

CUSTOMER (SERVICE) STRATEGY JOINT REPORT OF STAL AND STACC

April 2016

Introduction

This short, Joint Report about STAL's emerging customer service strategy clarifies for STACC members its content so far, emphasises its importance for both STAL and STACC and indicates how STACC members might input to it through collaborative working with STAL. For STAL, the Strategy is led by Karen Smart, Customer Service Director (MAG) whilst for STACC, the principal interface for consultation is the UEG.

The Strategy and the MAG Framework

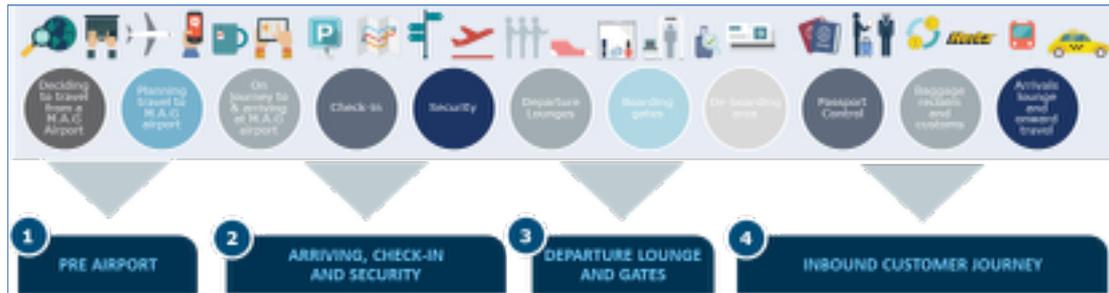
One of STAL's key objectives is to develop and achieve a strategy for enhancing the experience of the airline passenger customer¹. The entire experience of the customer comprises the moment contact is made with the airport about a flight, the outward journey of getting to and through the airport and then the return journey of passing back through and out of the airport. The Strategy will be known as the Customer Service Strategy. Similar strategies are being developed at each of MAG's four airports and each is set within an overarching MAG Framework.

The MAG Framework has a few, important features but subject to these, each airport has considerable autonomy over its own particular Strategy. One key feature of the MAG Framework is an emphasis on the customer's 'digital experience'. A significant percentage of passenger customers (and certainly at Stansted) is of an age which uses and relies on 'digitisation' to a high degree. There is a requirement therefore that each airport strategy must reflect this reality. Another key feature of the Framework is that as much information as possible about the individual passenger customer must be in a data form that makes its ownership by MAG corporately (as well as its use at each individual airport) readily accessible for future MAG research and marketing purposes. So, each strategy developed at each MAG airport must take into account and reflect to an appropriate degree the key features prescribed in the overall MAG Framework.

The Strategy Format: The Journey Stages

The strategy highlights how the passenger customer journey is broken down into four super stages and eleven individual stages; this will be the same for each MAG airport. These four super stages comprise 1) the pre airport experience, 2) arrival, check in and security, 3) departure lounges and gates and 4) the inbound customer journey. All the stages and their interrelationship are shown diagrammatically below:

¹ The customer may be a business, leisure or a PRM passenger.



The Strategy Format: Enhancing the Experience

The key element of the strategy is about enhancing the actual passenger customer experience. MAG has agreed a set of minimum standards relating to space, ambience, wait times, walk times, automation and choice all of which should contribute to a general enhancement of this experience. Each of the MAG airports is to adhere to these standards but can exceed them should an individual airport management judge there is value in doing so.

Making the Strategy Happen

The strategy addresses not only legacy issues where appropriate but focuses primarily on embedding an improved customer experience into future thinking and activities. This will become particularly important as business grows and the airport develops. For example, it is already clear that by enhancing the shopping, food and beverage offer, the customer experience has improved in line with the aspirations of STAL. As passenger numbers and the airline mix continue to grow at the airport the terminal and the customer strategy will evolve naturally to capture change and make sure any future enhancements create minimum disruption to the passenger.

Setting out the strategy format in ‘journey stages’ for the passenger customer and then in sections within each of the four super stages is one thing. Breathing oxygen into the Strategy so as to make it actually happen over a period of time is quite another. This will require good management by STAL including the initial, meaningful involvement of and then regular checking back with interested parties. One such interested party is STACC.

Specific attention will be focused on the journey stages and other elements of the strategy which STAL regards as critical whilst other stages and elements may not necessarily be given the same degree of attention. STAL will identify these ‘focus areas’ of the passenger customer experience within the customer journey and will consult the UEG. (It is of course probable that most if not all of the STAL priorities will be priorities for the UEG as well). Given STAL’s time and resource constraints, UEG may have relatively limited time in which to respond with views and relevant information. Equally important, UEG may identify stages as priorities which differ from STAL’s priorities. STAL would then need to consider seriously UEG’s suggested priorities albeit bearing in mind competing priorities, commercial imperatives and the proportionate use of staff resources.

Next Steps

STAL and STACC (UEG) will meet to agree a) the focus areas within the customer journey (which would then feature in STACC's AWP) and b) the consultation arrangements.

**Karen Smart
Stewart Ashurst**