

go with the flow

Traveler specific wayfinding announcements are a key tool in improving passenger flow throughout the terminal

Passenger flow is a key responsibility for airport operators and can be a headache without the right assistance. From the moment a passenger arrives at the airport, the efficiency and speed of their movement through the terminal is of vital importance.

Airport developers try their utmost to guide passengers smoothly from check in to boarding, providing commercial and entertaining facilities for their comfort. However, inconveniences like long queues at security screening or long transfer times may cause passengers to leave the terminal with a bitter taste in their mouths. In addition, congestion can lead to several other problems such as delayed or missed flights, and can even increase the harm caused by a terrorist attack. IATA also classifies airports according to multiple factors including passenger density and transfer times, and a lower grade might cause major airlines to avoid using such facilities.

Importantly for stakeholders, the efficiency of passenger flow has a direct influence on the revenues of commercial facilities. Research by US marketing firm JD Power has shown that an extra 10 minutes spent at security may reduce retail spending by as much as 30%. On the other hand, passengers who are very satisfied with an airport tend to spend on average up to 45% more in retail outlets.

One of the ways to gain more control over passenger flow is to use public address announcements to keep travelers informed and guide them efficiently through the airport. However, as air traffic grows, passengers are increasingly annoyed by the sheer amount of announcements they have to listen to and often cannot even



understand what is being said. Having recognized this, some airports have reduced the number of announcements or even shut them off altogether, as this would at least have a positive effect on the customer experience. But is this really the solution?

The question is how to accommodate the need to inform and guide passengers, while reducing the number of announcements and avoiding annoyance. The answer is to use intelligent automatic announcement systems that can generate short, effective announcements in multiple languages that are broadcast only at the right time and in exactly the right location.

Intelligent announcements

AviaVox Intelligent Announcement Systems can contribute considerably to the optimization of passenger flow. They can control the number of announcements made, and by routing them properly, passengers will hear only the announcements relevant to them. These systems take their data feed from the AODB and interface directly with the PA systems so that they can control the PA zones at the airport.

ABOVE: Wayfinding is essential to smooth airport operations

RIGHT: Queueing passengers need to stay informed

The number of airports that use automated monitoring systems on an individual level to improve passenger flow and prevent congestions is rapidly increasing. In combination with an AviaVox intelligent announcement system, such data can be used to automatically trigger announcements aimed at the improvement of the congestion, not only at the right location but also in a large variety of languages. One can only imagine the efficiency improvement if it would be possible to know the native tongue of every passenger (for instance by detecting the language settings in their smartphone) and address them in their own language, not only for rerouting, but also for pre-instructions at security checks, customs and any other congestion-sensitive location.

Everything that has previously been said about airport-wide announcements is also applicable



for the boarding procedure at the gate. As the number of occupied seats per flight continues to rise, flow efficiency during boarding is of equal importance. AviaVox's Airline-Gate-Client announcement system supports announcements in the restricted area of the boarding gate, and is used by airlines and handling agencies during their boarding procedures. It is a powerful software tool that can be fully tailored for every airline. The software holds a huge number of boarding announcements for airlines, and is set up for a step-by-step approach to guide the passenger through the gate to board the aircraft. It has a proven boarding efficiency improvement rate of up to 16%, which makes it a money-maker for both airport operators and airlines.

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