

New research reveals key to attracting Millennial travelers

By **Hibah Noor** on August, 22 2016 | Industry News



New research from global loyalty agency ICLP has revealed the factors that determine how passengers choose which airports to fly to and from, pointing the way to a better understanding of how to foster airport loyalty. It also reveals the keys to targeting the all-important Millennial traveler.

Many of the elements airports are unable to influence, such as cost of fares or convenient transport links, were among the must-haves in the decision making process. However, many of the factors that could sway choice are within their control. These include a number of elements that improve the convenience of travel, such as efficient security (77%), or easily accessible parking (48%).

Others are swayed by the concepts that make the airport experience more pleasant, such as the food and beverage offering (44%), shop or restaurant offers and discounts from the airport (37%), a good choice of retailers (34%) and access to a premium airport lounge (34%).

When it comes to attracting Millennial passengers, the rules are changing and a new approach is required, according to ICLP. For example, a larger number of younger passengers enjoy the airport experience compared with their baby boomer parents (58% of Millennials versus 42% of baby boomers). This could indicate that they may be inclined to see their arrival at the airport as heralding the start of their holiday experience.

Millennials also have a different view when it comes to looking at which airport they will use. When choosing an airport, Generation X and Millennials are much more influenced than baby boomers by food and drink outlets (33% of baby boomers versus 46% of Generation X and 47% of Millennials), and airport loyalty programs (31% of baby boomers versus 44% Generation X and 41% Millennials).

Other important factors that influence choice of airports are access to lounges (23% of baby boomers versus 39% of Generation X and 37% of Millennials) and restaurant and shopping discounts (22% of baby boomers versus 41% of Generation X and 43% of Millennials).

Choice of retailers for shopping is also a factor (20% of baby boomers versus 38% of Generation X and 39% of Millennials). This would suggest that for Millennials, passing through an airport is an experience to make the most of rather than a necessary but inconvenient part of a journey.

Commenting on the findings, ICLP Managing Director Mignon Buckingham said: “This survey highlights the need for airports to identify those passengers who have a choice in the airport they travel from, and understand the factors that are particularly important to that group. This is key to communicating with passengers more effectively, motivating customers to return to an airport and ensuring that an airport is in the running at times when the customer has a choice.”

Buckingham continued: “Our study revealed that a significant 40% of passengers picked their airport based on the airport loyalty program. This shows that there could be an untapped opportunity for airports to drive sales, considering only a handful of airports globally currently have a loyalty strategy. ICLP has been working closely with a number of airports to help them better understand their data, use that data to provide genuine and informative insight, and so capitalize on the crucial traveler trends.”

The survey was conducted by independent research agency SSI. A sample of just over 2,900 travelers were questioned.