



DIGITAL DIRECTIONS

NEW YORK AIRPORTS ACHIEVE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT THROUGH DIGITAL SIGNAGE AND SELF-SERVICE WELCOME CENTERS

 Visitors to New York area airports – JFK, LaGuardia and Newark International – are booking hotels faster, finding transportation into the city easier and not experiencing the typical headaches involved in travelling to the USA’s busiest city. Meanwhile the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the governing body of the aforementioned airports, is providing better customer service and moving swiftly towards a serious ROI in its arrival terminal technology.

That technology is a series of digital Welcome Centers, designed and implemented by Parabit Systems of Roosevelt, New York. With its arches brightly coloured in yellow and blue, passengers are welcomed into New York with helpful kiosks, digital signs and brochure displays to accommodate their stay in the city and surrounding areas.

But the passengers are not the only ones to reap the benefits of the Welcome Centers.

Since the units were installed, the Port Authority has been able to enhance customer service while capitalising on revenue opportunities related to ground transportation, ATMs and digital signage advertising.

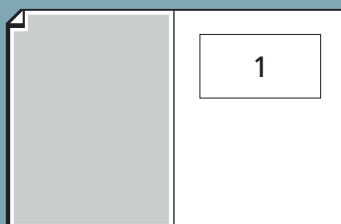
THE TECHNOLOGY In what is being called “One of the best examples of the integration of digital signage and kiosks in one enclosure,” Parabit created the Welcome Center design several years ago specifically for the Port Authority. The yellow and blue arch design gives a single, identifiable look to all arrival areas in the largest three airports in the region. The idea is that no matter which airport a passenger might arrive into, they will have an icon showing them where to get served for hotels, flight information, lost baggage, car rental reservations and ground transportation.

“After some research, we learned that in Roman times the arch always served as a welcoming icon into a city,” says Robert

Leiponis, CEO of Parabit Systems. “We’ve designed our Welcome Centers in the Port Authority’s airports with this in mind. The core concept is based on the arch, which resonates with travellers either consciously or subconsciously as a welcome sign to New York City.”

The key technological trait is the expandability of the unit. The Welcome Centers are modular, so they can be scaled up or down as the requirements of the airport change and as terminals are improved via their reconstruction. They feature interchangeable panels that can house electronics such as interactive information and telephone kiosks, digital signs, ticketing machines, and Parabit’s latest application, the Virtual Concierge, which promotes a green effort by providing digital brochures that can be emailed and/or printed.

Set to be released later this year, Parabit’s Virtual Concierge solution will eliminate thousands of tourism brochures



1. Welcome Center at JFK International Airport, Terminal 4



that clutter arrival areas. The application turns a touchscreen into an interactive database of local attractions, allowing travellers to access multimedia content on their attractions/services provided. The application is installed in several beta locations and will be ready for production release by the end of 2010. Along with Parabit's Virtual Concierge application, a Remote Content Manager and a back-end management website is provided that allows advertisers to log in and update their virtual brochures/media.

Parabit has developed a low-profile card-dispensing kiosk and is attempting to work with the New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to create an interface to dispense a MetroCard, as typically MTA ticketing kiosks are quite large. Device-charging kiosks, which charge travellers' mobile phones and other devices for a small fee, are also scheduled to roll out to the Welcome Centers next year.

For the Port Authority, the Welcome Centers have solved a location-based issue through consolidation of services. "We had separate desks for information, ground transportation, ticketing, etc," says Ralph Tragale, the Port Authority Aviation Department's assistant director of public affairs. "There were too many desks and they were spread across the arrivals area. We saw an opportunity to centralise the functions in the terminal."

CUSTOMER SERVICE The Welcome Centers don't completely eliminate human interaction, however. "Sometimes you need a person to talk to in the case of a compli-

cated transportation issue," Leiponis says. "For this reason we have integrated desks into each Welcome Center where a Customer Care Representative can be placed."

A Port Authority Customer Care Representative, also known as a Redcoat, is a Port Authority vendor that provides concierge services at the Welcome Center when needed. Former help-desk employees have found the Welcome Center as a better way to provide customer service.

"In the airport business, safety and security is paramount, but a close second is the customer experience," Tragale says. "The Welcome Centers have helped us better allocate resources."

There have been some improvements to the arrivals areas of the Port Authority's airports thanks to the installation of the Welcome Centers. For example, as part of the design Parabit placed a railing system around the Welcome Centers that creates a barrier between arriving travellers and unlicensed cab drivers. Travellers are therefore able to explore practical and cost-effective transportation options into the city.

THE ROI The Welcome Centers are providing an ROI to the Port Authority in several ways, although using them to create extra revenue streams wasn't the original intent.

The Welcome Centers use digital signage to show advertisements placed by businesses looking to reach travellers in an

engaging way. Once enticed by an advertisement presented via the digital signage, the traveller is drawn in and exposed to other promotional messages at kiosk level.

Also, airports typically have hotel phone boards at their welcome centres that feature local hotels that pay a fee to have their name listed on the board. The Port Authority is taking this concept further by digitising these boards and integrating them into the Welcome Centers. The Port Authority says the model could be extended to include car rental companies, town car services, restaurants, attractions and other transportation companies.

"Anytime you can bring in a technology that can supplement and/or allow labour to be redeployed to more effective duties and increase revenue, you'll get the attention of airports," said Leiponis.

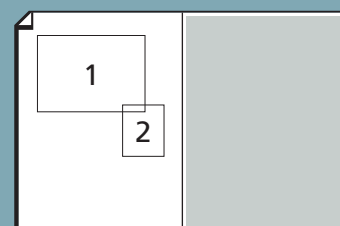


BUILDING ON SUCCESS The Welcome Center project is shaping up to be the beginning of a beautiful relationship between Parabit and the Port Authority. Parabit originally won the contract because of its ability to provide a complete turnkey solution that demonstrated an understanding of design, manufacturing and the integration of digital signage and various kiosk solutions.

The Port Authority has since signed a contract to expand the Welcome Center technology to its AirTrain JFK rail stations that connect JFK Airport to New York City's subway, bus, commuter trains and airport parking lots.

At the two AirTrain remote terminal locations (Howard Beach and Jamaica), Parabit has installed a more rugged Welcome Center solution. For the other 10 AirTrain Stations Parabit has designed a monolithic interactive digital signage kiosk using 42in touchscreens and 26in digital displays. Travellers can use these screens to search destinations within the NY Metro area and get directions via the public transportation network that the MTA manages.

- 1. Welcome Center at JFK International Airport, Terminal 7
- 2. Welcome Center kiosk installed at AirTrain JFK rail stations



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- » Digital Advertising
- » Device Charging
- » Coupon Emailing/Printing

Locking Charging Bays permits passengers to visit retailers or wait for baggage during a charge!

POMONA & AVETA

Parabit's Virtual Concierge solution provides many revenue opportunities. Advertise and Access Via Kiosk or Courtesy Phone:

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- » Airline/Airport Services
- » E-Brochures and E-Coupons
- » Way-Finding/Directions
- » Lost Baggage System, Security Warning and Weather Feeds

Promote Green Environment by Emailing E-Brochures/E-Coupons!

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Improve Vendor/Visitor Security processing through Parabits Visitor Management Kiosk:

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- » Badge Printing/Prox Card Dispensing
- » Watch List Screening
- » Visitor Check Out
- » Email Notification

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