

CASE STUDY

A Journey to Greater Efficiency at Scottish Airports with eSquiggles

Glasgow based company THS provides support services to airport passengers with reduced mobility needs. In order to more effectively manage staff, share information and track progress of jobs they implemented the eSquiggles mobile working solution which runs on PDAs. The pilot phase demonstrated cost and efficiency savings so quickly that the rollout to all staff across two sites was completed within four months.

THS is a growing services based company, working directly for Scotland's two largest airports - Glasgow and Edinburgh. Established over five years ago and providing support services to airport passengers with reduced mobility, it has now grown into a £4m company with a wider service set which now includes handling services, commercial cleaning, passengers with additional needs, portering and trolley recovery. As the company has grown, the need for more efficient ways of sharing information whilst workers are onsite within the airport has become a top priority in moving forward as a company.

Managing Director at THS, Kevin Muir, explains, "When we first started the company we had 16 employees, providing mainly wheelchair support services for passengers with reduced mobility. The staff are responsible for the passenger from the moment they meet them outside the airport until the point they board the flight. We need to provide fast, efficient, yet dignified services. In the past the porter would complete paperwork during the

duration of the job, making a note of pickup time, drop off time and notes on any other stop-offs during the job.

As they proceeded they would radio back to our controller in the office to let them know how the job was progressing.

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However, with the rise in budget airlines and a general upturn in the number of passengers flying from both airports, business has been very busy for us. The number of passengers we have been working with has increased and the types of services we provide has diversified, which has led to a huge recruitment drive. Going from a 16 man to 140+ man company has been fantastic, however, managing this amount of people proved to be so inefficient using paper forms and radio messaging. With up to 20 people on any one shift, we simply had to find a better and more cost effective



Project Benefits

- » Substantial cost savings via staff productivity
- » Better control over staff and shift rotas
- » Reduction in human error, non complete jobs, missing data, etc.
- » Dramatically improved management reporting
- » Improved levels of customer service

Project Deliverables

- » Time stamping/time recording at various stages eg: pickup, security, arrival at gate etc
- » Reporting - adhoc & management reports per airline
- » Electronic risk assessments
- » Efficient job scheduling
- » Detecting and recording of 'pain points' in the process
- » Client survey and analysis tool
- » Integrated with SITA IT system
- » Fast & efficient reporting against Service Level Agreements (SLA's)

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way of tracking staff and jobs. Mobile working software running on PDAs was the obvious solution to us. We implemented eSquiggles earlier this year and have had our expectations exceeded, to say the least."

Working directly for airports and major airlines, THS is governed by EU legislation and there is a major focus on reporting back statistics and reports on a regular basis. As security measures increase and the process of getting passengers from arrival at the airport through security and departures is prolonged, companies like THS need to have data recorded and time stamped to prove that they are performing against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Kevin comments, "Time stamping is a major benefit of using eSquiggles, as opposed to customer service agents radioing back to base to update our operator. Now they can quickly complete an electronic form on the PDA which tracks when they reached each stage of the journey through the airport. Bottlenecks can be identified. So for example, if they were continually being held up at security causing them to be late for boarding, this will be recorded, which we in turn can report back to BAA (British Airports Association).

We have the evidence that we are performing, but possibly being delayed for other reasons. We can feed this back, have something done about it and ultimately provide a better service to our customers. This information is invaluable and simply would have been missed on a paper based process. Not only that, but we now have greater visibility of staff productivity and shift productivity so can plan our shift rotations and job scheduling much better.

Literally everything we do now, we do electronically. We send the staff their day's jobs straight to their PDA. They download, complete their job whilst completing the electronic form. We have all information sent straight back to our database so we constantly know which jobs have been done and which ones are outstanding. And when it comes to reporting back to our governing bodies, it is simple process."

A new EU directive introduced recently focuses around Passengers with Reduced Mobility (PRM). Since July 2008 those with reduced mobility have been entitled to free of charge assistance at all airports situated in the territory of an EU member state. This will undoubtedly mean a rise in volume of jobs for THS, but will also mean greater scrutiny of the level of service provided and greater accountability by the service providers. The introduction of mobile working technology,

which facilitates job monitoring and reporting, will become a must for all companies like THS.

The project itself had a very quick turnaround time, mainly due to the simplicity of the electronic forms which THS were able to generate themselves.

John McGuire, Managing Director at the company behind eSquiggles, Pulsion Technology, comments, "The feedback from the eSquiggles product team working on this project was very positive. Although many of the staff at THS who are using eSquiggles were fairly non-technical, they really hit the ground running with it due to ease of navigation around the system and its user friendly data capture functions.

My staff were able to provide a few training sessions then hand over to THS. Since implementation they have only been called on for support occasionally. At the outset eSquiggles was designed to enable clients to design electronic forms and output reports themselves - this project proves we have achieved this. We're delighted!"

