



**visits4u Case Studies:
Amsterdam Schiphol Airport
Amsterdam, Netherlands**

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol Amsterdam, Netherlands

Title: Limitless Travelling



Description

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, is the main international airport of the Netherlands. It is located 9 kilometres (5.6 miles) southwest of Amsterdam, in the municipality of Haarlemmermeer, North Holland. The airport is built as a single-terminal concept: one large terminal split into three large departure halls.

Schiphol opened on 16 September 1916 as a military airbase. The end of the First World War also saw the beginning of civilian use of Schiphol Airport and the airport eventually lost its military role completely. By 1940, Schiphol had four asphalt runways at 45-degree angles. The airport was captured by the German military that same year and renamed Fliegerhorst Schiphol. The airport was destroyed through bombing but at the end of the war the airfield was restored quickly. In 1949, it was decided that Schiphol was to become the primary airport of the Netherlands.

Schiphol Airport is an important European airport. It is the third busiest airport in Europe in terms of passengers. In 2010, 65.9% of passengers using the airport flew to and from Europe, 11.7% to and from North America and 8.8% to and from Asia; cargo volume was mainly between Schiphol and Asia (45%) and North America (17%).

In 2010, 106 carriers provided a total of 301 destinations on a regular basis. Passenger destinations were offered by 91 airlines. Direct (non-stop) destinations grew by 9 to a total of 274. Regular destinations serviced exclusively by full freighters (non-passenger) grew by eight to a total of twenty-seven.

Besides, this airport provides easy access to many of those interested in visiting Holland, as it is the airport of reference in the Netherlands and the fact of being an accessible airport, facilitates that people indifferently of their backgrounds, can visit this beautiful country.

Becoming inclusive:

1. Description

As an airport with international fame and a large load of passengers per year, it needs to be an adapted space so that all people without their specific needs are an obstacle to travel.

In Schiphol airport, if somebody are planning to travel, and are affected by reduced mobility or a disability, they may request assistance (provided at no charge to them) through the airline or travel agency. They can request assistance if, for example, he/she have sight or hearing impairments, are confined to a wheelchair, have difficulty walking, are pregnant or are affected by a mental disability.

The person who need assistance, only need to requests the assistance at Schiphol when they book the flight.

The airport advise that the person can request assistance via their airline, tour operator or travel agency, but also sending an email to assistance@schiphol.nl and they will be ready and waiting for them when they arrive at the airport. In the e-mail, the person need to state his/her name, address and place of residence; the flight number and

destination; the date and time of the arrival at Schiphol and a mobile phone number.



2. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

Main adaptations carried out during this adaptation process:

1. Disabled parking spaces inside the building with valid parking exemptions.
2. People with reduced mobility or their relatives or people accompanying them are allowed to park in front of the departure hall for three hours.
3. All airport toilets have been adapted to people with reduced mobility: enough turning space for wheelchairs, no floor unevenness, wider approximation spaces to mirrors...
4. Hearing loops.
5. Clear signposting.
6. Accessible lifts and escalators.
7. Wheelchairs for general use inside the airport.
8. Intercom service in the departure hall or in the car park to report users' arrival and to can reclaim the PRM assistance.
9. Assistance bus to transport to the aircrafts and stair climber or 'ambulift' to help the boarding in case of necessity.

3. Main stakeholders

Schiphol employs hundreds of Passenger Assistants (PAs). In total, these employees provide assistance to around 350,000 passengers every year. Amsterdam Airport Schiphol provides professional, customer-friendly assistance to passengers with a disability or reduced mobility, referred to at Schiphol as PRM (persons with reduced mobility).

The PRM services are conducted in compliance with Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2006 and the Interpretive Guidelines of June 2012. Document 30 of the ECAC guidelines formed the basis upon which the quality standards were compiled. Safety, security, quality, hospitality and expertise are paramount to the services provided for PRM.

The nature of the assistance is tailored as closely as possible to the needs and wishes of each passenger. In this way, disabled passengers or passengers with reduced mobility have access to the same air-travel opportunities as everybody else.

The assistants are trained to be hospitable and to expertly assist PRM. They possess wide knowledge of aviation processes and safety standards and they have completed training in lifting disabled persons. The assistants can be identified by their Schiphol uniform and a badge displaying the disabled icon and the text 'Passenger Assistant'.

Once on the airport grounds, passengers can report to the registration barriers (in the car parks, at Schiphol Plaza, the bus station and in the departure halls) or the assistance counters in the departure halls.

In principle, upon reporting to the registration barrier, passengers will have to wait no longer than 15 minutes for their Passenger Assistant.

Upon reporting to the assistance counter in the departure hall, the assistance will take the passenger to the departure gate. Vehicles such as caddies, wheelchairs and hoisting equipment are periodically inspected and maintained by certified bodies.

The services must be conducted in compliance with quality standards relating to professionalism, customer satisfaction and punctuality, and the services are periodically evaluated.

Results and Impact

The impact of having an airport adapted and accessible to all, is always beneficial for its users, as it guarantees a greater number of customers who can benefit from its services in a way that does not excluded anyone for their diverse mental or physical conditions. All customers are satisfied with the assistants' service, as, they claim, they are trained and have the required knowledge to perform adequately and efficiently when helping people with special needs.

In the same line, it's been withdrawn from interviews and satisfaction questionnaires that customers are satisfied with all facilities, structures and services offered for people with disabilities, as they are very helpful and well designed to meet with their needs.

Future-wise, the airport plans to introduce further changes and adaptations, mainly in the external services provided, as the facilities are already highly adapted and accessible; however, no detailed information is available about such adaptations and changes.

Lessons learnt

One of the key success factors can be claimed to be the professional training, preparation and knowledge of the assisting staff: they are provided with detailed training on the field of people with disabilities. Another of the successful facts of the adaptation process is the contemplation of connections and transfers between the airport and other important places (bus stations, car parks, train station...), not only for the wide offer, punctuality and good information provided but also for its accessibility: ramps, assisting aids, information panels easy to read and intercoms are a real breakthrough.

Users' need to ask and report in advance their concrete necessities, however, can be seen as a challenge that needs to be addressed. It could be improved introducing slight changes that made it quicker and more immediate. It has also been identified that reduced mobility and



other physical impairments are well addressed and assisted, however, people with mental disabilities, do not count with any special department or assisting channels. Finally, it is important highlight the need of improvement in the field of a more accessible leisure offer inside the facilities.

Further information

Airport website: www.schiphol.nl



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