

# Giving you extra

Ease the journey – and increase your commission – with airport add-ons, writes Samantha Mayling

**B**eing on holiday should be fun, but travelling there and back can end up quite the opposite. So why not lessen the stress by selling a first-class experience, without the premium-priced ticket?

While your clients nab the chance to get their nails done in the airport spa, send those all-important emails from the comfort of a luxury lounge, or arrive well rested thanks to a night in the airport hotel, you'll have topped up your commission and gained a satisfied customer in the process.

## ► BAGS OF FUN

Even before clients leave home, agents can make the journey easier by offering luggage transfers from the likes of AirPortr. Available within the M25 and around Heathrow and Gatwick, AirPortr will collect a customer's luggage from their front door and reunite it with them in baggage reclaim at their destination. Agents can earn commission, or pass the savings on to customers as added value on their booking.

Alex Large, AirPortr head of partnerships, says: "We've seen a trend emerge where people

want to upgrade their travel experience, whether for leisure or business."

## ► PARK AND FLY

Travelling to airports is another stress point so hotel-and-parking packages ensure the holiday experience begins early – and can save money.

Lindsay Garvey-Jones, Holiday Extras' national partnerships manager, says: "Offering an airport hotel that includes holiday parking can offer significant savings for customers. Booked together, hotels and parking can cost little more than parking

alone. Arranging breakfast or dinner at the hotel in advance will add value to the holiday for the client and the agent."

Affordable Car Hire's Affordable Xtras also sells airport parking and lounge passes that are commissionable for agents.

Chief executive Angela Day says: "Agents shouldn't think of these items as extras. Airport parking and lounge passes are essential to a customer's travel arrangements and make their holiday far more enjoyable.

"Everything can be pre-budgeted, so the customer





**LEFT:**  
Escape  
Lounge, East  
Midlands  
airport

**RIGHT:**  
Crowne Plaza  
Manchester  
Airport

**BELOW:**  
AirPortr



→ is aware of costs up front. When the client is looked after by the agent from start to finish, there is more chance of receiving repeat custom, as we always go back to someone we feel that we can trust.”

Accommodation and parking packages are also featured by many airport hotels. Lapithus Hotels Management UK has Park, Stay and Go offers at selected Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn properties, aimed at travellers with early departures or late arrivals. A one-night stay and up to 15 nights’ parking cost from £115, while one night and four days’ parking starts at £70.

Another airport hotel specialist, Arora Hotels, also offers park-and-fly packages. Commercial director Raj Shah says: “Airport hotels offer fantastic perks that provide added luxury and calm amid the hustle and bustle of an international airport.



## At the airport, lounges and queue-jumping passes make a holiday more special – without breaking the bank

“We offer day and hourly spa treatments – the perfect add-on for guests before taking a flight, once landed or, indeed, during transfers, time permitting.”

Airport Parking and Hotels offers parking at all major UK airports, plus hotels and lounges. Managing director Nick Caunter says: “Airport parking is one of the easiest and most stress-free ways of travelling to the airport, especially when packaged with an overnight hotel stay. Agents can add real value to the customer’s travel experience.”

He recommends booking a car park that holds the police-approved Park Mark Safer Parking Award, which means customers have peace of mind that their car is parked in a safe site that has been inspected by police.

### ▶ LOUNGING AROUND

Once at the airport, lounges and queue-jumping passes make a holiday more special – without breaking the bank.

Holiday Extras offers lounges at most UK airports from £23. Garvey-Jones says: “Entry to an airport lounge is a cost-effective way of adding value to a holiday and it saves money for travellers at the airport that would be spent in cafes and bars.”

Jonathan Adams, business development manager at Your Service Centre Gatwick, says: “Airport add-ons are a hidden luxury that the infrequent traveller may not be aware of, or a little luxury that may be

assumed as unaffordable.”

Lounges are a growing business. No1 Lounges, for example, plans to double its portfolio to 16 UK airports by the end of 2018. Three types of lounge are available – My Lounge, No1 Lounges and Clubrooms – with entry starting at £18.

Chief executive Phil Cameron says: “Premium travel is changing rapidly – it is no longer just about turning left when you board the plane. Passengers are increasingly looking for affordable luxuries and more personalised experiences, especially as many airlines are streamlining their offerings.”

East Midlands airport has upgraded its Escape Lounge, which offers freebies such as food and drinks, newspapers, Wi-Fi, printing facilities and charging points for devices.

The airport offers Meet & Greet parking services and a FastTrack pass, bookable via Holiday →



## HOW TO SELL AIRPORT ADD-ONS



Always offer extras when you are selling a holiday. Actively selling add-ons in advance will save the customer money. Build on the rapport you have with your customer to find out what they really need. Taking a bit more time will pay dividends.

**Lindsay Garvey-Jones, Holiday Extras**

Luggage transfers can be an economical alternative to costly cabs and busy London roads. No bag is too big, so it's great for people who love to play golf, cycle or even surf abroad.

**Alex Large, AirPortr**

Use independent review websites if you haven't used a parking service yourself, and sell parking early. Customers may leave booking airport parking as late as possible, but this can severely limit availability and tends to be more expensive.

**Nick Caunter, Airport Parking & Hotels**

➔ Extras. FastTrack is £4 per person – a 20% saving on the walk-up price – while the lounge is £25 per person, a £5 discount on paying on the day.

Sister airport Stansted has recently upgraded its Escape Lounge, while Manchester's will be refurbished this month.

Fast-track passes can be arranged as part of the booking for hotels, parking and lounges, or as a standalone product.

Adams at Your Service Centre Gatwick says passes are ideal for families and apprehensive passengers, adding: "It's easy to focus on the passengers' in-resort experience, but their pre-departure experience is just as important."

### SOMETHING SPECIAL

Furthermore, clients who are celebrating a special occasion may appreciate the chance for some star treatment on their journey. EasyJet passengers can use a luxury private-jet terminal at Luton airport, which is popular with celebrities such as Brad Pitt and Taylor Swift.

The VIP service costs £475 for one passenger and £120 for any additional travellers in a group.

Travellers can park by the front door, then customs, immigration and security screening are performed at the terminal, with passengers offered refreshments while relaxing in its luxury lounge.

Andrew Middleton, easyJet head of



**Clients celebrating a special occasion may appreciate the chance for some star treatment on their journey**

ancillary revenue, says: "We think it will be particularly popular for those celebrating a milestone birthday, anniversary or other special occasion, or for those travelling on business."

Another treat could be a spa

treatment, ranging from a quick massage to manicures and pedicures. Airport Parking and Hotels has a guide to airport spas, including Cloud Spa branches at Birmingham and Manchester, and the Be-Relax Spa at Heathrow Terminal 5.

There are also spa facilities at Heathrow Terminal 2's Plaza Premium Lounges and at the No1 Lounge, in Terminal 3.

Lounges can be a godsend for tired travellers during stopovers on long-haul flights at airports such as Singapore Changi, Kuala Lumpur or Dubai. Emirates has extended the usage of its luxury lounges at Dubai airport to loyalty programme members and their guests, regardless of their class of travel. Eligible guests can access the Emirates Business Class lounges in Dubai for \$100 and the Emirates First Class lounges for \$200.

And don't forget the homeward journey after the holiday ends – add-on specialists such as Holiday Extras can offer lounges at airports across the world. Most international lounges welcome children, and prices with Holiday Extras start at £25 for a three-hour stay.

Finally, the arrival back in Blighty can be blighted by jet-lag – especially if customers are facing a lengthy drive home from the airport – so a simple shower and chance to relax can be a real boon.

Plaza Premium Group has opened an arrivals lounge at Heathrow's Terminal 3. Offering 11 shower rooms, the lounge handles passengers from more than 110 long-haul flights a day. **tw**



PICTURES: S WRITTLE; HYWELL WATERS; STEFAN ZANDER

**ABOVE:** Emirates lounge, Dubai airport

**LEFT:** Cloud Spa, Birmingham airport