

# Taking Stress Out of Travel

## Alaska Airlines Commits to Easing Passenger Travel

By Fred Heid, PMP

In a world where consumers readily access on-demand services for everything from banking to shopping to entertainment, the traditional airport experience can come as a shock.

Remote parking, check-in lines, baggage restrictions, security screenings and gate delays create a barrier to satisfaction that can be hard to break through. But it can — and is — being done.

“Our job is to remove any and all obstacles for customers and give them a stress-free environment,” says Ron Calvin, director of the Eastern Region for Alaska Airlines. The airline is sending a powerful message to its passengers about its goal for every passenger’s travel experience.

### Self-Service, Full-Service

Airlines realize customers want control of the check-in procedure. Travelers can now check in from a hotel lobby or a parking garage. Alaska Airlines continues to serve those passengers who prefer a more personal experience or for whom self-service technologies are not the first choice.

While available customer options are contingent on space constraints at individual airports, the Alaska Airlines Web site and customer service agents can help travelers determine what options are available on their routes.

Alaska Airlines kiosks empower passengers to print boarding passes, activate themselves on the stand-by list, upgrade to first class and select a new seat assignment. This frees customer service agents to help customers who desire one-on-one interaction or who need to address an atypical travel need.

By the time passengers reach the boarding area, they should be ready to fly, eliminating the angst and stress often associated with the boarding an airplane.

### The Baggage Factor

As security protocols reduce curbside services, budgets are reallocated. In some stations, off-site baggage check-in is available through cruise ships, hotels and convention centers. These operators can hold passenger bags until flight time, leaving the traveler care-free until departure time.

The baggage rate per person ranges from 1.2 to 1.5 bags per customer. Most airlines previously charged passengers \$2 per bag for curbside check-in. But the recent implementation of fees of \$15 per bag means the curbside charge probably will be removed.

Alaska Airlines intends to provide a stress-free passenger experience, removing obstacles from the time passengers enter the terminal until they collect their baggage. In fact, the airline guarantees every bag will be in the passenger’s hands within 25 minutes of gate arrival and is scanning each bag to record arrival and delivery times. If the bags don’t arrive on time, the airline offers 2,500 frequent flier miles or a \$25 credit toward a future flight. Prompt baggage claim is important to Alaska Airlines because it is important to each and every passenger. ✈️



In Seattle, Alaska Airlines passengers can use self-service kiosks to smooth their travel experience.