Rating and recognising

Airlines are increasingly encouraging passengers to provide service feedback via apps and cards says **Raymond Kollau**

Social media has provided passengers a powerful platform to voice their opinion on the experience they have with airlines. In response, airlines are among the organisations that most actively monitor the online conversation in order to pro-actively take actions and correct issues if needed. However, instead of just waiting for passengers to share their experiences (both good and bad) online, several airlines have also started to encourage passengers to provide their feedback about the service they encounter in real-time.

KLM 'Feedback App'
KLM, for example, has launched a mobile app that allows passengers to give real-time feedback on their experience at the airport. The app, available for both Apple's iOS and Google's Android, allows passengers to choose their airport and area used (check-in, lounge, boarding, arrival) and rate accordingly. They rate areas with a 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' button but can also give a comment and see how other passengers rated the area within the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, KLM team leaders and station management at participating airports have been equipped with iPads that enable them to monitor feedback in real-time, so they can react to feedback immediately. KLM says that the current version of the Feedback app has been built only for the passenger experience on the ground. However, inflight services may be added in the future allowing passengers to give their opinion on the onboard experience.

KLM's Lounge can now be rated; British Airways' Golden Ticket; and all smiles from the United Airlines' recognition programme

United 'Outperform Recognition'
Following its merger with Continental, United Airlines has relaunched its service recognition programme. MileagePlus members can now submit up to five nominations every four months through United's mobile app, mobile website and Facebook page. The option to recognise excellent service through the mobile app is the most innovative part of the initiative as it provides passengers an easy way to express their satisfaction in real-time – especially since United will have 200 wifi-equipped aircraft by the end of 2013. Each period the airline rewards 101 employees randomly from the pool of submissions.

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BA 'Golden ticket'
British Airways takes a more low-tech approach but is rewarding outstanding customer service through its 'golden ticket' scheme. Gold and Premier Executive Club members are given two golden tickets to hand out in recognition of excellent service.

One BA crew member said, "The fact that someone takes time to give me their golden ticket makes me feel my effort was noticed which is good." Customer service matters and tapping into technology and new creative ideas will surely be key for airlines which want to stay at the top of the game.