/Diagonal

## 1. OVERVIEW

The client of this project was Finavia, a public limited company owned by the Finnish State. Finavia maintains and develops a network of altogether 24 of the country's airports and the air navigation system of Finland. The project Diagonal conducted was called *Travellab* and it took place at Helsinki Airport in 2014. Since Finland's national airline company Finnair has become one of the largest airline carriers to Asia, the target audience of Travellab was early on selected to be the Asian transfer customers.

The strategic vision and the service mission of Finavia is to build Helsinki Airport into the leading transfer airport of the Northern Europe within the Asian transit travel market. Travellab was created to support achieving this vision by improving the **transfer passenger experience** of Helsinki Airport.

In the beginning of the co-operation with Diagonal, Finavia had a positive problem. They had gathered over 200 improvement ideas from their passengers. However, the company didn't know what to do with the ideas and more specifically, how to prioritize the improvement ideas. Diagonal's task was to create a trustworthy and agile model for prototyping as well as for measuring the success of new potential airport services. The aim was to understand which new services would have the most significant impact on improving the transfer passenger experience. Diagonal's objective was to present Finavia management a prioritized and validated list of new services which would best support Helsinki Airport in becoming the leading transfer airport of the Northern Europe.

## 2. PROCESS

Diagonal established Travellab on the agile and user-centric process of service design and on the newest methods of user testing and live-prototyping. In order to complete a trustworthy prototyping process, Diagonal team created a 5-stage *idea funnel* – execution model for completing the project:

1. Collecting and analyzing existing ideas with Finavia steering group
2. Selecting and voting ideas by passengers
3. Prototyping and testing ideas with the passengers
4. Analyzing the prototyping results
5. Ranking of the prototypes and prioritizing them for implementation

Diagonal team begun its work by gathering understanding on what is the transfer service like at the airport now and what do the transfer passengers expect from it.  A lot of insight materials had been gathered prior to Travellab, and the first task for Diagonal team was to analyze the existing material

regarding transfer travelling. The team analyzed the existing service ideas together with the Finavia steering group and prioritized best ideas for prototyping based on customer surveys.

In order to complete Travellab successfully, Diagonal also recruited a group of Asian service design students from Aalto University to help with the contextual interviews and the translations. Diagonal also designed and set up a *mobile prototyping booth* at the airport to support the team's work at the airport environment.

All in all, during Travellab more than 900 passengers were interviewed during 75 days of prototyping at the airport. This included testing of 12 different kinds of new service prototypes chosen out of the 200 improvement ideas. The 12 prototypes included services such as *YogaGate*, *Follow the rabbit* – family service, *Gate Roastery*, *Midsummer festival*, *Restaurant Day*, *renewed security gate service model* and *renewed service menu*. Diagonal team created various service samples and an individual execution plan for each service prototype.

Diagonal team was in charge of the measuring and analyzing the results of each prototyping session and designing improvements based on the feedback. Each prototype and the customer feedback received were evaluated from five significant perspectives. The measurement criteria was developed together with the steering group of Finavia:

- impact on customer experience
- reliability of the prototype
- sense of urgency
- cost efficiency
- alignment with the strategy of Finavia

As a result, Finavia gained deep understanding on with which new service ideas to proceed in creating a globally leading transfer airport of Northern Europe. In addition to this, live testing at the airport environment resulted in a significant boost in traditional and social media coverage; for example the tweets about Yogagate reached over 5 million Twitter users globally.

Besides providing a reliable and prioritized list of new services for improving the transfer passenger experience, Diagonal team created two new tools for Finavia to continue with user-centric prototyping culture:

**1) Model for systematic prototyping at the airport environment**
**2) Digital ranking tool to measure the impact of different type of service ideas**


The aim of the new tools Diagonal built was to ensure that Travellab would not be a one-time-thing, but more as an example of how desirable airport services can be designed in the future as well.  With

the help of the new tools and the results of Travellab, Finavia management now has even better understanding on the benefits of design thinking. Through Travellab, the management team and the whole organization of Finavia have had an opportunity to estimate and see how design approach supports the service development processes of the organization.

**How we gathered customer insight:**
- Diagonal team orientated and analyzed over 200 insights and ideas Finavia had gathered from the customers prior to Travellab
- Diagonal team spent 75 days working *hands-on* at the airport among the customers conducting research, prototyping ideas and designing concepts further
- During Travellab Diagonal team interviewed over 900 customers
- Altogether the insight reached *n15000*
- Throughout Travellab, the feedback from the customers were constantly gathered so the final concepts truly reflected the need, wants, and motives of the travelling customers
- Project was extensive in the sense that a team of five trainees from different Asian countries were recruited to help Diagonal engage with foreign customers. This way there were no language barriers when interacting with the customers.

**How we tested the service concepts:**
- 20+ prototype iterations were created during Travellab
- Diagonal tested and measured altogether 12 unique service prototypes live among the transfer passengers by designing various service samples and building individual execution plans for each prototype. Also, Diagonal team was in charge of engaging a large group of third party stakeholders and choosing the correct service providers for each of the live-prototypes (e.g. café owner for Gate Roastery, yogastudio for YogaGate, event producers for the Midsummer festival etc).

**3. BENEFITS**

The entire project focused on improving the transfer passenger experience at Helsinki Airport. Through the extensive research, concept creation and cutting-edge prototyping, Diagonal was able to help the Helsinki Airport to distinguish itself from its Nordic and European competitors.

Due to the results Travelleb, the service investments and the focus of Finavia in the following years, will genuinely be based on the customer needs and preferences:

"*We stopped assuming, and started to experiment. The result of Travellab has been our newly-found*

*courage to experiment. The way in which we measure the success of the customer experience projects has improved significantly."* - Ville Haapasaari, Senior Vice President of Finavia

**Benefits for the customer:**

- *More manageable layover times.* No longer was the visit at Helsinki Airport just a boring, uninteresting stop but it was translated into a more significant transfer experience that could even arouse interest in the customers to travel via Finland on their next trip or to recommend transfer travelling via Helsinki Airport. The customer feedback for the most prioritized service ideas was extremely positive, and transfer passengers thought that the services really improved the transfer experience. The most liked services included *YogaGate*, *Midsummer festival*, *Restaurant Day*, *Selfie from Hel* and the improved *Service Menu*.

**Benefits for the organization:**

- *Validated strategic vision for future customer experience.* Finavia management now has validated and reliable vision of which service investments will truly benefit best in achieving the strategic goal of Helsinki Airport becoming the leading transfer airport of Northern Europe.
- *Prototyping model and digital ranking tool.* The new tools Diagonal created support the organization to speed up their current service development processes to be more agile and user centric. The new digital ranking-tool shows automatically the impact of potential service ideas in a comparative form that supports decision-making process in Finavia when deciding on the future investments. All in all, the tools promote more customer-centric service development results and provide customers with more desirable services and better transfer experiences.

**Impact on the competition market:**

- *Positive publicity and distinguishing from competition.* With Travellab and its unique transparent prototyping and large focus on transfer experience development, the airport was able to distinguish itself from its competitors, other Nordic transfer airports. The airport gained wide international press attention which may translate into higher profits when more people choose Helsinki Airport as the connecting airport.

## 4. EFFECTS

- Helsinki Airport has gained reputation as one of the best and most reliable airports for

connecting flights and Travellab supports greatly in maintaining this reputation. Between January–June 2015 Helsinki Airport has succeeded well in the competition regarding the international flight passengers, compared to other main transfer airports of Northern Europe. During this time the international transfer travel at Helsinki airport has increased 3%, and altogether Helsinki Airport served more 6,6 million passengers. [1]

- The live testing at the airport environment resulted in a significant boost in traditional and social media coverage. Travallab gained a significant global media coverage in more than 80 English news or online updates. Travellab was covered e.g. in Condé Nast Traveller, Forbes, New York Daily News and in Business Traveller. The tweets about YogaGate reached over 5 million Twitter users globally, and during the final stages of Travellab in October 2014, SleepingInAirports chose Helsinki Airport as their third best airport in the world: "*The innovative and transit-friendly Helsinki International Airport excels in terms of comfort, convenience, cleanliness and customer service. Favourite unique features here include the book exchange, relaxation areas, electronic passport kiosks (that virtually eliminate lines), art gallery and, perhaps most importantly, the ergonomic and publicly accessible Kainuu lounge. What really set Helsinki apart this year was the TravelLab series – an airport-led initiative designed to improve the travel experience. Last winter and spring, the airport collected feedback from travellers as to services they'd like to see offered. They then piloted the best ideas over the course of the summer. Highlights included free yoga and pilates classes, pop-up Finnish restaurants and a 'selfie-wall' that featured famous national landmarks.*" – SleepingInAirports [2]

- The results of Travellab have a significant impact on the planning of future investments at the airport. Currently, Finavia is largely investing on increasing the capabilities to serve international transfer passengers by enlarging the current Helsinki Airport terminal with 80,000 square meters. The key design drivers of the major investment are improved travel experience, environmental issues and energy efficiency. Finavia is committed in utilizing the results of Travellab when planning the details of this significant investment.[3]

- Currently, Finavia management diversely utilizes the tools, results and multiple findings and experiences Travellab provided. The core aim of Finavia management is to speed up their internal service development processes and to provide better and more desirable customer experiences.

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[1] https://www.finavia.fi/fi/tiedottaminen/ajankohtaista/2015/alkuvuoden-lentoliikenteen-matkustajamaarat-edellisvuoden-tasolla/

[2] http://www.sleepinginairports.net/2014/best-airports.htm

[3] https://www.finavia.fi/fi/tiedottaminen/ajankohtaista/2015/helsinkivantaan-terminaalilaajennuksen-suunnittelu-kaynnissa/