Lufthansa's Innovative Self-Service Bag Drop Kiosks Designer: Interview with German Professor and Friend of UACU Stephan Schupbach

To what extent does the design of industrial products take user requirements into account. The interview with Stephan Schupbach, Professor of Design at Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany, was conducted at Frankfurt am Main International Airport
by Prof. Dr. h.c. Moritz Hunzinger, Honorary Professor at Ukrainian-American Concordia University.

M. Hunzinger
Hello Prof. Schupbach, we are here at an almost empty terminal at Frankfurt Airport at Lufthansa. Obviously, Coronavirus did a great job here. How are you holding up during this crisis?

S. Schupbach
Dear Prof. Hunzinger. First of all, my sincere gratitude to you and your team for meeting us here at the airport in these memorable times and yes, not only Lufthansa, and other top companies, but also us designers are shaken up quite well. I am particularly sorry for Lufthansa's current position, since I have had close relationship with this great brand for almost thirty years. In the 90s, together with my then business partner Prof. Dr. Bernhard E. Bürdek during my first projects for self-service ticketing, and then, from 2005, together with Peter Schmidt Group brand and design agency, as part of the development of Lufthansa's design principles and a few years later, I have resigned from the Board of Directors of Peter Schmidt Group and serve as a professor at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, owing to design development of the self-service terminals with baggage drop-off, near which we are now standing.

M. Hunzinger
These self-service bag drop kiosks, how we call them now, are complex products design development of which certainly has to take a number of factors into account. Am I correct?

S. Schupbach
You see that absolutely correct. Not only functional factors such as robustness, user-friendliness, security aspects and specific factors in use in the so-called semi-public area play

a role here, but also a whole range of other aspects. So, the user is always the focus of our work. It is always about him and his age, nationality, i.e. his language, his body measurements and his sex surely will not be a handicap for the use of the baggage claim. Families with children also use the service independently, which means that special safety aspects must also be taken into account. Who wants their child to disappear into the airport's luggage catacombs instead of their suitcases? Here, of course, we apply extremely high security standards in design development.

In addition to the functional factors, there are also design-specific factors. Keywords here are Product Semantic, which helps us users to recognize the product as what it is, namely a self-service baggage drop-off, in order to then understand how to use it. We are here at Lufthansa. That is of course another important aspect. The design features of Lufthansa must be reflected in the product. As a customer, I need to know that this self-service baggage drop-off is a product of this airline and not a competitor's product. These design features are incorporated in the design guidelines already mentioned. Design style guidelines, in which the details of the design with regard to the brand strategy of the company are listed and which are used as a basis for creative work for the company. In addition, these design development processes are, of course, carried out in close cooperation with everyone involved, of course also on the part of the company, in this case with the Lufthansa corporate design department.

M. Hunzinger
Prof. Schupbach, since I am a teaching professor myself, my next question is: You teach design at two renowned German universities. In Frankfurt am Main and in Aalen in Baden Württemberg. Can you also briefly tell us about this? Do the students learn from you how to design correctly?

S. Schupbach
Now there is actually no industry and no area in which design does not matter. Think of consumer goods such as a soft drink, of durable consumer goods such as television, or your motor vehicle, capital goods such as machines, or here, the baggage claim, components for the capital goods industry, e.g. instrument carriers for the automotive industry, services such as Deutsche Lufthansa or Deutsche Bahn or purely intangible products such as software products such as apps on your smartphone, or your software for video conferencing these days. A certain specialization is of course important in the design of all these industries and areas, of course a fashion designer and a user interface designer have different expertise and in particular a great deal of knowledge about the user in all its facets, possibilities and values. User is always the focus of development. Regardless of demographic data, such as age, income, marital status, confession etc., play a role for us today in the development of a design strategy, so-called psychographic aspects; aspects that give me information about the

values of individual target groups and can thus serve as the basis for positioning models. Different models are known, including the so-called "product semantics room", which I helped to develop and which is used today as a model by well-known, internationally active companies as a positioning matrix for their design strategy.

This, as well as implementation of knowledge in specific forms, in specific design, are the teaching content of my professorship and my teaching at the two universities. My focus here is on technical products, often from the capital goods sector, just like here with baggage drop-off for Lufthansa. This is also the reason why I do not teach at a classic arts college, but at the two universities in Frankfurt and Aalen; on the one hand with engineering scientists and on the other hand with economists.

It is important to me in my teaching that, in addition to the functional factors mentioned, students also learn the SoftFacts just described and always put the user at the center of their considerations in their later projects.

Ultimately, it's about designing rational and emotional quality. Here for Deutsche Lufthansa and maybe tomorrow for another great brand.

M. Hunzinger
Prof. Schupbach, thank you very much for this interesting conversation and continued success in design and your teaching at the universities in these crazy Coronavirus times.

Prof. Dipl. Des. Stephan Schupbach
teaches brand and design sciences at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences and Aalen University, also read lectures at Ukrainian-American Concordia University. Author of numerous scientific articles and co-author of important guidelines; advisor to prominent organizations in German business and university education. Under his leadership, projects were created for a large number of international companies. As part of his contributions to European education policy, Prof. Schupbach received the highest honors.

Checking in baggage at the self-service bag drop kiosks – how it works:

1. Scan the barcode of your boarding pass on the scanner. Please make sure that the backlight of your mobile phone is on if you are using a mobile boarding pass.
2. Check the booking information that appears on the screen and press 'Check in baggage' if all the details are correct.
3. Place your first piece of baggage on the conveyor belt.
4. The self-adhesive bag tag is printed automatically.
5. Attach the tag to your baggage item.
6. Confirm the removal of your baggage. You can now check in your other items of baggage.