



Understanding interaction with animals as a way to relieve stress at airports

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Abstract

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<p>Often, running an airport is presented as running a city in the role of its mayor. Like a city, an airport includes a large number of facilities, users, workers, systems, rules, and standards. One of the main problems in the operation of the airport terminal is to meet all the most important needs of a wide range of passengers. Airport operators combine a wide range of services and technologies to fulfill their role in the air transport industry.</p> <p>For many, air travel remains a source of stress. To cope with stress, many passengers resort to alcohol or drugs, which can be very risky. Airports are constantly developing new ways to spend time for passengers who are used to being constantly connected or working even while traveling.</p> <p>The thesis addresses the problem of air travel stress and ways of coping with it. The thesis' purpose is to analyze factors that cause stress among passengers of airports. The aim of the thesis is to suggest an alternative method of relieving air travel related stress, and to receive feedback from potential passengers by means of interview.</p> <p>The thesis discusses factors causing air travel related stress and ways passengers chose to cope with it. This research mainly uses qualitative research in a form of interview. The research was done during June 2022 with potential passengers who regularly travel by plane. Main research questions in this thesis were: How potential passengers would perceive such stress relief method at an airport as Pets Unstressing Passengers Program? In what way animals, - dogs, in particular, - would be able to help passengers to cope with their stress before flight?</p> <p>The research process required the study of a large amount of information on the topic of stress, its appearances and consequences, as well as ways to deal with the stress associated with air travel. The use of specially trained dogs as a way to reduce stress at the airport is considered and justified in details in the thesis project.</p> <p>The information obtained during the interviews led to the conclusion that potential passengers generally have a positive attitude towards such an alternative method of relieving stress as communication with animals (in this study, with dogs). The research results also brought up a low awareness of potential passengers about such services, as well as about what exactly they are and how they are provided.</p>
Keywords Air travel, air travel stress, therapy dogs, interaction with animals, Pets Unstressing Passengers

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1 Introduction

Often, running an airport is presented as running a city in the role of its mayor. Like a city, an airport includes a large number of facilities, users, workers, systems, rules, and standards. And just as trade and commerce have an impact on the prosperity of a city, an airport becomes successful due to its ability to be a location through which both passengers and cargo travel to and from other destination airports. Moreover, just as cities are part of a country's economy, an airport is part of a national airport system. (Young & Wells 2011, 4.)

One of the main problems in the operation of the airport terminal is to meet all the most important needs of a wide range of passengers. It is wrong to think that virtually every passenger out of 1 billion passengers traveling annually on commercial airlines has the same needs and wants similar itineraries. Passengers can be divided into several categories, some of which include the type of itinerary, the purpose of travel, group size, type of baggage carried and type of ticket, and whether it is a domestic or international passengers. Each passenger, due to the nature of the different categories they may fall into, needs certain means known as basic processing facilities within the terminal area. Understanding each of these needs on an individual basis, along with understanding how these needs interact, is in itself essential to the successful operation of the terminal. (Young & Wells 2011, 254.)

Airport operators combine a wide range of services and technologies to fulfill their role in the air transport industry. Many of these services are related to terminal services, such as ground handling facilities, which are the link for passengers, their baggage, and cargo between the terminals and the airfield. There is now also a growing number of commercial properties, including hotels, conference rooms, entertainment centers, and business areas located outside the terminal. Outside the airport terminal, there is also the development of ground transportation to and from the airport, including car parks, access roads, and direct access links such as taxis or direct rail. (Graham 2014, 137.)

Despite this, for many, air travel remains a source of stress. For example, in a survey conducted by CPP, a third of 2,000 British respondents said that the experience of being at the airport caused them more stress than a working week, and a quarter of respondents considered it even more stressful than moving to a new place. (Finavia Corporation 2018).

Airlines are vigilant about passenger safety, so control begins at the entrance. The very first action that you need to take when you arrive at the airport is to check-in. As soon as the registration is passed, you need to proceed to the next point - pre-flight control. Pre-flight control, in which all passengers pass before being in the hall where everyone is waiting for their flight. At this stage, passengers' luggage is thoroughly checked. If security personnel have questions about the contents of the luggage, they will have to open it. In addition to scanning things, the passengers themselves, who need to go through the metal detector, are also searched. Moreover, belts, watches, and mobile phones must be left on the scanner tape. Sometimes security personnel can ask to remove their shoes. (Vox 2018.)

The airport is a rather complex system that has its laws. Often, arriving at the airport in advance, many passengers appear in the landing area at the very last moment. This can happen for several reasons. For example, the passenger did not take into account the time he will spend in queues and what he will spend on overcoming distances at the airport. Taught by bitter experience, with their next journey, passenger leaves for the airport even earlier, which, as a result, ends, on the contrary, with a few hours of waiting. So how do you find a middle ground? It can be assumed that the larger the airport, the longer it will take to overcome all obstacles. It is also worth taking into account whether there is a transfer to another flight or not. All this can help reduce stress levels.

Many passengers, stressed at the airport before flying, prefer to cope with it with alcohol or drugs, which can lead to dire consequences. According to IATA, in 33% of cases of inappropriate passenger behavior, alcoholic beverages or drugs were to blame. The use of sleeping pills during a flight can also lead to unpredictable con-

sequences, as the body may react unusually to atypical altitude and pressure inside the aircraft cabin. (Vox 2018.) To top it all off, Covid-19 has changed the daily routine of airports, potentially making it harder to stay inside terminals. Even before the pandemic, passengers needed to study a large number of instructions, provide the necessary information to pass all the checks, as well as figure out how to get to the correct terminal and the correct gate. The new rules and processes brought about by Covid-19 have become new stressors. (Condé Nast Traveler 2021.)

So how to deal with all this? Airports are constantly developing new ways to spend time for passengers who are used to being constantly connected or working even while traveling. For starters, airports have installed sleeping pods so that passengers can relax in a free-standing capsule. At Heathrow Airport, workstations called 'think pods' have been installed in the new Terminal 5 on the territory of the business center. Gatwick Airport has installed a workspace of four square meters size. (Future Travel Experience 2014.)

O'Hare International Airport in Chicago invites its passengers to use a special room where they can study yoga while waiting for a flight and thereby relieve stress. Helsinki Airport has opened an entire recreation space with comfortable chairs and cocoons for sleeping; creating a special atmosphere that helps to feel the culture of Finland. At Munich Airport, passengers can also use the reclining seats and a complex of workstations in the waiting room, the entrance to which is free. At Dallas Airport, tired passengers are invited to use a sleep center that has nine sleep pods. These capsules can be booked for one hour or spent in them all night. (Future Travel Experience 2014.) A common feature of the above services provided by airports is the need to find their location on the airport site. Some of them must be paid for. However, there is another comfortable and completely free way to cope with stress.

At Los Angeles Air Harbor, specially trained dogs help passengers relieve stress and tension while waiting for a flight. Los Angeles airport workers have found a way to help their passengers. They hired therapy dogs as one of the most effective

ways to reduce stress levels is to interact with animals. Dogs of various breeds calm down aerophobes, as when they see animals they experience positive emotions, and when they play with them, they are distracted from their fears and do not think about them. (TV channel Dog and Cat 2017.)

The thesis' purpose is to analyze factors that cause stress among passengers of airports. The thesis aims to offer an alternative method of relieving air travel-related stress and to receive feedback from potential passengers through interviews. The author of the thesis also intends to answer the following research questions:

- How potential passengers would perceive such a stress relief method at an airport as the Pets Unstressing Passengers Program?
- In what way animals, - dogs, in particular, - would be able to help passengers to cope with their stress before a flight?

2 Airport Services

In the recent past, most airports offered a rather limited range of products and services to airlines, passengers, and other users, and the range of these services did not depend on the specific needs of different market segments and consumer groups. Some segmentation has occurred at airports through service differentiation, limited to separate check-in counters for business and economy passengers, and more distant aircraft for charter passengers. Then the level of segmentation increased when business class passengers were able to check in faster than other passengers. At the same time, premium and frequent flyer lounges have become more popular. However, despite all this development, the main focus was still directed to the airport, which provides a full range of services in one place for all consumer groups. However, in recent times the power of competition has forced airports to pay much more attention to differentiating their services to meet the demands and needs of different market segments. At the same time, the range of airline models has become much more diverse (for instance, alliance members, and freight specialists). (Graham 2014, 178.)

Several factors influence the provision of a good level of service at airports. Demand is usually very uneven. At many airports, the terminal will look and feel very different on a quiet Tuesday in the winter compared to a busy summer Saturday during the school holidays. Also, the passenger traffic in the early morning or evening will be much larger than at other times of the day. This plays one of the most important roles in the process of perception of the quality of services offered to passengers. (Graham 2014, 219.)

A clear understanding of the quality of services provided and the factors that contribute to a positive passenger experience is essential for airports to understand the demand of current and future customers (Graham 2014, 219).

2.1 Airport Customers

The center of any marketing system is the consumer, so a thorough understanding of the consumer is essential to the effective planning of a marketing strategy in the later stages of the marketing process. There are a large number of markets that airports interact with. Each market includes consumers with specific needs, which must be satisfied through the combination of tangible and intangible products and services that the airport offers. These include passengers, airlines, tour operators, tour agents, freight carriers, and visitors. More broadly, other business customers such as ground handlers and retailers use the airport product in part to sell their services and pay for them with fees or rental payments. Such customers are also considered consumers of airport services. Airport employees also contribute to the product, but at the same time, they act as consumers when entities such as retail are involved in the process. (Halpern & Graham 2013, 45.)

Having identified the main consumer of airport services, it is necessary to evaluate his behavior concerning the factors that can influence the choice of airport. For any consumer, choosing an airport is the result of a complex decision-making process. For airline passengers (as well as tour operators), one of the most important factors is the size of the coverage area. Depending on the type of route under consideration, the attractiveness of the coverage area for business and leisure customers, as well as the characteristics and purchasing power of those within the coverage area, is a key consideration. The possibility of transporting goods on passenger flights should also be considered. If an airline plans to develop a hub, it should target central geographic locations according to the markets it plans to serve. (Halpern & Graham 2013, 48.)

“Airport customer experience can be defined as how a customer perceives their interaction with an airport as the sum of all the interactions that a passenger has with the entire airport community” (ACI 2020). These interactions may occur in person, online, at self-service points, or through other channels. This all reinforces the criti-

cal moment - also known as the moment of truth - that creates the overall consumer experience. (ACI 2020.)

In recent years, the competitiveness of the aviation industry has increased significantly. As a result of this, many airlines chose to focus their efforts on pricing rather than customer service. Airports later found themselves in this niche. Currently, airports appear to be a more complex competitive structure. One of the main characteristics that distinguish one airport from another is the customer experience. The previous and real experience of its passengers has a direct impact on the image of the airport. (ACI 2020.)

Finding themselves at the airport, passengers gain world experience. The assessment of the airport occurs when passengers use its various services, for example, domestic and international flights, arrivals and departures, and visits shops and restaurants on the airport site. (ACI 2020.) The following figure shows the experience that passengers live through while travelling through an airport.

One experience – One Brand – One Airport



Figure 1. Customers' evaluation of the quality of an airport (ACI 2020).

2.2 Airport Customer Journey

To understand what exactly contributes to increasing the level of customer satisfaction, the airport needs to understand which point in the customer journey contributes the most. This information will allow the airport to decide which investments need to be made. One way to do this is with a customer travel map, which allows for determining where the customer is most satisfied. On the other hand, the focus throughout the customer journey makes it possible to create strong ties between all interested parties. (ACI 2020.) Visualizing a potential customer journey helps create a unified vision of this process within the team. This also helps to improve the marketing strategy and make the necessary decision when changing the action plan.

“The customer journey in marketing refers to the customer’s path, via touchpoints, to their decision to purchase an item” (Digital Marketing Encyclopedia 2021). The consumer usually does not decide to purchase a product as soon as he learns about its existence for the first time. Most often, a consumer studies a product or brand for some time before deciding to purchase it. In marketing, this is called touchpoints. So the customer journey goes through similar touchpoints. (Digital Marketing Encyclopedia 2021.)

A touchpoint is any interaction between a brand and a consumer at any point along the customer journey. These individual touchpoints can influence the consumer's perception of the brand, and each, in turn, presents an opportunity to take it along the customer journey. (Emplifi 2020.) With this, expectations, fears and barriers that a potential client may have are manifested.

At many airports, touch points on the customer journey can be a pre-flight control service, retailers, and other service providers. This suggests that not all of them are under the direct control of the airport. Thanks to such third-party service providers, the quality of passenger service began to improve, if earlier the airport management could not attach much importance to cooperation with them, then in recent years, the level of interaction with service providers has increased significantly. It

was found that the increase in customer satisfaction has a positive effect on non-aviation revenues. (ACI 2020.)

Excellence in customer service occurs when an airport's ability to exceed customer needs and expectations is consistently aligned with the customer's perception that their needs and expectations are being met. Thus, customer satisfaction can be defined as the result of customer experience compared to customer expectations. Customer service management includes the strategies and actions taken to influence the consumer experience. An important part of the customer experience management process is customer service. (Boudreau, Detmer, Tam, Box & Burke 2016, 20.)

Although there are many parties involved in the provision of services at an airport, from the consumer's point of view, it is a single entity. Often, consumers do not know or do not attach importance to who is responsible for each link in the process of providing services. Consumers expect their airport experience to be easy, hassle-free, and somewhat entertaining, no matter who is in charge of providing the service. (Boudreau & al. 2016, 20.)

Creating a great customer experience in an airport atmosphere is a challenge. And the reason, as mentioned earlier, is the presence of many responsible for this process. While any service provider may be held responsible for a negative experience, airport customers and the media generally always pin the blame on the airport authorities. (Boudreau & al. 2016, 20.)

Realizing this reality has helped many US airports become customer-centric:

- At the executive level of the airport administration, along with the integration of strategic and holistic management;
- Through facility designs, operating and maintenance protocols, service offerings, amenities, and technology use;

- Through the involvement of airport staff and their approach to customer service; and
- In their interaction with business partners and stakeholders in a complex and interdependent service environment where transactions and collaboration are critical. (Boudreau & al. 2016, 20.)

Over the past 15 years, there have been significant changes in the way managers see customers. Today, many leaders among airport operators have become more experienced in creating superior customer experiences. They began to realize that if airport management were to take a strategic approach to understand the customer experience process and also embrace the brand that serves customers at the airport, customer satisfaction with the airport experience would be significantly higher and non-aeronautical profits would increase in a direct relationship with customer satisfaction. (Boudreau & al. 2016, 21.)

Simply put, great service and increased customer satisfaction is the best business strategy. The interdependent nature of airport service delivery requires a strategic, holistic approach. Such an approach typically involves senior management of airport operators seeking to develop a customer-centric vision in collaboration with the airport community, utilizing the relationship between vision, brand, and airport service delivery strategy. Some airports call their brand a customer service charter. The first step in building a customer-centric airport is to define an airport service brand that aligns with the service delivery strategy. (Boudreau & al. 2016, 21.)

The global aviation system is a network structure and is crucial for building public confidence around the world.

Aviation itself is an industry focused on meeting the needs of its customers. Passengers want a unique and efficient experience at every touchpoint on their itinerary, from booking and check-in to security screening and baggage claim at the destination airport. Increasing passenger traffic over the next 20 years will ensure that

the provision of a personalized experience will benefit passengers and facilitate more efficient use of airport infrastructure to meet emerging demand. (IATA 2017.)

Touchpoints can arise both online and offline, whether or not they are within brand control (Emplifi 2020).

Channels where interactions can take place along the customer journey:

- Website
- On location
- Phone/call center
- Email
- Social media
- Word-of-mouth
- Mobile app
- Review sites
- SMS

The number of touchpoints and the time spent on each stage of the customer journey can vary depending on many factors. Such factors include:

- Customer preferences (how the consumer prefers to make purchases, contact support, etc.)
- Relevance and significance of the goal (e.g., purchasing a car vs. purchasing a pen)
- The channels through which companies choose to interact with customers (Emplifi 2020.)

2.3 A Service-Centered View of the Customer Experience

Doing business in the 21st century is becoming an exciting process. The reason for this is that every aspect of the market is subject to transformation. Thanks to new technologies, new opportunities appear in the market, and new organizations are formed, which sometimes behave very defiantly in the market. Consumer preferences also change very quickly. Organizations must pay attention to creating interactions with customers that can build strong relationships, as everyone faces competitive pressures in a dynamic marketplace. In this atmosphere, many business experts have adopted a customer-centric way of working because they believe that services, as opposed to products, are fundamental to market exchange. This way of doing business allows them to focus on the needs of the client and the relationship between the consumer and the organization. Traditionally, services have been defined as deeds, activities, or performances. However, nowadays managers often perceive their organizations as creating services for consumers, helping them build strong relationships with these organizations. (Bolton 2016, 1.)

What is a customer experience? This refers to the sensory, cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral characteristics of all activities that connect the consumer and the organization even after time, including all touchpoints and channels for obtaining services (for example, business-to-business, business-to-consumer, and consumer-to-consumer). This definition includes all activities in which a consumer is the object of an organization, including pre-purchases (e.g. displaying ads, browsing a website), purchasing behavior, consumer behavior, engagement (blogging, posting photos), and other activities that do not relate to the purchase. Figure depicts the scope of the customer experience, which includes all the elements that come from the offer. (Bolton 2016, 6.) The figure shows the range of experience that a customer has at an airport including all products and services that this airport has to offer.

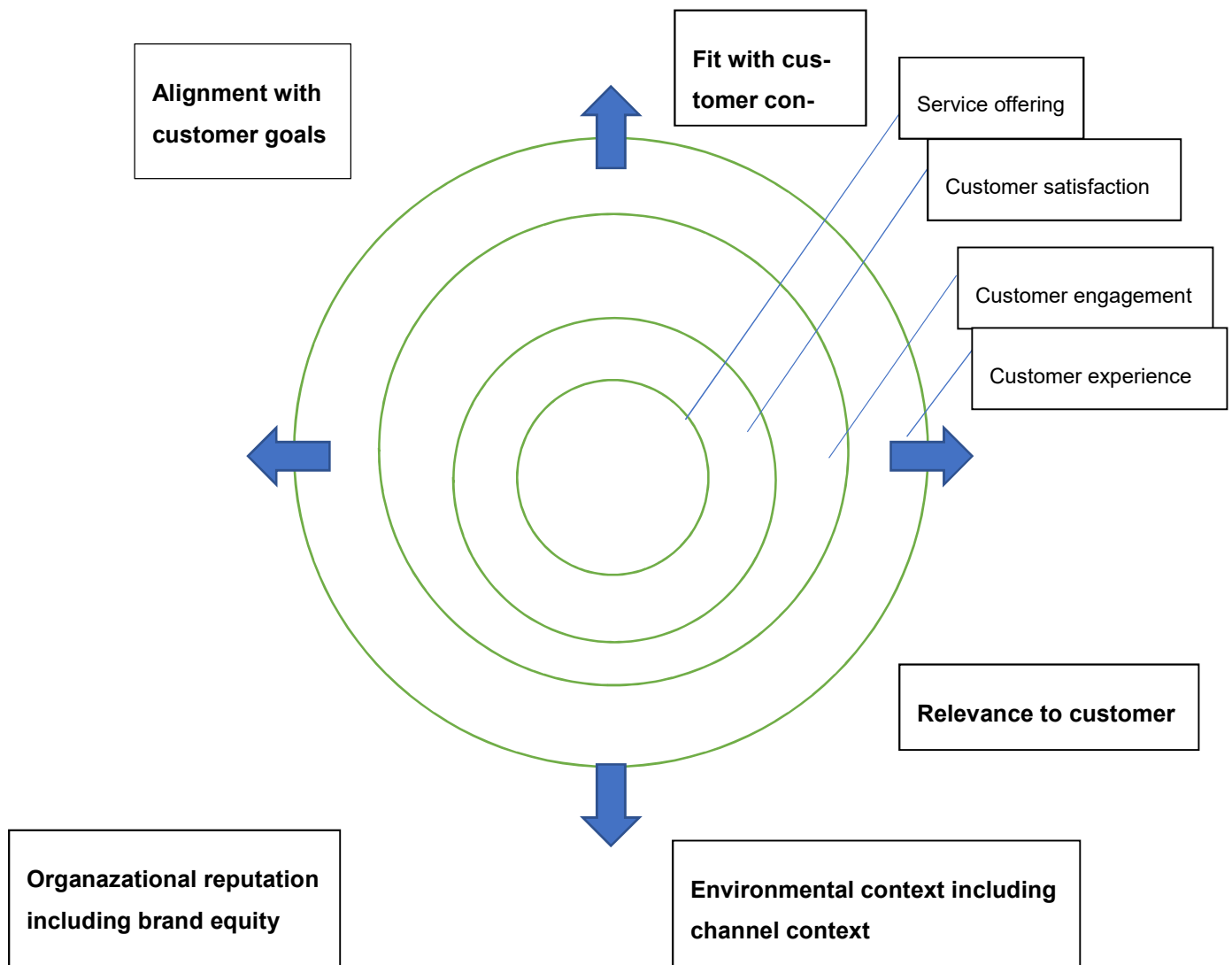


Figure 2. The customer experience (Bolton 2016, 7).

An organization must build excellent relationships with customers, as customers are cash flows. Thus, business success is based on co-creation. The organization creates an experience together with the consumer, which helps to build relationships between this organization and the consumer, and these relationships turn into financial flows for the organization. Customer experience is the basis for such creative processes. (Bolton 2016, 7.)

2.3.1 Passenger experience at an airport

An airport product must meet the needs of a very diverse range of passengers unless the offer includes a specialized product or an entire terminal. Some passengers need to go through all the stages of check-in at the airport as quickly as possi-

ble and do it without any obstacles. Other passengers want to enjoy the opportunity to visit shops and cafes. The needs of business travelers may differ from those of leisure travelers. It may even happen that the same passenger will have different needs for different trips - for recreation, business trip, or family weekend trip. (SITA 2012.)

In the process of assessing the quality of airport services in recent years, there has been a change in focus on the experience received by passengers. This process includes consideration of various aspects. However, the main focus is on consideration of those aspects that are significant for passengers. For example, the proportion of passengers who received the service, rather than simple service delivery standards, or the assessment of key services by different providers. Airport operators need to understand what are the main drivers influencing the passenger experience and their satisfaction with the airport. (SITA 2012.)

In a 2012 survey of 6 of the world's major airports - Abu Dhabi, Atlanta, Beijing, Frankfurt, Mumbai, and Sao Paulo - it was surprising that some stages of the journey are more stressful for passengers than others. The highest level of stress is caused by security checks, as answered by 31% of respondents. In second place were flights with transfers and regular delivery and collection of luggage. 44% of respondents answered that the main cause of stress for them was the loss of time and the fear of missing their flight. 11% experienced stress due to unexpected changes, 8% due to lack of control over what is happening, and 7% due to lack of information. (SITA 2012.)

Other causes of stress at the airport include time differences, language barriers (when it comes to foreign passengers), and cultural differences. In the case of solo travel (for example, a business trip), many passengers miss their family and the usual way of life.

A similar study was carried out for Amadeus, which found that the main problem was waiting too long in line to pass the security check. In the second and third places, there were problems related to airlines (flight availability, as well as flight

cancellations and reschedules), and too long waiting in line for check-in and baggage check-in. (Amadeus, 2011.) Linking passenger satisfaction with service quality measurement can provide a deeper understanding of the passenger experience (Graham 2014, 174).

3 Managing stress at airports

3.1 Definition of stress

“Stress is the feeling of being overwhelmed or unable to cope with mental or emotional pressure sure” (Mental Health Foundation 2021). Stress can be caused by a large number of life situations and events. Stress is often associated with the onset of a new life experience, something unexpected or something that threatens our sense of self, or when we feel like we are losing control of a situation. (Mental Health Foundation 2021.)

Everyone deals with stress in their way. Our ability to cope with stressful situations may depend on our genetics, early childhood events, our personality, and socioeconomic circumstances. When we encounter stress, our body responds by producing stress hormones and activating the immune system. This helps us respond quickly to a dangerous situation. Sometimes such a stress response can be beneficial: it can help us cope with fear or pain, and we can, for example, run a marathon or give a speech. Stress hormones bounce back fairly quickly after the stressful event ends and there are no lasting effects. Though, too much stress can have destructive consequences. This can cause us to remain in the fight-or-flight phase for extended periods, overwhelmed, or depriving us of the ability to cope with a stressful situation. In the longer term, this can affect our physical and mental health. (Mental Health Foundation 2021.)

3.2 Factors influencing stress

Feelings of stress are normally triggered by things happening in your life that involve:

- being under lots of pressure
- facing big changes
- worrying about something
- not having much or any control over the outcome of a situation
- having responsibilities that you're finding overwhelming

- not having enough work, activities, or change in your life
- times of uncertainty.

Stress can be caused by one big event or several smaller ones. It is this circumstance that can make it difficult to determine what exactly caused stress and explain it to other people. (Mind 2022.)

The amount of stress you feel in different situations may depend on many factors such as:

- personal perception of the situation - this can be related to past experiences, self-image, and personal idea of how things should happen (for example, whether the person perceives everything that happens in a positive or negative way)
- how experienced a particular person is in how to deal with this particular situation
- your emotional resilience to stressful situations
- the amount of other pressures on you at the time
- the amount of support you are receiving.

Everyone is different, so a situation that does not bother one person at all can cause a lot of stress for another. For example, some people have high self-esteem and easily give speeches in public, feeling comfortable and even enjoying it. However, if the person is feeling down or usually prefers not to be the center of attention, this situation can cause stress. (Mind 2022.)

3.3 Signs of Stress

We all experience stress differently in different situations. Sometimes a person can immediately tell that he is stressed, but sometimes he can continue to do his usual activities, not even suspecting that he is already showing signs of stress. Stress can affect both the physical state of a person and the mental, as well as his behavior. (Mind 2022.)

How you might feel

- irritable, aggressive, impatient, or wound up
- over-burdened
- anxious, nervous, or afraid
- like your thoughts are racing and you can't switch off
- unable to enjoy yourself
- depressed
- uninterested in life
- like you've lost your sense of humor
- a sense of dread
- worried about your health
- neglected or lonely.
- Some people who experience severe stress can sometimes have suicidal feelings (Mind 2022.)

How you might be physically affected

- shallow breathing or hyperventilating
- you might have a panic attack
- muscle tension
- blurred eyesight or sore eyes
- difficulty falling asleep, staying awake or having nightmares
- sexual problems, such as losing interest in sex or being unable to enjoy sex
- tired all the time
- grinding your teeth or clenching your jaw
- headaches
- chest pains
- high blood pressure
- indigestion or heartburn
- constipation or diarrhea

- feeling sick, dizzy, or fainting (Mind 2022.)

3.4 Travel stress

Usually, travel brings joy to our lives, but sometimes it can cause stress. Lack of familiar support systems, the distraction of daily routines, language barriers, culture shock, and other unforeseen situations can greatly increase stress levels. Travel often reduces the level of control: it affects perception, reveals personal boundaries, and can change the way of thinking, mood, behavior, and reaction. (IAMAT 2020.)

Stress is the body's natural response to a threat or danger, whether real or imagined. Travel stress is associated with dissatisfaction or problems on the trip. A certain amount of stress is an integral part of everyday life, but the problems that a traveler faces on the road, no matter how big or small, can become intractable in new unfamiliar conditions. (IAMAT 2020.)

Travel stress varies from person to person and depends on previous experiences, new situations, worries about things not going according to plan, and fears about unforeseen circumstances (IAMAT 2020).

Signs of stress include:

- Difficulty concentrating or thinking clearly
- Irritability
- Fatigue
- Dizziness or nausea
- Rapid heart rate
- Headaches or muscle tension
- Shortness of breath

Stress during travel can be triggered or exacerbated by existing mental disorders. Even if the traveler has no prior history of psychiatric illness, changes in mood,

substance abuse, and severe anxiety can potentially lead to trip disruption. The key to traveling safely is recognizing warning signs early and being aware of where to get help in a new location. (IAMAT 2020.)

3.5 Air travel stress

The current model of stress assessment has a significant impact on the perception of situations in which passengers have to go beyond their capabilities and feel helpless. Since stress includes an element of subjectivity, it is difficult to determine whether an air travel situation is perceived as stressful depending on the beliefs and personal assessments of passengers. (Bricker 2005, 616.)

The stress experienced by passengers during a flight causes strong emotional reactions, including anxiety and anger. Components of anxiety can be worried about possible negative effects in the future, as well as somatic manifestations such as heart palpitations. Passengers may feel stressed when a flight is rescheduled, nervous when they are late, or worried about a passenger doing something dangerous on the plane. Situations associated with air travel can provoke the manifestation of various forms of aggressive behavior. Among the components of anger are the state of passion, hostile thoughts, aggressive intentions, and physical arousal. In a situation where passengers perceive the behavior of other passengers or the actions of airline or airport personnel in a negative light, they may experience irritation and resentment because this situation threatens their safety and comfort. A passenger with hostile thoughts may perceive the behavior of other passengers as being rude. (Bricker 2005, 616.)

It is also interesting to note here that men and women respond to stress in different ways. This also determines the different behavior of women and men in a situation of stress. A man tries to overcome a stressful situation, defeat it or avoid it. A woman in such a situation takes care of her children and seeks to find the support of society.

Some people are afraid of airplanes. Because of this, they often sacrifice a fast and comfortable flight for a long and exhausting train ride or even forego vacations or business trips abroad. Why does aerophobia occur and is it possible to cope with it? (RIAMO 2021.)

The International Civil Aviation Organization, an agency operating within the United Nations, states that aircraft is the safest means of transport. The probability that a particular passenger will die during a flight is only 1/8,000,000. This is significantly lower than the risk associated with cars and rail transport. However, a large number of people travel fearlessly on trains, cars, buses, and motorcycles, but suffer from a strong irrational fear of airplanes. (RIAMO 2021.)

Fear of flying, or aerophobia, is a disorder in which a person experiences fear and discomfort during air travel. The symptoms of this disorder are very diverse: anxiety, suspicion, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, heart palpitations, and panic attacks. Moreover, these symptoms can appear not only on the plane but also on the eve of the flight. Aerophobia affects people of different ages, life experiences, and social statuses. Therefore, psychologists believe that irrational fear of aircraft is not always associated with flight safety, but also with internal psychological problems. (RIAMO 2021.)

For example, some psychologists believe that the cause of aerophobia lies in a lack of trust in the outside world, perfectionism, and hyper-control. Being inside the plane, a person must completely trust the technology and pilots, while in the car he manages everything himself. Thus, in the event of an unforeseen situation, the passenger of the aircraft becomes completely helpless. Some aerophobes are not afraid of the flight itself, but of what can happen to them on the plane. For example, in the event of a heart attack, internal hemorrhage, or a detached blood clot, it will be impossible to quickly get qualified medical care. (RIAMO 2021.)

3.5.1 Solutions for decreasing stress before departure

On the Internet one can find hundreds of tips on how to mentally prepare for a flight. For example, reading a book or listening to music, watching a favorite TV show, or talking about something pleasant with a neighbor. It can help to take your mind off negative thoughts. (RIAMO 2021.)

Experts advise aerophobes not to resort to alcohol. Contrary to popular belief, alcohol will not help relieve tension and cope with stress. On the other hand, any alcoholic drink sharpens the senses and reduces self-control, which means that fear and panic attacks can only get worse. Sedative drugs should also be taken with caution and only on the advice of a doctor, otherwise they can provoke unpredictable reactions - overexcitation of the nervous system. (RIAMO 2021.)

In any case, you need to understand that advice from the Internet only works if the fear of flying has not had time to cover the whole mind. If a person is not able to cope with his inner feelings, there is only one way out - to get the help of a specialist. (RIAMO 2021.)

3.5.2 Safely Clearing Security

There is no better way to increase your stress level than to enter the airport and see the line for security checks. Add to that the worry that a security agent says you need to unpack all your electronic devices, take off your shoes and coat, and walk through the gate like that. (The New York Times 2018.)

The only way to avoid such queues is to arrive at the airport well in advance. This opportunity may vary depending on the size of the airport and the passenger's comfort level; however, one should arrive at an airport at least ninety minutes in advance for local flights and three hours for international flights. (The New York Times 2018.)

Another way out is to purchase an individual pass through the security service. This is a separate line where the verification process is in an accelerated mode. To do this, you must fill out an online application, pass a personal interview, be fingerprinted, and pay \$85. This status is valid for five years from the date of approval and allows passengers to keep their laptops and toiletries out of their luggage, as well as keep their shoes and clothes on during checks. According to the agency, in April 2018, 92% of passengers with this status spent less than five minutes in line. (The New York Times 2018.)

3.5.3 Inclusive solutions

Many travelers are subject to anxiety and confusion. Inclusive solutions are designed to help deal with this. Such solutions will be able to help the passenger calm down at the stage of preparation for traveling home. For example, a traveler can watch special videos showing the work of various airport services. By viewing them, the passenger will be able to feel in a familiar environment upon arrival at the airport and experience less stress from an unfamiliar situation. Specially trained airport staff can perform an observer role and identify passengers who need assistance or support. Such passengers include those who are overly excited, aggressive, or disoriented, as well as passengers with disabilities. (Passenger Terminal Today 2020.)

Areas offering sensory solutions to help passengers can be located throughout the airport in different locations. These can be musical touch walls, opto-fiber elements, mesmerizing tubes with bubbles, special seats, etc. In such places, passengers can independently control the level of their involvement. For people with disabilities, for example, in a situation where the flight time is postponed, an active game can help to calm down. It is also important to take into account the opinion of passengers about what exactly and in which zones of the airport such solutions should be applied. To extend the soothing experience for the duration of the flight, there are also portable touch kits. (Passenger Terminal Today 2020.)

Passengers continue to be well informed about how airports create a positive environment. This applies especially to those with disabilities and their families, who research, support, and promote accessibility. Airports that embrace a fresh and inclusive approach to stress and anxiety reduction stand out as airports that value every passenger and prioritize a unique customer experience. (Passenger Terminal Today 2020.)

3.5.4 Nature experience

In an attempt to reduce the stress levels of passengers traveling through the airport, Helsinki Airport has introduced a new natural experience that aims to counteract the hectic environment of airports (International Airport Review 2020).

Numerous studies have shown that spending time in nature has a positive effect on well-being, and walking in the forest helps reduce stress levels. An initiative called The Helsinki Airport: Metsä/Skogen, a wellness center driven by the power of the Finnish forest aims to bring this natural experience directly to passengers. (International Airport Review 2020.)

Thanks to this initiative at Helsinki Airport, passengers can now enjoy a wide range of eco-friendly design products and scents from the Finnish forest. This place is designed specifically for relaxation and tranquility. Here, for example, you can take a virtual walk through the forest. (International Airport Review 2020.)

3.5.5 Therapy dogs at airports

Pets Unstressing Passengers (PUP) Program

Communicating with pets can increase the level of service for passengers, relieving them of stress. This experience is offered by the LAX Pets Unstressing Passengers (PUP) program. The essence of this program is that volunteers with dogs go to the departure area of the airport, providing passengers not only to communicate with animals for a more comfortable waiting for the flight but also providing them with the

necessary information about the work of various airport services. Volunteers and therapy dogs are easily recognized by red T-shirts and vests with the program logo. Passengers experience warm feelings from the sight of moist noses and wagging tails alone. The program offers a "PAWSitive" experience at Los Angeles Airport. (LAWA 2019.) Although, the first airport conducted such a service was San Jose International Airport. The program was opened right after the 11th of September when a volunteer Catherine Liebschutz took her dog Orion at the airport to help passengers after attacks. It was noticed that interaction with Orion had positive effect and airport management agreed on official conducting of PUP Program.

LAX Pets Unstressing Passengers (PUP) is currently the largest passenger stress reduction program in the United States. Before the start of the pandemic in 2019, 121 dogs were participating in the program and about 5,200 volunteer hours were registered. The program was developed in 2013 by Heidi Hübner and she continues to manage it. She is now an expert on similar airport therapy dog programs and has helped 70 other airports launch similar programs. Perhaps one of the most important things Huebner teaches is the realization that not all dogs can work at an airport. A dog cannot be taught this. A dog should be born with such a temperament. A dog by nature should be very sociable, love people and not be afraid of movements and sharp sounds. (Rusbace 2021.)

Therapy dogs also need to have other skills. That is one year of experience in a recognized professional organization, registration with Therapy Dog Alliance, and passing an initial welcome and introduction test. The program accepts dogs of various breeds, sizes, and ages. The trainers are fingerprinted and wear special badges. They must work at least one shift per week. (Rusbace 2021.)

Such programs are increasingly appearing at airports in the United States but unfortunately for travelers who love dogs, there aren't many of them. Before the pandemic, the program operated at 87 airports in North America. It was suspended in 2020 due to security concerns, but now airports are gradually attracting volunteers with dogs. Many have reduced the number of volunteers because the dogs are no

longer in the program. Some have also changed their approach to meeting pandemic protocols. (Rusbise 2021.)

So far, there is no single database that says where and when therapy dogs can be found at the airport. And since the programs run on a volunteer basis, even if there are volunteers at the airport, they are unlikely to be there permanently. The traveler can only search for information on Google. Some airports maintain social media profiles that mention programs or even their accounts in which volunteers write where and when the dogs will be. (Rusbise 2021.)

Communication with a therapy dog can be beneficial for everyone - young, old, those who travel alone, and who travel on business. Tara Hoover, who leads the Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) therapy dog program PIT PAWS (Pups Alleviating Worry and Stress, English. Puppies that relieve anxiety and stress), saw adults lie on the floor to be closer to the dog, and older pilots demand a selfie with Juno, her certified dog. (Rusbise 2021.) The next image shows Tara and her dog Juno as they are volunteering at Pittsburgh International Airport.



Image 1. Tara Hoover and her dog Juno (Rusbise 2021).

Volunteers like Tara and Juno can be a godsend for travelers who are afraid to fly. Passengers told Hoover that Juno's interaction helped them a lot, and they no longer needed to take sedatives before the flight. Dogs are also a big hit with families - kids are thrilled to pet a dog and parents are thrilled to be distracted. Dogs can also be useful for those who work at the airport, whether it is the US Transportation Security Administration or the cashiers. (Rusbise 2021.)

3.6 A Historical Perspective on Dog-Human Relationships

The modern relationship between humans and dogs is, without a doubt, unique. We share a common history of evolution over tens of thousands of years, during which dogs have filled a unique niche in our lives as man's best friend. Dogs have learned to communicate skillfully with humans through the process of domestication and natural selection. For example, many studies suggest that dogs are very sensitive to our emotional states and gestures. They can also communicate with us using complex cues such as alternating gazes. In addition to this, dogs can form complex attachment relationships with humans that mirror the relationship between infant and caregiver. (Frontiers 2021.)

In today's society, companionship with dogs is common throughout the world. In the US, 63 million households have a dog as a pet, and the vast majority of these households consider dogs to be part of their families. In addition, dogs have also acquired an important function as personal assistants to people with various disabilities. During and after World War I, official training of dogs as helpers for the handicapped began in the US and Germany. After the end of World War II, the official training of dogs for other functions, such as mobility and helping people with hearing impairments, began to spread. Decades later, the role of assistance dogs has grown to include helping a wider range of individuals with even more diverse disabilities, such as epilepsy and diabetes, and psychiatric disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder. At the same time, society has noticed that the use of dogs is increasing in other industries, such as investigations, hunting, grazing, and protection. (Frontiers 2021.)

In addition to all these roles, dogs have acted as support in other therapeutic ways. In the early 1960s, animal-assisted interventions (AAI) began to develop, led by Boris Levinson, Elizabeth O'Leary Corson, and Samuel Corson. Levinson was a child psychologist and in his practice in the 1950s noticed that a non-verbal child during therapy began to communicate with his dog named Jingles. This experience led Levinson to begin work on creating a fund for AAI as an adjunct to therapy. In the

1970s, Samuel Corson and Elizabeth O'Leary Corson were among the first researchers to test therapy with dogs. Like Levinson, they discovered by accident that some of their mentally ill patients showed an interest in dogs and interacted more easily with each other and with staff in the presence of dogs. Over the next ten years, the number of therapy dogs increased significantly. These dogs help people with different needs in a wide variety of ways. (Frontiers 2021.)

4 Research Methodology

4.1 Service Design

Service design appeared at the beginning of the 21st century and there were several reasons for this. Service design also has a legacy that is a premise. Some of this comes from old design approaches that were used in mass production and communications. Service design thinking and methods have influenced the art of industrial design and branding. Service marketing had a significant impact on service design since it was in this area that the first service schemes were developed. (Reason & al. 2015, 10.)

Service design offers a point of view, a methodology, and a set of tools. It helps organizations realize business ambitions and cope with internal and external changes. It provides an approach to dealing with strategic and operational challenges by answering three fundamental questions:

1. How will this help our current and future customers?
2. How will this affect our business?
3. What capabilities does the organization need to respond to or promote the initiative? (Reason & al. 2015, 12.)

The main focus of the approach is to solve problems associated with customers in conjunction with finding a balance between business factors and the capabilities of an organization. Understanding the client's perspective helps provide the clarity and direction needed to achieve results and manage organizational change. It is essential to separate business interests from consumer interests. In all cases, service design starts from an external perspective and progresses through real goals. (Reason & al. 2015, 12.)

4.1.1 Qualitative Research Method

Interviews are one of the most popular qualitative research methods. In general terms, an interview is a conversation structured in a series of questions and answers. Usually, the interviewer starts the conversation and asks a question, and the respondent answers. Qualitative interviews can also be ordinary conversations in which the difference between the interviewer and the respondent is not so marked. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 79.)

Most of the interviews are conducted in person, face to face. However, interviews can now also be conducted by telephone or online, using computer technology. Most interviews are conducted between two people - the interviewer and the interviewee - however, in the field of business research, interviews in a group of two or more participants are also common. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 79.) The reliability of the information received depends on the quality of the interviewer's work.

The purpose of the interview, as a research method, is to study people's views and opinions on a particular problem. One of the advantages of this research method is the depth of understanding of what is happening in society at the moment. Quantitative methods often cannot provide such results. In a situation where the investigator does not have enough information about any problem or requires a more detailed understanding of the point of view of a particular respondent, the most appropriate method of study is the interview. Interviews can also be a good alternative in a situation where respondents refuse to speak on sensitive topics in group research settings. (BDJ 2008.)

There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Structured interviews are questionnaires conducted orally, during which a pre-prepared list of questions is used. Such interviews are also characterized by the presence of small or complete absence of any variations, as well as the absence of the opportunity to ask additional questions. It follows that this method of research is quick and easy to conduct and may be of particular value in situations where clarifi-

cation of specific questions is needed or there is a likelihood of problems with the literacy of the respondents. (BDJ 2008.)

On the other hand, unstructured interviews do not reflect any preconceived theories or ideas and do not require a serious organization of the process of conducting them. These interviews may begin with open questions and proceed simply based on the initial answer. Unstructured interviews often take a long time, sometimes up to several hours. They are difficult to manage and participate in due to the lack of pre-prepared questions, resulting in a lack of guidance on what to talk about, which many participants find very confusing. The use of this method is considered mainly when a significant depth of information is needed or when practically nothing is known about the subject area (or a different point of view on the subject area is required). (BDJ 2008.)

Unstructured interviews consist of several key questions that help define the research area. They also allow the interviewer or interviewee to deviate from the main topic and answer the question in more detail. The flexibility of this approach, especially in comparison with a structured interview, allows you to discover information that is important to the respondent, and that he did not previously consider relevant. (BDJ 2008.)

For this research, semi-structured interviews were used by the author. The nature of the interviews was one-to-one and conducted both face-to-face and online.

4.1.2 Interview Analysis

The interview was conducted via WhatsApp and Viber instant messengers. Questions were sent to the respondents, and in the process of receiving answers from them, the topic of the interview was discussed through messages and voice messages. This method of conducting interviews was chosen due to the convenience of obtaining information from respondents from different countries. Subsequently, this format of the interview, namely the availability of written answers, facilitated analyzing the data obtained.

The information was obtained by interviewing respondents of different ages and genders, and social statuses, with and without children. The main parameter for selecting respondents for interviews was the use of air transport at least once a year.

The purpose of this survey was to find out what emotions passengers experience at the airport while waiting for their flight and going through the various stages of check-in, how they prefer to cope with negative emotions, if any, and how they would react to the opportunity to relieve stress through communication with dogs. The survey included open-ended questions. Open-ended interview questions allowed respondents to express their opinion on the proposed topic. The interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

One of the main questions of the interview, according to the author, is a request to describe emotions while at the airport, specifically at the check-in counter, when passing through the security service, and checking luggage, as well as while waiting for the flight. With the help of this question, the author tried to understand how comfortable or uncomfortable passengers feel during various processes at the airport, and in what emotional state they are. For example, along with respondents who feel relatively calm at all stages of checks and even feel some anticipation before the flight, some spoke quite sharply about the need to stand in lines and the need to wait in general. One interviewee answered that on the way to the airport, along with the euphoria of the upcoming trip, he feels panic attacks because he could forget something important at home (documents, money, etc.) or that he might miss his flight. Interviewee (I)1: "Complete nonsense. I feel like I'm in a traffic jam. I can't stand waiting."

I2: "When I go to the airport, I have a feeling of euphoria with elements of panic (suddenly I forgot something). At check-in: calm. Security service: calmness and a little irritation and fear (undress, unpack everything, then don't forget or lose anything, and if they didn't like something during the inspection, you need to remember what you put there, or open the bag and

turn everything over, show and then sit and pack again). In the waiting room: sometimes fatigued, if it took a long time to get to the airport (traveled by train, taxi), stood at check-in, terrible security inspection, and other reasons. If everything went well, I feel happiness and euphoria from the upcoming flight. If we're flying home, then I feel a little sad that the vacation is over."

I3: "Fear of being late, forgetting documents, and losing luggage."

I4: Anticipation.

Another equally important interview question was about how to spend time at the airport while waiting for a flight. Respondents were asked to talk about how they deal with stress or other negative emotions when they arise and why.

I1: "Usually I fly with children. Therefore, I pay a lot of attention to them at the airport - I follow them so that they do not go far, and do not get lost, I try to occupy them with something, and I talk. I go shopping sometimes. Reading, using my cellphone. We can eat at the cafe. If I'm worried, sometimes I can drink a little alcohol. If I don't drink alcohol, then I can take some sedatives but I don't use strong sedatives."

I2: "I usually watch movies on my laptop/phone. It helps to relax."

I3: "I smoke in the toilet (there are no smoking rooms in Russia), and use smoking rooms abroad."

I4: "Oh, there were only a couple of stressful situations. It is difficult to calm down when you are excited, I always write off with a loved one (sister) who always says that everyone is alive and well, and the rest can be survived. Drink something alcoholic, a glass of wine and then everything is getting better."

The remaining interview questions are closely related to dogs and their role in stress reduction. Respondents were asked about their attitudes towards dogs.

There were no negative answers, all interviewees noted their love and good attitude towards dogs.

This was followed by a question about how respondents see dogs as a way to reduce stress and get positive emotions while waiting for a flight. Half of the respondents were very enthusiastic about this idea, while the other half had a rather diverse opinion on this matter.

I1: "Since I don't have stress, it's hard to answer. But those who are afraid, I doubt that something will help them, they only need to understand that there is nothing to be afraid of."

I2: "No opinion."

I3: "I don't think that a dog can relieve stress at the airport, the dog will bark and behave uncomfortably and this will only annoy many (not all), but many especially already tired people."

I4: "This is a double-edged sword. Some people hate dogs. I know such ones. I would rather prefer a cat in terms of relieving stress because lately, only a cat relieved my stress. And in flight, it also helps me."

I5: "Not an option for me, but it would distract the child"

At this point of the interview, it was very interesting to listen to people's opinions and see how they change, as, at this stage, many of them had no idea how dogs are used to relieve stress in airports. Subsequently, as respondents were provided with more detailed and visual (photo) information about existing programs in this area, opinions changed.

The next question was specifically about the PUP program, in which volunteers participate with their dogs, specially trained to communicate with different people in different situations. After reviewing the information provided, the respondents were asked to express their opinion about this program. The vast majority of those sur-

veyed had never heard of such programs, but some once came across such information.

I1: "I haven't heard about the service with pets, but I would cuddle."

I2: "I heard something, quite a bit. But I did not know the name of the organization and in which countries there is such a practice. I think it was the US. I believe in the therapeutic effect of interacting with animals."

I3: "I didn't hear. Maybe it helps someone. Everything is individual. The main thing is that it is not dangerous for passengers."

I4: "I have never heard about it before. I think this is a great option for aerophobic to forget about their fear because aerophobic mostly drink sleeping pills in packs or liters of alcohol. Calming communication with a dog is the best option to forget your fear and quietly spend a flight. "

I5: "That's great. This should be in every airport. We are not aerophobic, but we would use such a service."

In the last question of the interview, respondents were asked to describe their thoughts and emotions about the possibility of having such a service at airports, whether they would use such a service, and explain why. In the answers to this question, opinions also turned out to be different, but basically, the respondents were inclined to believe that they would be very interested in this service, even though they do not experience stress, especially if they travel with children.

I1: "I would use it if I flew with children."

I2: "I would be delighted. I would like to use this service. I love dogs very much. Our family has always had dogs since my early childhood. They bring joy and become true friends and family members. And I would also like to use the service for the sake of interest, to see how it works, what breeds of dogs work as such "psychologists."

I3: "Joy, happiness. If you can still touch them, it's just a thrill. I would gladly take advantage of this opportunity, if you have a long wait between flights, you will spend time with benefits, and you will receive a charge of happiness. The waiting will not be so tedious. If you fly with a child, then at the same time you will teach the child to interact with animals.

I4: "Well, maybe if it calmed the children, or people sitting nearby, I wouldn't mind."

I5: "I would love to go. Even though I am not afraid of flying, I would like to pet dogs, play with them, and have a carefree time before flying."

I6: "Dogs are great. These are positive emotions and feelings of happiness."

I7: "I don't, but I would take the child. I think she would love it, she loves animals."

I8: "Does not matter. Not interested."

I9: "I don't care. I would probably ignore such a service. My dog is enough for me. At the airport, I prefer movies."

4.2 Personas

Design thinking is an innovative approach to problem-solving that puts the consumer first in the process of creating products and services. Many design thinking activities can be applied to understand the customer. Persona is one of such activities. "A persona is a fictional character that represents a type of customer or user of a service or product" (Innovation Training 2019). A person is created based on data about real consumers and their main characteristics, which are predominant in a certain group of customers. This approach allows to better understand the needs of customers, as it has a research justification. (Innovation Training 2019.)

There are four steps to creating a persona:

- Research and Analysis
- Persona descriptions
- Problem analysis
- Collaboration and Revision (Innovation Training 2019.)

The first step is research. It identifies who the consumers are and learns as much information as possible about their behaviors. At this stage, observation and polling are often used as a method of obtaining information about the customer's basic needs. (Innovation Training 2019.)

At the second stage, you need to draw up a description of the persona. A description should be made for each persona created and the main interests and values should be listed. It is also necessary to specify such data as, for example, education and lifestyle. (Innovation Training 2019.)

The third step is to analyze the problem. This stage involves testing personas to find out how suitable they are for a specific brand. For example, you need to understand how a certain person will behave in a specific situation. If it is difficult to answer this question, it is necessary to return to the previous stage and examine the person in more detail. (Innovation Training 2019.)

Throughout the collaboration process, it is of particular importance to work with the creative team and management team. It can take a long time to create the right persona. At this step, it is extremely important to repeatedly revise the available information until the desired result is obtained. (Innovation Training 2019.)

4.2.1 Persona Maya


Maya is a school teacher who has three children, a husband, and several pets. Maya loves children; she loves to teach them and to spend time with them including spending time outdoors and taking care of animals. Maya believes that when children grow up with animals, they learn how to be responsible as well as become compassionate and empathic.

Maya loves traveling as well. She with her family loves equally to study the area where they live and to travel somewhere far, such as by plane. Taking into account the presence of pets, it can be concluded that Maya is familiar with the benefits of communicating with animals firsthand. Maya admits that any journey or trip is some sort of stress. Every time there is a need to keep in mind a large number of details of the upcoming trip, among other things.

Maya thinks that having such an opportunity to use dogs for unstressing passengers at airports is a great way to feel comfortable. One of Maya's children is wary of unfamiliar dogs. However, even in this situation, Maya has a strong interest in such a service and believes that this is a very good and ecological way to get rid of the stress before the flight.

Persona was created on the basis of an interview conducted, which made it possible to determine the behavior and demographic information of potential passengers. The main goal of creating a person was to determine the most common needs and expectations of customers, since knowing the target audience, you can create the best product or service for it. The study analyzed factors such as life goals, age, interests, level of education and income. This helped to better understand who would use the service.

The figure shows the Persona Maya that represents all main characteristics of the chosen customer group.



Maya
School Teacher

Age 40	Education Bachelor's Degree	Location Europe	Income Medium
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Quote

I love dogs so much. My family always had dogs. Dogs bring you joy, become your friends and family members. They bring you positive emotions.

Goals

- I would like to gain such an experience of interacting with psychologist dogs, to see how it works;
- I would like to have another way of spending time while waiting for my flight;
- I would like to entertain my kids.

Story

Maya is a school teacher and lives in a fairly large city. She loves children, loves to spend time with children and this is one of the reasons why she became a school teacher. Maya loves animals as well. She has several pets at home as she believes that it makes children more responsible and instill compassion and empathy in them.

Figure 3. Persona Maya for PUP Program

4.3 Value Proposition Canvas

The Value Proposition Canvas was created by Alexander Osterwalder, Yves Pigneur, and Alan Smith. As a business model tool Value Proposition Canvas helps to understand that a company's service or product meets the basic needs of the customer. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.) The following figure shows value proposition canvas and its segments.

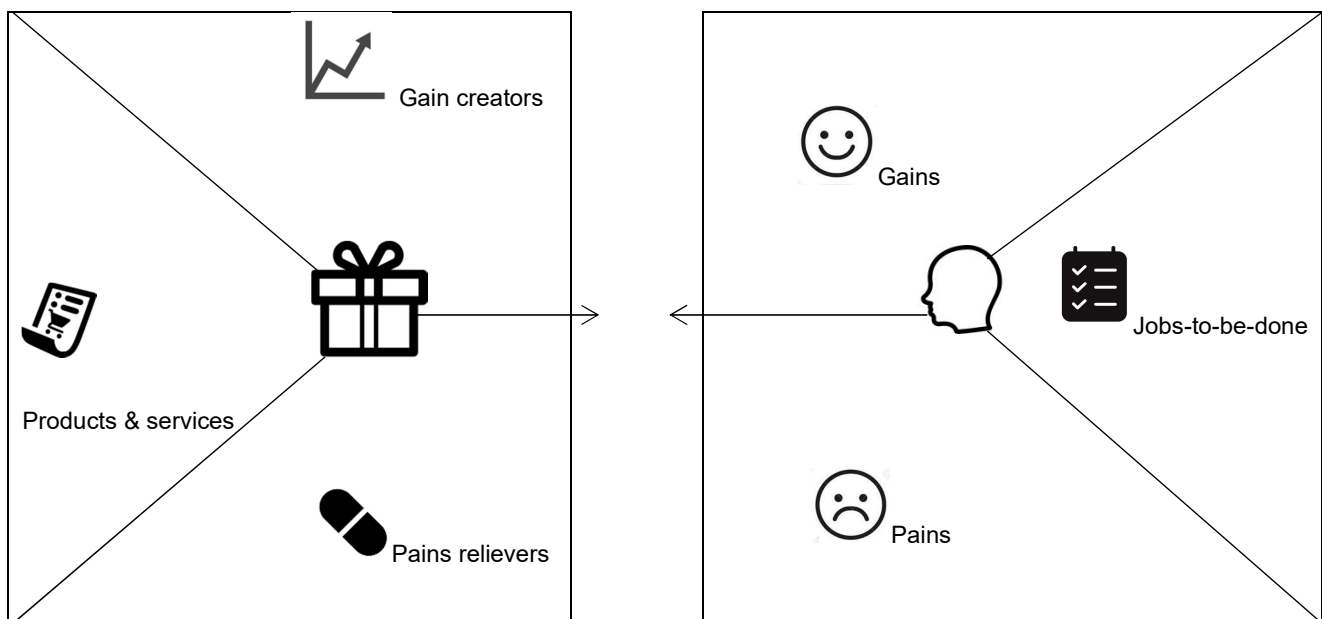


Figure 4. Value Proposition Canvas (The Business Model Analyst 2021).

The main goal of the Value Proposition Canvas is to achieve a match between a product or service and the market. In this regard, the it consists of two blocks and examines them in detail. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

Benefits of using the Value Proposition Canvas:

- Understanding customers' needs;
- Product development according to consumer desires;
- Identification of compliance between the already finished product and the needs of consumers;
- Identification of compliance between the already finished product and the market;
- refusal to produce those products that are of no interest to anyone;
- Saving money and time.

As mentioned above, the Value Proposition Canvas consists of two blocks - value proposition and customer segment. These blocks represent the essence of the business model as they focus on “What” and “To whom”. Simply put, the focus is on how the company delivers value to its target audience. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

The canvas is divided into two parts, the right side of which is the client profile. In turn, the client profile is divided into Jobs-to-be-done, Pains, and Gains. On the left side is the Value Proposition, which is also divided into Products & Services, Gain Creators, and Pain Relievers. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

4.3.1 Client Profile

Jobs-to-be-done

The figure 5 shows client’s profile of value proposition canvas and its jobs-to-be-done segment.

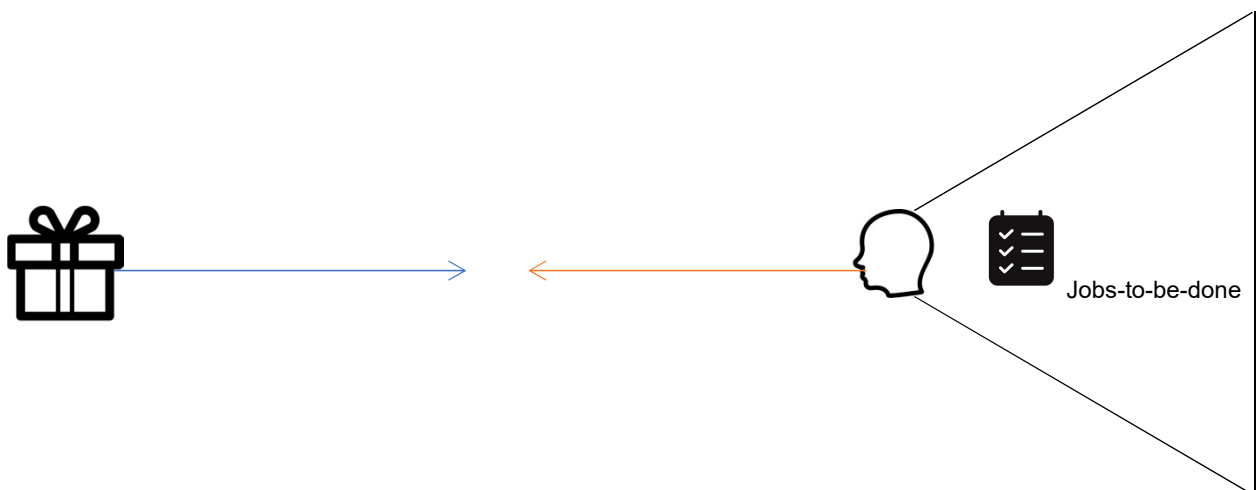


Figure 5. Value Proposition Canvas. Client Profile. Jobs-to-be-done. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

This describes what the consumer is trying to do. This should include all the tasks the client is trying to complete, as well as the problems they are trying to cope with and the needs they want to satisfy. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

Also important is the frequency and necessity of the work performed, as well as the various roles that the consumer must play. To complete this stage, you need to answer the following questions:

- What questions does my client have? (is he experiencing problems at work?)
- What social issues does my client care about? (career development, professional communication with colleagues)
- What is my client's emotional state? (good fitness, well-being)
- What needs does my client seek to meet? (friendly communication, necessary hygiene). (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

Pains

The figure 6 shows client's profile of value proposition canvas and its jobs-to-be-done and pains segments.

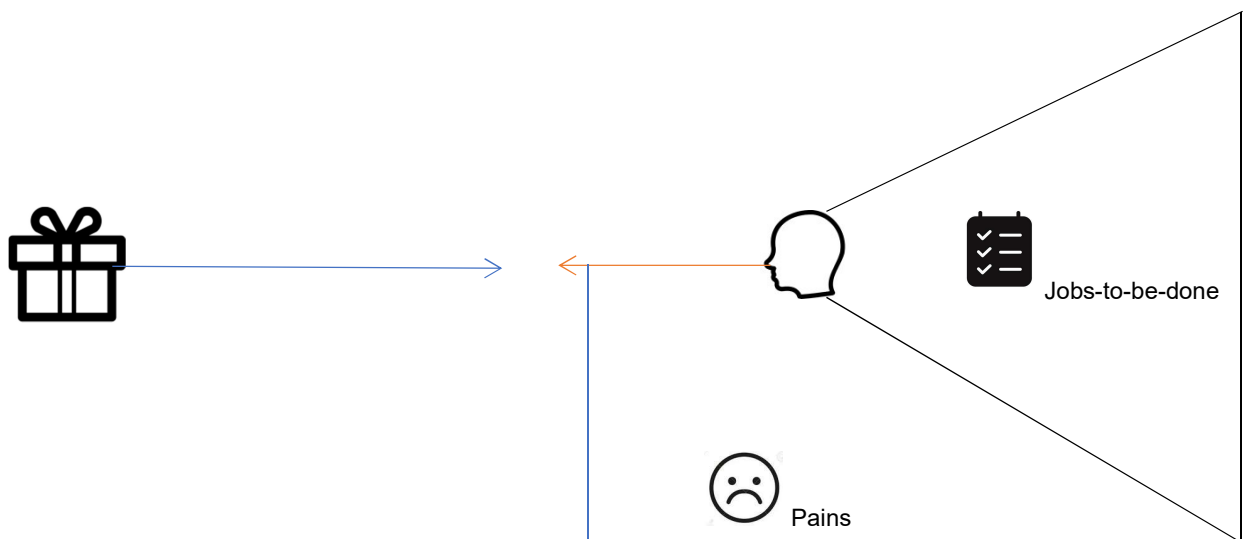


Figure 6. Value Proposition Canvas. Client Profile. Pains. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

This includes everything that upsets the client in the process of performing tasks. For example, negative experiences and emotions, difficulties, risks, finances, mistakes, and consequences. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

It is necessary to categorize each pain as mild or severe and pay attention to how often it occurs. At this stage, the questions might be:

- What does my client value? (time, money, knowledge)
- For what reason might my client feel unwell? (physical pain, frustrations)
- What difficulties is my client experiencing? (any physical or psychological limitations, lack of understanding of anything)
- How do the current decisions satisfy my client? (weaknesses, poor performance)
- What side effects can occur? (loss of money or status)
- What difficulties is my client afraid of?
- What are the disadvantages of my client? (lack of understanding, incorrect expectations)
- What are the obstacles to my client's decision-making? (unwillingness to change, investment). (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

A separate profile is created for each consumer group and then matched. Then it is necessary to determine what value you need to offer to solve their problems. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

Gains

The figure 7 shows client's profile of value proposition canvas.

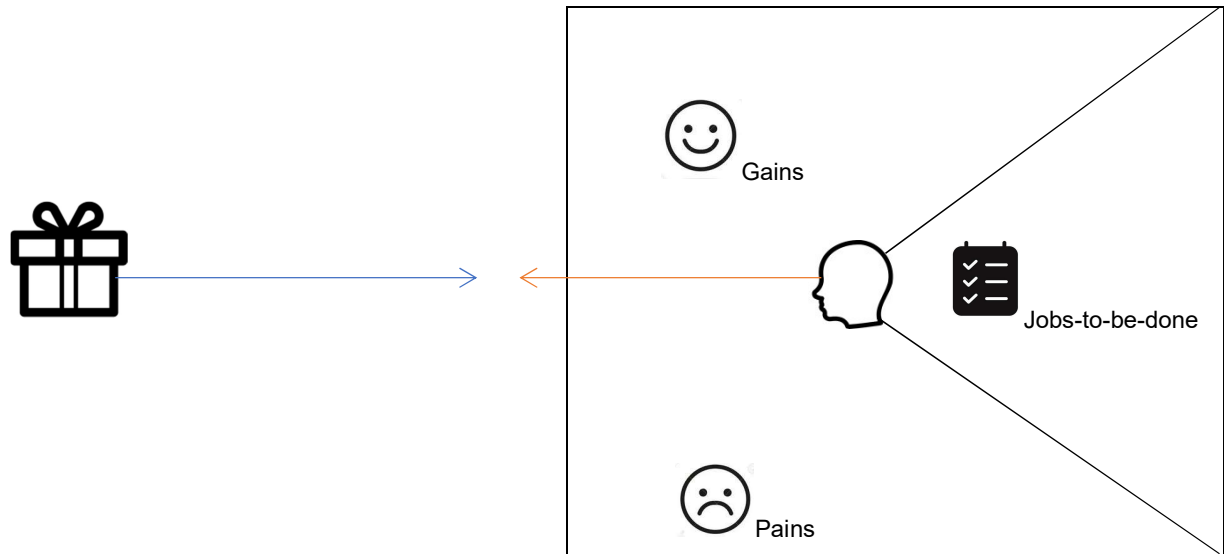


Figure 7. Value Proposition Canvas. Client Profile. Gains. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

These are all the advantages and benefits that the consumer is waiting for or even something that can pleasantly surprise him. Benefits can be functional, emotional, social, or financial. Simply stated, it is everything that brings joy to a client and makes life easier, more fun, and more enjoyable. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

Each gain can be ranked. To do this, you need to answer the following questions:

- What indicators does my client expect as a result? (profit, quality improvement)
- What will help my client solve his problem? (reduced costs, more services)
- Looking for what is my client? (special product or service, quality assurance)
- What is my client's reaction to his successes and losses?
- What can contribute to the decision-making of the client? (quality improvement, best warranty terms)

It must be remembered that for each consumer it is necessary to make up a separate profile segment. The next step is to determine what value they will associate with your product or service. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

4.3.2 Value Proposition

Products & Services

The figure 8 shows client's profile of value proposition canvas and products&services segment of value proposition block.

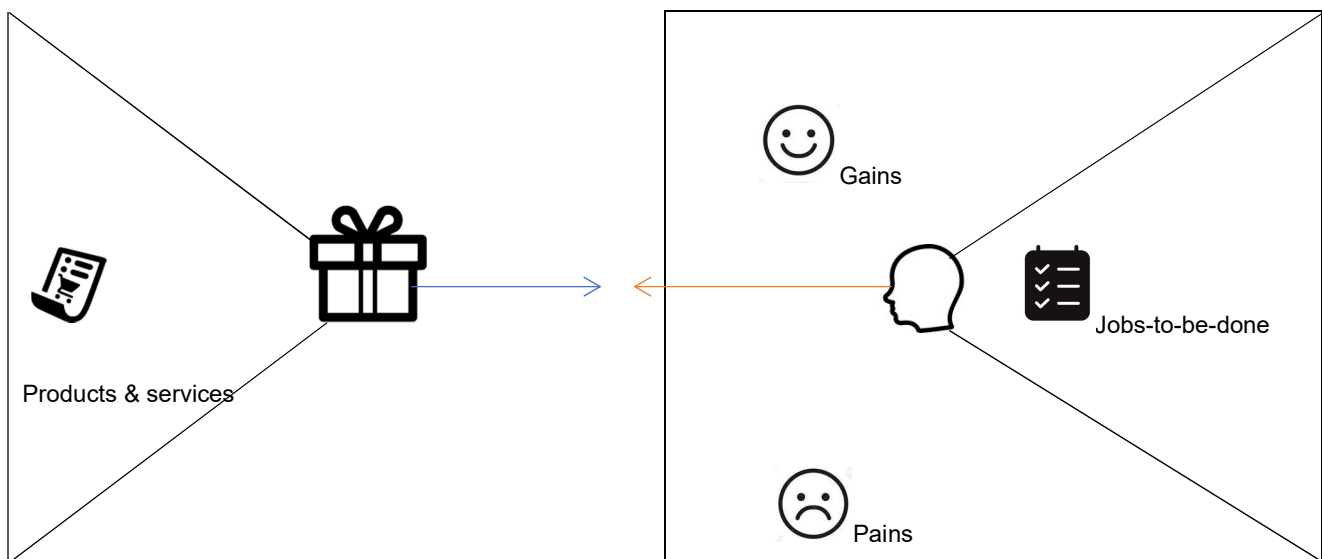


Figure 8. Value Proposition Canvas. Products & Services (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

This segment includes all products and services that a company intends to provide to its customers. For each of them, the following questions should be asked:

- Is any product or service capable of contributing to any task?
- What is the service/product? (digital, financial)
- How relevant is the service/product?
- How often does the customer use this product or service? (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

Gain Creators

The figure 9 shows client's profile of value proposition canvas and products&services and gain creators segments of value proposition block.

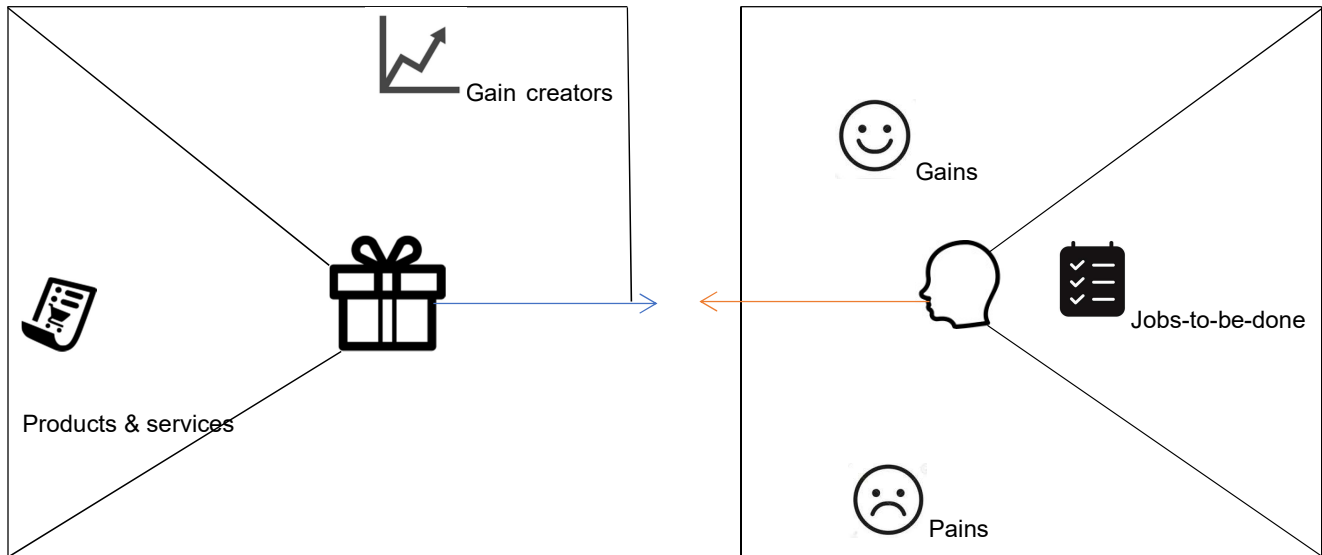


Figure 9. Value Proposition Canvas. Products & Services. Gain Creator (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

This part answers the question of how the product or service offers added value to the customer, what benefits a product can bring, and whether the desires and expectations of a consumer are satisfied. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

And again, it is necessary to rank each gain of a product or service by its relevance to the client and note how often this happens. Questions here might be – if a product or service:

- saves the customer money, time and effort;
- results in or exceeds the customer's expectations;
- improves the characteristics of existing offers;
- makes the customer's life easier or makes it easier to solve problems;
- gives the client what he is looking for;
- helps to achieve clients' goals. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

Pain Relievers

The figure 10 shows client's profile of value proposition canvas and products&services, gain creators and pain relievers segments of value proposition block.

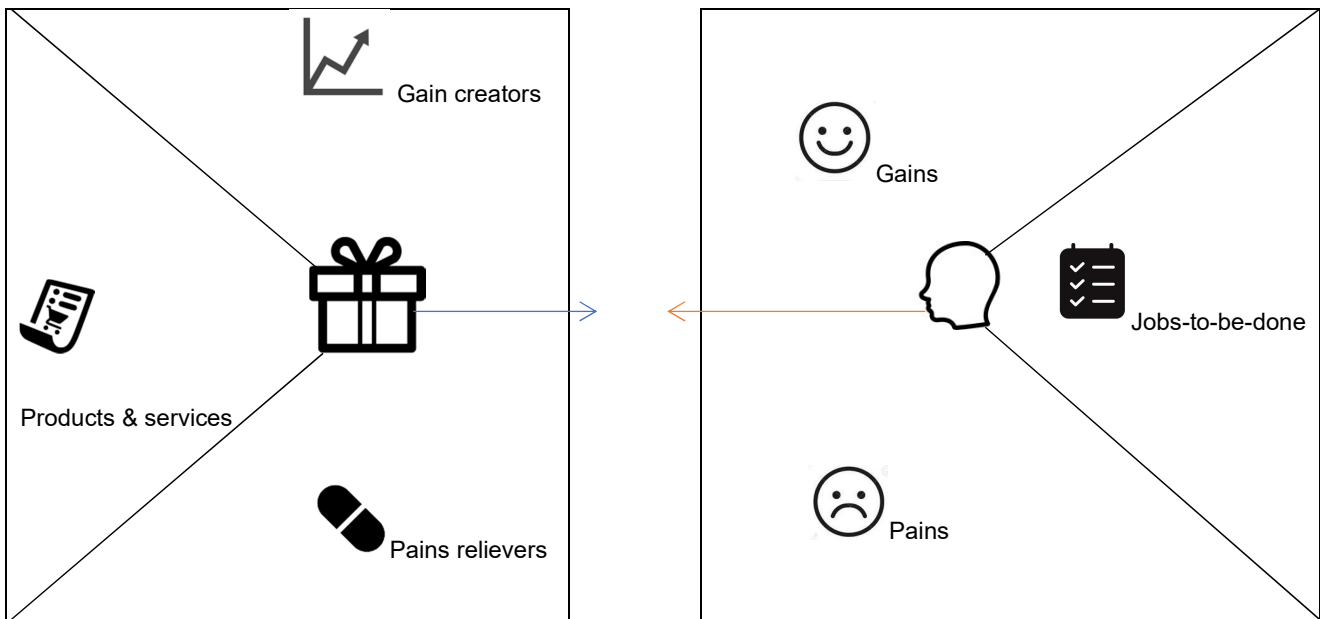


Figure 10. Value Proposition Canvas. Products & Services. Pain Relievers (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

At this stage, it is necessary to define how the product or service alleviates the client's pain. It is worth specifying in detail whether the product or service reduces cost, negative feelings, efforts, risks, consequences, or errors. In any case, it is important to make it clear how you will make the consumer feel better. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

Also, each pain may have a different intensity and this must be taken into account when ranking. This must be done to understand how your product or service helps your customer. At this stage, the following points can help:

- saves money, effort and time;
- helps the client feel better;

- improves the performance and quality of a product or service;
- helps to get rid of the difficulties faced by the client;
- helps to overcome the risks that the client is afraid of;
- helps reduce anxiety levels;
- works with errors made by the client;
- removes obstacles to solving problems (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

4.3.3 When to use Value Proposition Canvas?

The figure 11 shows interaction between a customer and an organization offering value proposition.



Figure 11. Value Proposition Canvas (The Business Model Analyst 2021).

In a nutshell, this tool is designed to help you put yourself in the shoes of the client to better understand his needs (The Business Model Analyst 2021).

The ultimate goal is to match the product to the market by positioning it according to the needs, expectations, and interests of the customer (The Business Model Analyst 2021).

Value Proposition Canvas helps you understand the impact your value proposition will have on your customer's life. Based on the client profile, the conformity of the product or service to the market is revealed. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

Value Proposition Canvas is best for:

- startup launch;
- reorganization of the sales process to better understand a consumer;

- adding a feature to a product that may involve a large investment of time or resources or both;
- expanding into new markets or customer sectors requires knowing how new customers will perceive service or product.

You must always remember that filling out this template is the first step. It is important to prove the idea through analysis and feedback. All this will help to return to the template and update it. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

It's also worth noting that the Value Proposition Canvas does not replace the Business Model Canvas. Both models work best in combination. One model does not dismiss, however, the other. (The Business Model Analyst 2021.)

4.3.4 Value Proposition Canvas: airport passenger

Since one of the aims of the thesis is to gain an understanding of how communication with animals could be used as stress relief at airports, the author used the Value Proposition Canvas to better understand what value interaction with dogs can create in passengers' life. The figure 12 shows the filled value proposition canvas.

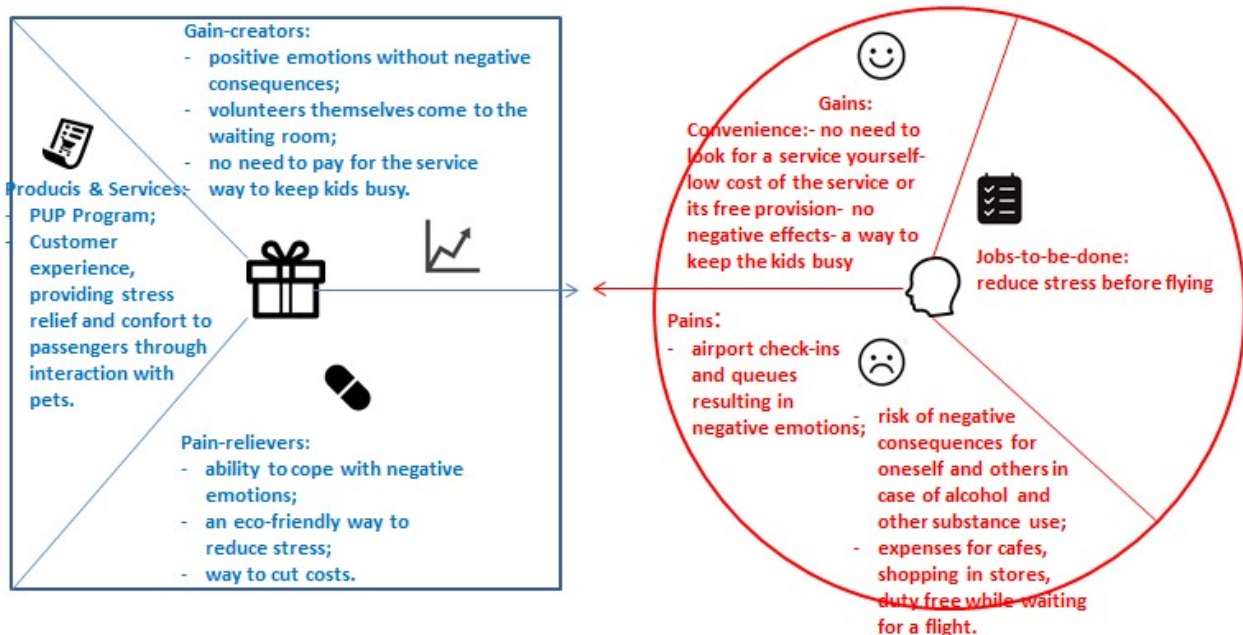


Figure 12. Value Proposition Canvas

The core of the customer profile is the customer. Since the thesis focuses on a narrow segment of customers, namely passengers who experience fear or other negative emotions while at the airport, first, the canvas needs to define the jobs they are trying to get done. In general, the main point here is to reduce the stress level before the flight.

Concerning the Pains or some negative experience/undesired costs, there are a few. While getting through airport check-ins and queues, the passenger may begin to experience discomfort and other negative emotions because of tension and long waiting. Some of the passengers prefer (and the interview results also show this) to use alcohol as a way to reduce stress which may result in negative consequences for passengers and others. Another way to spend time while waiting for a flight sometimes requires significant financial costs. This way is visiting cafes, shops, duty-free, etc.

If to think about benefits and wishes a customer expects from a product or service, Gains here include convenience, as there is no need to look for a service, low cost or free of charge, no negative consequences for yourself and others, and, what will be important for passengers with children, a way to keep children busy for a while.

Now it is time to shift to the left side of the canvas to understand how to address the customer needs. Here, products and services are put which can bring value that will help customers get their jobs done. Thus, it is the PUP Program that provides customers with the experience of helping to relieve stress and find emotional comfort through interaction with pets.

The next step is to understand how this service can help passengers to alleviate pains. The best way to do this is to answer the following questions: how does it eliminate the negative experiences, mitigate risks, or reduce undesired costs that are mapped on the right side? In this way, the PUP Program can help to cope with

negative emotions. Interacting with pets is an eco-friendly way to reduce stress and another good way to cut costs as it is free of charge.

In the Gain Creators section, it is important to understand how a product or service produces value for customers. For instance, the PUP Program brings positive emotions without any negative consequences, volunteers themselves come to the waiting area, this service is free of charge and is a good way to keep kids busy.

4.3.5 Feedback to Value Proposition Canvas

To test the validity of the ideas, it was decided to get feedback on this value proposition. A person who is a potential airport customer was interviewed. This person did not take part in the previous interview and was not familiar with the services of the PUP Program. This person received all the information concerning the PUP Program, its advantages over other ways of reducing stress, and, according to Value Proposition Canvas, its value for potential customers.

The feedback was quite positive. The idea of coping with stress through interacting with pets seemed great to a respondent. The respondent herself has five children of different ages, - from 7 to 21 years old, - and finds the PUP Program a great way to calm down before a flight. Her family also has several pets such as a dog, two cats, a rabbit, and two turtles, so she and her children know firsthand about interacting with animals and all the positive moments of the interaction.

However, during receiving feedback on Value Proposition, important questions were raised by the respondent. Such an example is the acceptability of the service for people with allergies or for children who are afraid of animals. The author of the thesis, certainly, studied these questions in the process of gathering information about the programs using animals for relieving stress at airports.

Volunteers planning to participate in PUP must have at least one year of experience in a recognized dog therapy organization. Dogs must be owned by an individual and be at least two years old. All volunteers and PUP dogs must be registered

with Therapy Dogs, Inc. (TD, Inc.). It is a national organization that registers, insures, and supports its members in animal volunteer activities. Such activities include visits to hospitals, special needs centers, schools, nursing homes, and, for the first time for the organization, airports. (LAWA 2022.)

Each volunteer undergoes a learning course and training on the territory of a terminal to familiarize themselves with the airport and ways to help passengers. They also take a walk around the airport to make sure both the volunteer and the dog are in good physical shape for the activity. In addition to the entire above, dog owners are fingerprinted and use badges. (LAWA 2022.)

Thus, this confirms that any doubts and fears can be dealt with through familiarization with the necessary information. In case, if a passenger has an allergy, does not like, or is afraid of a dog, he or she is not obliged to interact with them. Volunteers with dogs do not come into close contact with passengers, they always keep their distance, they are also equipped with special vests and distinctive signs by which they can be recognized and, if desired, come up and interact. It all depends on the passengers themselves.

4.4 Experience of other countries

Metropolitan airports in Russia are going to have unusual psychotherapists. Special dogs may appear in the waiting rooms to help passengers relieve stress before departure. As the press secretary of Sheremetyevo International Airport Roman Genis told, four-legged "specialists" can be an additional measure to reduce pre-flight stress for passengers. They are ready to study the experience of their American colleagues. And if it turns out to be positive, they can introduce such a service to provide additional psychological relief to passengers before departure, as sometimes some passengers try to relieve anxiety with alcohol and often behave very aggressively in flight. (Russian Gazeta 2016.)

And very soon, passengers will be able to experience in practice the therapeutic abilities of dogs at the airport. Sheremetyevo confirmed its readiness for the exper-

iment. This practice has already appeared in US air terminals: Washington, Chicago, Denver, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Newark, and Houston. There, several specially trained dogs of various breeds help passengers cope with stress. It is not yet known which of the four-legged psychotherapists will be able to help passengers at Sheremetyevo Airport. The method of treating people with the help of therapy dogs is called canister therapy. In Moscow, several foundations are engaged in canister therapy - these are both "Solar Dogs" and "Irida". There are purebred animals. And there is a unique fund "Not Just Dogs", where therapists are exclusively mongrels or mestizos who previously lived or are still in the shelter. (Gazeta 2021.)

Director of the Gift of Fate Foundation and owner of two therapy dogs Natalya Chaplin explains that the idea is very kind and correct, as rescue dogs, paratrooper dogs, sled dogs, orderlies, sapper dogs, guide dogs, shepherd dogs, service dogs - this list is endless because dogs from time immemorial have been a helper and companion to a person. Many people refer to the phrase "therapist dog" with a grin, and in the meantime, these animals can become a guide for people into the world of society. These dogs become the best friends of children and teach them love, responsibility, and trust. These dogs feel our emotions even better than we do, and it does not matter to them who you are, how you look, and whether you are confined to a wheelchair. (Gazeta 2021.)

Previously, there was an opinion that only specially bred breeds were needed for therapy, but in fact, mongrels do an excellent job with this task. After all, mongrels are the kings of all breeds. They have the strongest genes genetically; nature is so simple. Therefore, very often they have the most stable psyche and temperament, which can build up under any conditions. Such wonderful therapy dogs come out of mongrels because many of them are from shelters and have seen a lot. But they still retained a love for people and faith in the best, they are ready to give and give a hundred times more than those who have not known troubles since childhood. Though, while other airports are not ready for such innovations, it will be interesting to observe the development of developments in Sheremetyevo. (Gazeta 2021.)

In recent years, therapy dogs have gained a lot of popularity at airports, which means that more passengers throughout the US and around the world are benefiting from the calming effects of therapy animals (cats and even pigs are now involved in such activities). The number of such programs is steadily growing both in number and in countries using this service. According to Vane Airport Media Inc, in 2017 the number of programs was 48; several programs have already participated in the training. In 2018, there were already 58 such programs, and they quickly spread across countries. In the summer of 2018, the first therapy dog was introduced in the UK at Aberdeen International Airport. (Alliance of Therapy Dogs 2019.)

However, only a few airports can provide this service throughout the day and every day. Some volunteers visit airports weekly, others monthly. It must be remembered that both volunteers and dogs are at an airport voluntarily. They come and bring well-behaved animals with them for the sole purpose of helping other people smile despite the long wait at the airport and the delayed flight. As mentioned, programs are expanding. Some airports employ several groups of volunteers who work in shifts to allow passengers to interact with animals every day. (Alliance of Therapy Dogs 2019.)

5 Conclusion and learning outcomes

The thesis was qualitative research, - namely, semi-structured interviews. It was conducted with potential air passengers of different ages and social statuses. The thesis aim was to suggest an alternative method of relieving air travel-related stress and to receive feedback from potential passengers. A value proposition canvas and a persona were created based on interview results analysis. This part describes the research process, findings and learnings in connection with proposals for the future.

The main research questions in this thesis were: How potential passengers would perceive such a stress relief method at an airport as the Pets Unstressing Passengers Program? In what way animals, - dogs, in particular, - would be able to help passengers to cope with their stress before a flight?

The research process required the study of a large amount of information on the topic of stress, its appearances, and its consequences, as well as ways to deal with the stress associated with air travel. The theoretical framework also includes an overview of the experience of airports around the world in creating various services for passengers that help reduce stress levels and offer ways to have fun while waiting for a flight. The use of specially trained dogs as a way to reduce stress at the airport is considered and justified in detail in the thesis project. Thus, this can be considered as an answer to the research question In what way animals, - dogs, in particular, - would be able to help passengers to cope with their stress before flight?

The research methodology used in this project helped to obtain useful information on passengers' perceptions through conducting an interview. The information obtained during the interviews led to the conclusion that potential passengers generally have a positive attitude towards such an alternative method of relieving stress as communication with animals (in this study, with dogs). Many noted that this could be a positive experience for their children.

The research results also brought up a low awareness of potential passengers about such services, as well as about what exactly they are and how they are pro-

vided. For instance, respondents were often concerned that some of the passengers might be afraid of dogs or have allergies, or not know how a dog would behave, which could, on the contrary, cause irritation. However, after a detailed explanation of the essence of the service provided and the process of selection and preparation of animals participating in such programs, such questions no longer arose.

Moreover, one of the main points is that volunteers with dogs never come close to passengers on their own and do not impose communication with animals. The bottom line is that volunteers with dogs, firstly, have distinctive signs on their clothes, which allows passengers to immediately notice them at the airport, and secondly, having noticed them, a passenger can decide whether he/she wants to use this service or not.

The reliability and validity of this case study have limitations. The study was conducted without association with any organization involved in airport management or air travel. In the process of writing this paper and conducting the research, the author was unable to get a response from Finavia Corporation, probably due to Covid19-related restrictions. As a result, the study became one-sided. However, the author considers the service described in the thesis to be an excellent alternative for use by Helsinki-Vantaa Airport to offer passengers an additional (safe and free) way to relieve stress before the flight.

This research was interesting to do, as it was also something new for the author of the study. This study has come a long way since it began in 2020 when the author encountered information about services to help passengers reduce their stress levels. Some obstacles arose in the way of writing a thesis. Throughout the writing process of this work, the author studied a large amount of information about the structure of the airport, the services provided at the airport, stress factors, and ways to reduce them. The interesting findings came after conducting interviews with potential passengers and users of the airport therapy dog service. The author is pleased with the choice of topic for the thesis, although author admits that there is

still much interesting and worthy study in this area. The author hopes that the results of this study will be useful for other researchers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview questions

1. How often do you fly? Business/leisure trips?
2. Describe your feelings while being at an airport, at check-in desk, security control, waiting for your flight.
3. How do you spend time waiting for your flight? For example, if your stress level is increasing, how do you usually cope with it? What ways of coping with stress or other negative emotions, in case you face it, have you already tried? Which is your favorite? Why?
4. How do you feel about dogs?
5. How do you see dogs as a possibility to help passengers to relieve their stress?
6. Have you ever heard about PUP Program? What do you think about it and why?
7. Describe your feelings about the possibility of having such a program at airports? Would you use this service? Why/why not?
8. Age
9. Gender