The ACI Guide to Airport Security

Assessment of Human Factors in Checkpoint Security

Preview Sample
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Foreword by Angela Gittens

More than five billion passengers travel annually through our member airports and all of them have to go through the pre-departure screening process at least once on their journey. It is a bottleneck that can greatly influence their perception of the airport. Managing the checkpoint security operation is one of the most difficult tasks in airports today. As managers, it is essential we get it right.

This guide aims to equip managers with a deeper understanding of the human factors that contribute to effective passenger screening. These factors cover the ‘people’ involved and how we recruit, select and train our security officers. They address the ‘organization’ structures and the work processes we use. They look at the ‘technology’ component – the critical interface between man and machine – and how well we optimize the screening checkpoint’s working ‘environment’.

This guide is also a tool to help airports benchmark their strengths and weaknesses. It is a living document and our aim is to develop it further with case studies and guidance on what airports can do to bridge their gaps.

It is a ground-breaking piece of work and one which ACI is proud to make available to members in cooperation with LeighFisher. As a benchmarking tool is enables us to measure and compare performance. More importantly, as we have seen in airport service quality, it brings a deeper understanding of our processes and how we can improve them. It provides a catalyst for innovation and continuous improvement which, through time, raises the bar across the industry. This is my hope for this new guide and I commend it to you.
About this handbook

This leading practices tool is a handbook of reference material for those responsible for security screening and its management at airports. It is intended to help airports and airport security managers assess their organization across a range of human factor and organizational effectiveness attributes that have been identified as having a potential impact on security screening performance, as well as review the leading practices adopted successfully in other airports. Leading practices are methods or techniques that are shown to have achieved better results than those achieved with other approaches.

The tool was developed in response to feedback from industry that there were few mechanisms for airports to share leading practices in security. This reference material has now been updated with support from Airports Council International and will be further refined and developed in the future.

The detail of the leading practices tool was drawn from hands-on airport security management experience and interviews with a number of airports. It is intended to be a starting point, with more airports contributing material over time to form an increasingly accurate picture of the methodologies successfully employed at different types of airports. The information provided should be considered guidance and reference rather than recommendation and is not mandatory.

Leading practices are not a ‘one size fits all’ approach – some airports will satisfactorily achieve desired performance levels without implementing the guidance. However, they are intended to provide a useful starting point for airports seeking to improve performance in certain areas.

The purpose of the level charts is two-fold:

- A compendium of leading practices, drawn together from airports and other relevant industries. In this capacity it is a document that will be regularly maintained and updated so that it incorporates new, successful methodologies and approaches.
- A benchmarking tool that enables airports to analyse how their approach to achieving the common desired outcome sits in comparison to other approaches, and to identify the leading practices that might produce improved results.

Navigating the document

This document is available in two formats, a printed document or an interactive PDF. The PDF contains hyperlinks to help you find your way around it quickly. Your cursor will change to a finger when above a hyperlink. Click a heading in the header strip to go to that category. To return to the main navigation chart of headings from anywhere in the document click Contents. Further details of navigating the document are detailed on the contents page.

Navigate to the next (or previous) page with the arrows either side of the contents button, ✓ and ▷, in the bottom right corner of the page.
About the scoring matrix

The scoring matrix is to be used in conjunction with this ACI Assessment of Human Factors in Checkpoint Security document. The scoring matrix allows you (the airport) to record where you currently identify your capability/approach in relation to each of the checkpoint security function. You should try to score based on an accurate reflection of your current operations and procedures as the scores are not indicative of good or bad performance but simply help you to gauge your current status.

Airports should not expect to be at ‘leading practice’ in all areas – there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach – it is not necessary to be operating at the ‘Leading Practice’ level for every category. Some airports will be able to achieve the Desired Outcome satisfactorily with many of their processes corresponding to ‘Intermediate’ or ‘Initial’ levels. The guidance tool is intended to provide information to an airport when it is identified that it is not achieving the desired outcome satisfactorily using its existing approach and would wish to achieve an outcome closer to the optimum desired outcome.

The scoring matrix is therefore designed for airports to work through the document and then score where they feel they are for each area. This will help capture for the airport a view of their own leading practices, and also those areas where they would like to progress.

Obtaining the scoring matrix

Airports may request a copy of the scoring matrix from ACI. To obtain a copy for your airport, please contact security@aci.aero, with the subject line ‘Scoring Matrix’.

Using the scoring matrix

To use the scoring matrix, we would like you to read through the Assessment of Human Factors in Checkpoint Security document and then to indicate, with a cross, where you feel your airport currently is in relation to that area. This should be based on your existing airport operations, and not future plans you may have for redesigning security.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEOPLE High-level outcome</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Initial Approach</th>
<th>Intermediate Approach</th>
<th>Leading Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Publicity campaign</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ACI Guide to Airport Security Assessment of Human Factors in Checkpoint Security Scoring Matrix

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How to use this tool

The leading practices tool can be used in several different ways:

Reference material – a body of knowledge and best practice on a diverse set of processes that support the organization in performing its functions

Self-assessment – a tool to assess the extent to which an organization is at the leading edge in its organizational, operational, and performance management processes, versus operating at a more basic level

Diagnosis – a tool to help an organization identify where its current processes are not adequately achieving the objective, and the leading practices that may work more effectively

The security screening operation has been divided into four main sections:

Each section is divided into categories and sub-categories, and for each one there is a ‘Desired Outcome’ and a description of the levels of approaches adopted by different airports.

Desired Outcome
The desired outcome is a statement for each sub-category that represents the common goal every airport is seeking, regardless of its approach, and which is has been identified as a contributing factor in overall security and operational performance.

The levels of approach

Initial:
The initial steps that might be taken by an organization to achieve the desired outcome. At some airports, this approach may be successful, but the majority of airports will need to go further in order to meet their goal. It is likely that the desired outcome is only being met partially.

Intermediate:
The processes that an organization might put in place to achieve the desired outcome. Some will find that these processes are sufficient to achieve the outcome whilst others will find that the desired outcome is not being fully met.

Leading practice:
The ‘leading practices’ to achieve the desired outcome completely. The vast majority of airports should fully achieve the desired outcome if they implement the measures described here.

One important principle is that it is not necessary to be operating at the ‘Leading Practice’ level for every category. Some airports will be able to achieve the desired outcomes satisfactorily with many of their processes corresponding to ‘Intermediate’ or ‘Initial’ levels. Instead, the tool is intended to provide guidance to an airport that has identified that it is not achieving the desired outcome satisfactorily using its existing approach.
Definitions

This page sets out the definitions for the main headings in the tool.

**PEOPLE**
- The recruitment, selection, and on-boarding of Security Officers; their relationship with the job and organization throughout their employment; and monitoring of the workforce’s effectiveness.

**ORGANIZATION**
- The establishment of an organizational structure and processes that exemplify clear responsibilities, efficient planning and allocation of staff, and continuous improvement.

**TECHNOLOGY**
- The appropriate selection and implementation of technology that is appropriate, effective, and supports Security Officers in performing their job roles.

**ENVIRONMENT**
- The creation and maintenance of a working environment in which Security Officers can excel and passengers can be processed efficiently.
Contents

This page sets out the categories beneath each of the main headings. Clicking on a heading name will take you to the high level outcome overview for that category. Similarly, each subcategory can be accessed by clicking the buttons below each heading.

When navigating the tables, the subcategory strip indicates which subcategory table you are viewing. Click along the strip to jump to another subcategory.

To return to this page from anywhere in the document (for ease of navigation), click Contents.
High-level outcomes

This page defines a set of high-level outcomes for each category that should be common to all airports.

- **Recruitment**
  - Recruitment processes generate a sufficient pool of eligible candidates prior to down-selection.
  - Recruitment activity is well-timed to provide resources at the time they are needed.

- **Assessment & selection**
  - Candidates selected possess the competencies to excel at the range of functions performed by Security Officers.

- **Training**
  - Training fully prepares the Security Officer for the full range of tasks they are expected to perform and is delivered according to a regime such that the Security Officer’s competence at all tasks is continually maintained above baseline standards.

- **Post-training assessment**
  - Post-training evaluation provides assurance that the trainees are competent to perform the necessary range of security tasks to the required standards.

- **Training evaluation**
  - The organization conducts routine monitoring of its training provision (including Training Needs Analyses) to ensure that it adequately meets the training objectives.

- **Performance management**
  - The organization implements tools and techniques to assess the performance of individual screeners and to implement corrective actions. Remedial training is delivered in such a way that the Security Officer’s performance weaknesses are addressed in a timely and efficient manner. Talented employees are identified and afforded the opportunity to grow within the organization.

- **Motivation & coaching**
  - Security Officers are motivated, supported, monitored for their performance through motivation and coaching.

- **Standards**
  - Standards are set and maintained by those in the role of supervisor and coach.
## Desired Outcome
- Recruitment processes identify a sufficient pool of candidates, based upon business requirements, to allow the appropriate people to be selected

## Initial Approach
- Publicity of vacancy only reaches a few individuals in the general public
- Advertising is limited to local papers
- No external advertising support is considered

## Intermediate Approach
- Publicity reaches a large number of individuals within the general public
- Adverts provide sufficient details on the job to stimulate interest but also allow some self-selection

## Leading Practice
- Publicity reaches a large number of individuals in the general public but is targeted to specific groups from which current employees have previously been sourced successfully
- Current airport employees are encouraged to circulate job adverts amongst friends and family
- Job adverts are posted on the airport website with sufficient description of the job and working environment to allow some self-selection
- Job adverts emphasize the need for customer service skills
- Publicity material is targeted to relevant publications such as trade journals, union materials, and other pan-industry publications

## Recruitment materials
- Recruitment materials clearly describe the role with job previews and allow potential candidates to self-select

## Initial Approach
- A simple job description is provided

## Intermediate Approach
- Job descriptions are supplemented with realistic working job previews communicated to potential candidates

## Leading Practice
- Job descriptions include definitions of role, responsibilities, and duties in addition to working job previews
- Open days allow potential candidates to meet SOs, discuss the job and see the live security operation

## Resource forecasting
- Manpower levels are kept at an optimal level based upon valid and reliable predictors

## Initial Approach
- Recruitment activities commence without target numbers of recruits having been established; or activities are delayed resulting in a shortfall in recruited and trained staff

## Intermediate Approach
- Recruitment activities are driven by resource forecasting but activities commence late or without target numbers of recruits finalized

## Leading Practice
- Recruitment programmes are driven by resource strategy and forecasting
- Programmes are planned and scheduled sufficiently in advance to meet operational demand

## Application forms
- Application forms provide a sufficient quantity of information to allow selection of appropriate candidates

## Initial Approach
- Application forms capture only biographical data

## Intermediate Approach
- Application forms capture biographical data, information required for security vetting, personal profiles, and references

## Leading Practice
- Application forms capture biographical data, competency-based questions, information required for security vetting, and references that can be used to assess suitability