



## NEWS

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### **Outsource your luggage delivery and make travel easier**

With an all-party Aviation Group now discussing plans for luggage-free airports in the UK, along with some airlines either already charging for luggage with cheaper fares, and the premium carriers becoming very strict regarding excess baggage, it is worthwhile highlighting a previous TravelMole article on a company that launched earlier in Australia, called 'Personal Porter'.

A new service called **Personal Porter** has been launched that allows travellers to bypass the traditional check-in at airports. Customers can arrange to have their luggage delivered directly to their destination, prior to their arrival at the destination.

Outsourcing luggage delivery may at first seem a little odd, but closer inspection reveals a number of benefits for all.

#### **First, some details on how it all works:**

The process is kicked off by the customer visiting [www.personalporter.com](http://www.personalporter.com), completing a few simple questions and being presented a quote. Accepting the quote triggers the logistical side of the operation. Allow 10 mins from start to finish.

Customer information from the website is automatically passed to the Personal Porter logistics partner, DHL. There is no re-entry of data or other time-consuming actions required at DHL, the information goes straight into the DHL Manifest system that generates the actual driver manifests.

Next thing you know, a DHL man is knocking on the door. The luggage is checked and sealed on the spot and then enters the DHL system. Generally, 24hrs notice for pick-up is required, but this can vary depending on the final destination. It is anticipated that same-day pickup will be offered in the future, even for far-flung destinations.

The theory is that a customer takes only their hand luggage to the airport, where they join like-minded people to reduce long queues at check-in (ie "Look! No Bags!") and generally move more quickly through the airport. They are much happier and relaxed, and have more time to be tempted into purchases along the way (we know what institution would like the last part!!).

There are twenty checkpoints that all luggage has to pass through. These trigger SMS messages along the way. This means a customer knows

exactly where their luggage is at all times. Very re-assuring to read "Your luggage has cleared customs and is enroute to your hotel" just before you hop on your plane!

When a customer arrives at their final destination, their luggage is there. Pickups and deliveries can be organised wherever DHL has a tentacle, ie lots of places worldwide and lots of places within Australia.

So how does this new service benefit everyone?

### **The customer**

Two key words apply here – NEVER LOST. Personal Porter, through its logistical partner's systems & processes (including checkpoints) always knows where your luggage is in the world. Yes, you may change plans at the last minute, which in turn may mean your luggage is heading elsewhere, but it is never lost, it just needs redirection.

The importance of having luggage that is never lost will vary amongst customers. A professional sportsperson with customised sporting equipment would be the person least likely wanting to hear "We're sorry, your luggage has gone missing....!"

Business people who have to transport goods and equipment are equally interested in ensuring luggage never goes missing and they may have stronger security concerns. However, the big benefit here is that the business person jumps off the plane at their destination and they then sail straight out of the airport. When they arrive at their hotel / office, all their gear is there ready and waiting. Time is money, so there could be some potentially huge savings for businesses using Personal Porter.

For leisure travellers, there are other reasons. A common reason might be just for the sheer convenience and knowledge that their luggage will definitely be delivered to a specific location at a specific date. For example, there is a wedding party travelling to Fiji and there is a need to ensure the Bride & Groom's outfits are there for the big day! It would have been interesting to see where Schapelle Corby would have been today if Personal Porter had delivered her luggage to Bali.....

For group travel, how many times has a whole group of people been held up when just one bag from one person goes missing?!

Which brings us to cost. Many people are still happy to take their chances with the traditional check-in, risk having their luggage mishandled, and try and talk their way out of excess baggage fees (The Mole included!).

The landscape however is changing; carriers are

reducing baggage allowances and discouraging (and penalising!) passengers from exceeding baggage allowance limits. One major airline is shortly to mandate baggage allowances. This means there is no room for negotiation, excess baggage fees will definitely apply. It is expected that other airlines will then adopt similar policies in short order. Taking that extra 10kg to London may cost close to \$500.

Sure, the option of unaccompanied baggage also exists, but the onus is on the customer to drop off, pick up, pay any customs, handling, storage, or other fees and a delivery date cannot be guaranteed. Worst case, a customer may have to incur costs (time & dollars) to return to an airport half way through a holiday to pick up their bags.

So the customer has to weigh up a number of factors when travelling (forgive the pun!), yep the old cost/benefit analysis!

- How important is it that my baggage is not lost?
- What would be the impact if my baggage is mishandled?
- Can I stay below the baggage allowance limit?
- Am I willing to pay for the convenience of door-to-door delivery and security, ie for making my travel experience easier, even if I stay under the baggage allowance?
- Are the excess / unaccompanied baggage fees I'm likely to pay going to be greater than the Personal Porter cost?

Answering these questions should hopefully point people towards the right course of action, suitable for their specific circumstances. The good thing for customers is that there is now a better alternative to excess and unaccompanied baggage fees, however, a significant behavioural change is required in order to use it – luggage must be pre-planned and picked up prior to going to the airport!

### **Industry Benefits**

For logistics companies like DHL, who traditionally have been more business-to-business, a whole new market is now opened up.

For airlines, less baggage = less cost associated with day-to-day luggage handling, reduced aircraft turnarounds, less fuel, possibly even increased cargo revenue. Separating the business of moving

luggage from moving passengers has many attractions!

Equally as important, airlines could begin to reduce the millions of dollars spent each year on sorting out baggage mishandling issues (and subsequent repatriation costs). The statistics are amazing – according to SITA, more than 204,000 pieces of luggage are lost or stolen every year, with over 30 million bags mishandled annually.

On a typical Monday morning at Sydney Airport, between 6am & 9am, arriving passengers will experience the following:

45 bags delayed (average 1 to 1.5 days to resolve each delayed bag)

7 bags tampered

2 bags lost, never to be seen again!

Picture yourself as an inbound tourist for a moment, and your first impression of Sydney might be?!! Reducing these figures has to be good.

The best news of all is that this service can be also be sold on a commission basis by virtually anyone in the industry who comes into contact with luggage, from Travel Agents to concierges.

The Personal Porter model certainly appears to be a good step forward, and it does address the number 1 source of complaint by both airlines and passengers – luggage! However, their biggest challenge lies in educating people that it is OK to outsource their luggage delivery, and then changing the traditional behaviour of lugging everything to the airport and haggling over weight....

A report by The Mole