ModSquad Brings Blue Skies To America's Friendliest Airport

CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF:
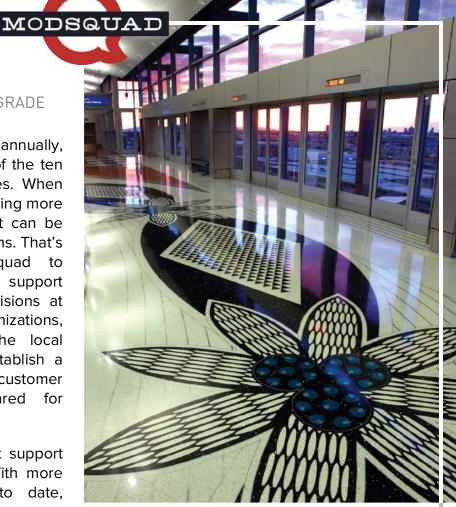### PHX UNDERTAKES A MAJOR CS UPGRADE

Serving 44 million passengers annually, Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport is one of the ten busiest airports in the United States. When any organization is tasked with assisting more than 100,000 customers per day, it can be overwhelming to their support systems. That's why Phoenix relied on ModSquad to implement a Zendesk customer support solution. Working with multiple divisions at the airport, contacts at external organizations, and with key stakeholders in the local government, ModSquad helped establish a user-friendly help portal and customer management system that's cleared for takeoff.

Setting up clients with the Zendesk support solution is old hat to our Mods. With more than 100 Zendesk installations to date, ModSquad has set more organizations up on the platform than any company other than Zendesk itself.

Sky Train Platform

So when Zendesk asked ModSquad to facilitate the introduction of the Zendesk solution to "America's Friendliest Airport," it seemed like a no-brainer.

But setting up the entirety of Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport — which includes scores of restaurants and stores and independent vendors, as well as a total of three sister airports — on one all-encompassing help system? **This would be the mother of all Zendesk installations.**

As a city entity with so many moving parts, Phoenix Sky Harbor knew that their needs were unique. The typical Zendesk configuration would not work for this endeavor. PHX needed someone who could dedicate the appropriate time and resources

to the project. ModSquad provided the optimal solution, laying out an implementation plan that would cover all touchpoints while allowing for a client-friendly timeline.

ModSquad helped prove the concept behind the Zendesk solution to key stakeholders. This was a big transition from the way that operations had been maintained at the airport. The former customer-communication model consisted of a rudimentary web form on the airport's existing website, which simply sent email notifications into a general inbox. The airport's agents would either forward these messages or answer them, without the luxury of a tracking system behind the form, or even an elegant interface. That was all about to change.

THE ZENDESK CONSULTING PROCESS: THE 30,000-FOOT VIEW

AUDIT
Jay Biros, ModSquad's account manager and head of the Zendesk consulting team for this project, set up an initial audit. "The first step for clients with an existing Zendesk instance is to audit their settings to make sure that best practices are in effect," explains Biros. "We do that with clients who don't have a Zendesk account as well. We audit their support process before the design phase just to make sure everything is optimal."

DESIGN
In this phase, the ModSquad team meets with key stakeholders to learn their support processes and procedures, as well as any software that would need to be integrated with their Zendesk instance. ModSquad then determines which Zendesk features and functionalities will complement existing workflows that support best practices, and which will serve to improve the scalability of their support operations.

IMPLEMENTATION
Once the design is client-approved, ModSquad walks the team through flowcharts or Zendesk designs to illustrate how things will work, with key stakeholders signing off on the process. When possible, one department is selected to serve as "proof of concept," so that the system and settings can be demonstrated to all other departments. For PHX, Biros and airport agents identified the department that could serve as this proof of concept. Recalls Biros, "Ground transportation was a great opportunity. With Zendesk, we could create the tickets, triggers, and automations. We got in there and began testing it." Soon the entire department was up and running, allowing the Mods to demonstrate to the Phoenix team how Zendesk would work.

CONFIGURATION
Over the course of the next phase, ModSquad implemented the Zendesk agent interface, developed a ticket-deletion script to ensure adherence to all airport regulations, and customized the online Help Center to mimic Sky Harbor's brand. "We usually start with ticket forms," says Biros. "Once they're built out, it allows for more of the end-user experience to be seen. We develop their ticket queues and business rules, so that tickets move between queues properly." Once the account is functional, the client is invited to test while the Mods continue enhancing the system with notifications, macros, branding, reporting, dashboards, and other client-specific business needs. "Then we move into the end user-facing Help Center, creating a knowledge-base structure and loading relevant articles that have been created." ModSquad's web development team then skins the Help Center with the brand's look and feel. In the case of Phoenix Sky Harbor, the Help Center was made to look similar to the new website that was being deployed. This gave travelers a visually consistent overall user experience.
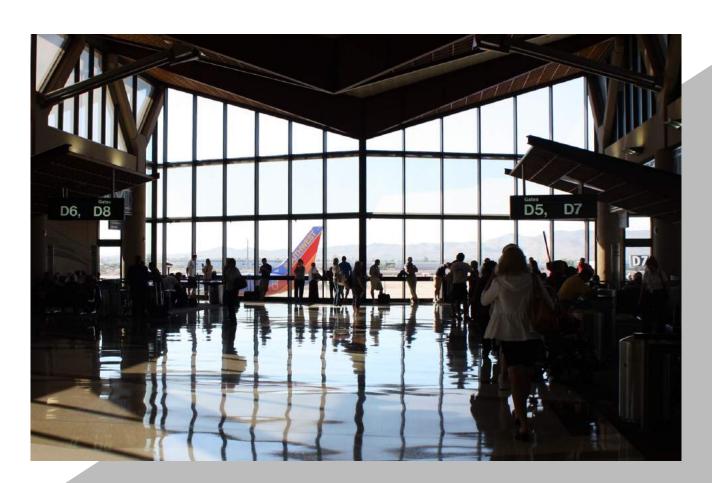
REPORTING

Following the configuration phase, the Mods run reports that are populated with data from the test tickets. These reports are then composed from the default Zendesk output to more closely compliment the client's precise needs. The Mods then build dashboards for each client user to see all relevant reports in one place. These dashboards can be emailed if needed, creating a reliable automated process that keeps all key stakeholders up-to-date. Upon completion, all tests and dashboards are deleted, and the client starts with a clean slate. As soon as tickets are created in a production environment, reports are populated naturally.

TRAINING

ModSquad typically completes each Zendesk consulting project with web-based training, so that the client's agents can be properly familiarized with all systems. Due to the complexity of this installation, and the large number of admins and users involved, ModSquad provided onsite training for all of Phoenix Sky Harbor's departments, from the airlines to the managerial team. The Mods, along with an airport representative, trained all of the agents and relevant admins on the Zendesk settings and how to further work within their system. Notes Biros, "PHX is using their Help Center as a feedback tool for airline customers, gathering feedback about ground transportation, the airlines, and the TSA. It's the first time I've ever seen Zendesk used in this way, and shows how we can customize functionality for each client."
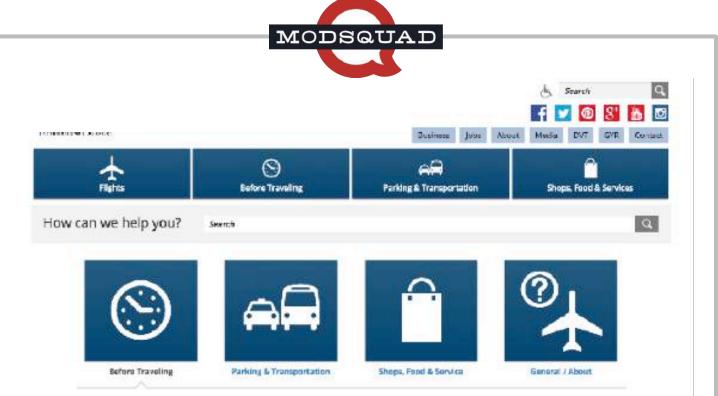
Image of PHX Help Desk

ROGER THAT: MODSQUAD MAKES IT HAPPEN

This was not a typical engagement. Where ModSquad might frequently spend a few days working with a client from audit through training, this assignment was considerably more complex and took much longer. But that was by design.

"ModSquad received great feedback from the client," reports Biros. "They appreciated our patience, and as they realized that it wasn't going to be quick and easy, they found it helpful that we stayed in there and were available when we were needed for guidance. With so many moving parts at PHX, things can often move slowly. We were aware that something that would normally take a small period of time elsewhere might take a few months to go through approvals. Add to that seasonal needs and other events at the airport, and it can eat away at your time."

ModSquad's flexibility was a boon for the airport team. Given their scheduling issues, ModSquad helped map out when the team would sit down with people, proof things out, build triggers, and show how everything would work. But it was worth the wait, as both teams reported an absolute change for the better.

Even when the project saw changes in scope, ModSquad provided the resources needed to get the job done. When the Phoenix team decided to customize their online Help Center, it became apparent that additional coding resources would be required. ModSquad brought in a development team to make it happen. Confirms Biros, "They told us that they definitely couldn't have done it without ModSquad."

A PERFECT LANDING: PHX IS A-OK

The earlier version of the airport website's feedback page was a simple, rudimentary form. Now, the new system-wide Help Center allows patrons to target the airport department in which they're interested. With a significant amount of self-help material available, the site is more user-friendly and technologically efficient than ever before. "They've added more articles and links to the Help Center, and the entire system is now providing real benefits to the end user. I've heard only positive feedback about the upgrade," says Biros.

And the public is certainly making use of the new help portal. Before the launch, Sky Harbor Airport was receiving more than 200 e-mailed help requests per week. Those requests are down to an average of 22 tickets per week.

"It's been interesting," reveals Biros. "After we went live, the client thought the system wasn't working correctly, because the amount of requests plummeted. It was discovered that the Help Center was aiding travelers, and an inquiry wasn't needed. The overall system has been more efficient, allowing the airport's PR team to spend time on reporting and trends, and seeing which articles are more helpful than others. It's been great for tracking and efficiency."

With so many disparate groups brought together for this Zendesk project — from merchants and food-service staffers to security to parking and transportation teams, at three area airports — it was no small task to satisfy all of the requirements of Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport. But ModSquad's consulting team helped bring it all together as one, a unified customer-support solution that serves to underscore PHX's well-earned reputation as America's Friendliest Airport.