

EUROPEAN AIRPORT RETAILING

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European Airport Retailing: Growth Strategies for the New Millennium

Paul Freathy

and

Frank O'Connell





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*To Iris and Iestyn – greater gratitude than can be
expressed in words*

To my father, Frank R. for the love of reading

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Preface and Acknowledgements

They say that opposites attract. To me, airports and aeroplanes were always a childhood fascination, now, 25 years later, little has been done to change my opinion or to dampen that early enthusiasm. Airports represent a microcosm of cultural and social diversity. An opportunity for the academic to study, to measure, to test, to hypothesise, to evaluate and, when the last piece of data has been analysed, the opportunity to experience the excitement of flying. The unbridled power that is exuded from a 747 as it begins to take off, the feeling of disbelief as the 400-tonne aircraft struggles into the air and, ultimately, when the drinks trolley is trundled down the aisle, the chance for one to fantasise about the glamour of being an airline pilot.

Fortunately for this book, the publishers and my career, my colleague and co-author Frank O'Connell has a more realistic and sane view of the air transport industry. Honed out of years of practical experience, he has on more than one occasion had to remove words and phrases such as 'dead brilliant', 'fab' and 'Marxist dialectic'. Through his vast array of contacts this book has become a reality. Scribbled notes have become sentences, sentences have become paragraphs, paragraphs have become chapters and ultimately chapters have become drafts. Collaborative work between academia and industry has much to commend it and this partnership has been one that we have both enjoyed.

Our objective in undertaking this research was to compose a text that had both an academic foundation as well as a practical intent. It has been written to appeal to both an academic and practitioner audience and attempts to convey an understanding of a dynamic and transitory industry. In this sense the book aims to provide a practical understanding of the factors that influence, structure and mediate the functioning of airport retailing.

Apart from the roars of self-congratulation and congenial backslapping that took place when this book was finally completed, there are a number of individuals who have provided us with considerable assistance. Help it is said comes in many forms, those who provided us with interviews include Guntram Brendel, Ray La Comber, Doug Newhouse, Theo van Alphen, Joke Lutterman, Tony Haines, Wilco Sweijen, Roger

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Special thanks to my dear son Iestyn who encouraged a rewrite of Chapter 7 by dropping my original manuscript into our toilet. Ken – thanks for the phone call.	My special thanks to Carmel, Aisling and Fiona for their patience both in Tavnagh and Dublin during my many hours at the keyboard.
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P.F.

F.X. O'C. November 1997

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