



THREE QUESTIONS WITH PETER AMARO, CEO OF MASTER CONCESSIONAIR

Master ConcessionAir, the Miami-based airport concessionaire with an array of both national brands and proprietary concepts in its portfolio, has been making its name known lately. In 2018, Master ConcessionAir opened two innovative concessions spaces at the Miami International Airport, with plans to bring more unique shopping and dining options to airports this year. AXN's Shafer Ross spoke with CEO Peter Amaro to discuss the company's plans for the future.

ROSS: What's the outlook for 2019? Where are you building out stores and which new opportunities do you plan to pursue?

AMARO: There are many opportunities in the pipeline. What seems to be the trend is airports looking to offer an elevated culinary and retail shopping experience, while cultivating sustainability and local sense of place.



In addition, the airports are continuously seeking technology which can deliver an improved and more seamless customer experience. Everyone is so connected and with the Millennials' ever-growing presence in the travel arena, we must continuously improve our technology and make it a seamless travel experience.

We are providing mobile offerings at Sergio's Café Cart and a Craft Beer Cart, which we will be opening in the very near future. We just opened a Samsonite store in Orlando. One cool feature is the store has two airplane seats and two overhead compartments, so the traveler can actually test their bags before making a purchase. We also opened a Sbarro Pizza in Atlanta. The space used to be an oversized holding area for Delta, which now actually produces revenue for both them and the airport.

ROSS: Regarding the recent Desigual "cube" and Tous cart that opened in Miami, can you discuss the increasing demand for concessions beyond the typical inline spaces?

AMARO: There are several reasons for this type of pop-up solution. One is the airport seeking temporary offerings as they enter construction or remodel. Another reason is they are looking for a new experience or incremental revenues. Also, space in airports is becoming much more constrained, so we must become more creative as to how we approach retail and F&B solutions.

This is the case for our Tous and Desigual pop-ups in MIA; they answer all the above. They can adapt to different footprints and are also easily relocated in just hours. They are also very approachable since they are located within 10 feet of the traveler's path as they walk to their gates. They have no walls which sometimes can act as barriers to the traveler. The travelers are able to easily view the merchandise offerings, which increases your chances of capturing their business.

We have also just delivered two mobile carts. One is a going to be local Cuban favorite by the name of Sergio's Café. It will offer travel friendly finger foods, sandwiches, empanadas and coffee. The other is a Craft Beer Cart, which will offer an array of locally crafted beers.

Real-estate in airports seems to continue to become scarce, so we feel these innovative pop-ups can really fulfill a need for additional F&B and retail offerings where traditional space is sparse.

ROSS: Millennial and Gen Z travelers are starting to influence the airport shopping and dining experience, how are you tweaking your offering to appeal to the younger generations of travelers?

AMARO: By creating as much of a seamless experience as possible from home to destination. Millennials are about sustainable and environmentally-conscious solutions. They spend more on the experience and travel more often.

And of course, social media, which takes connectivity in an airport to a new level. If you are doing things right and delivering the experience these outlets enable stories, pictures and status updates to go viral, and tell your story very quickly. Millennials want to tell the story: a unique find, destination or experience.

Mobile ordering and payment solutions is our number-one concern. We are also offering self-ordering solutions, where they do not have to await service nor have to speak to anyone. Millennials love technology and hunger for more, as well as the latest and greatest!

A recent study from Airbnb reveals that millennials are more interested in spending their money on experiences rather than big purchases, and that same study also found that Millennials crave authentic experiences, with eight of 10 respondents reporting that the best way to get acquainted with a country is to live like a local. Millennials are constantly sharing their experiences so make sure it is a great one.