



MEMPHIS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

RETAIL CONCESSIONS PLANNING AND REDEVELOPMENT

Company profile

- Established in 1989, as Unison Consulting Group
- Became UNISON-MAXIMUS, a wholly owned subsidiary of Maximus 1999
- Acquired in 2008 by UCG Associates now doing business as Unison Consulting
- More than 100 airport clients have benefited from our firm's consultant expertise
- Experienced senior staff with more than 150 years of industry experience
- Firm's senior staff have held management positions with airports, airlines, the FAA, government consulting firms and other national aviation consulting firms
- Professional consultants are experts in economics, finance, retail concessions, airport planning, information technology, and airport management

Challenge

Anticipating the expiration of long-term concession leases, the Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority engaged Unison Consulting, formerly UNISON-MAXIMUS, in association with ARP Consulting and Architectural Alliance, to examine the existing concessions program to determine opportunities for enhancement and develop a new program specific to the needs and preferences of passengers and other Airport users.

Solution

The Unison team developed a comprehensive business plan to achieve the objectives of the Authority to create a world-class airport concessions program, provide opportunities for Memphis businesses, and maximize revenues to the Airport and its concessionaires:

- **Merchandise Plan** – The recommended merchandise plan was based on a review of the existing program, passenger preferences and needs developed through a passenger survey, and the latest airport concession trends. Also, the team worked with the Authority and airlines to re-locate concession space to the highest traffic areas of the airport in order to increase revenues, provide for varied merchandise concepts, as well as create a “sense of place” for the Memphis airport.
- **Leasing Strategy** – We developed a leasing strategy that increased the selection and depth of the merchandise offerings, created opportunities for local and disadvantaged businesses and increased competition within the retail program yet maintained financial viability for multiple concessionaires.



- **Design Theme Development** – The Unison team developed a retail theme “Changing the Region ...Connecting the World” to reflect Memphis’ historical role in the development of music, culture, and transportation. In addition to influencing the design, branding and merchandising of individual stores and restaurants, the design theme was captured in various common area enhancements, most notably a new central rotunda in Concourse B, the most heavily trafficked part of the airport. Unison also created an innovative financing plan whereby the common area improvements and other redevelopment costs were funded at no net cost of the Authority without affecting concessionaire long-term financial viability.
- **Request for Proposals and Lease Development** – The team provided critical guidance to the Authority to develop requests for proposals and lease documents that described the opportunities, program requirements, and terms and conditions of solicitation and operations. The Unison team also provided proposal review and selection advice to the Authority’s selection committee.
- **DBE/Outreach Program** – The team closely worked with the Authority to develop and implement outreach strategies to generate maximum program participation by local and minority businesses.

Results

The business and common area improvement plans were implemented beginning in late 2003 with a competitive RFP process, award of contracts in early 2004, and construction – including enhancements to the common areas – from 2004 until completion in early 2005. The new concessions program is an unqualified success with respect to quality of design, variety of concepts and incorporation of Memphis themes. Further, the program has exceeded the minimum DBE participation goals and achieved a financial structure that allows for competitive returns to the airport and a fair profit to the prime concessionaires and their subtenants and partners.

Industry Awards:

- 2006 *ACI* Griesbach Award of Excellence
- 2006 *ACI* Best Food & Beverage Program (medium airports)