

“In food & beverage we tried to create local flavour as much as possible,” says de Graaff.

“You see it in Shake Shack, an institution in the USA through chef Danny Meyer; in concepts such as Uptown Brasserie from Marcus Samuelsson which are custom-made for this location, and the new SSP coffee concept, Flatiron.

“We want to give people a flavour of the city. We have a growing number of people connecting here, from Europe or Asia and going onwards in the USA, or the other way round, and they only spend a little time here. New York has a name that resonates, it’s cool and trendy and exciting, and if we can give them a flavour of that, then we have done our job. Also, for visitors or New Yorkers departing, we offer

Bluwire’s template for technology



At JFK Terminal 4 Pacific Gateway Concessions (PGC) operates two of the most striking consumer technology operations you’ll see at an airport, with its vibrant, eye-catching Bluwire concept in the A and B concourses.

PGC (which operates the retail brand under licence from Bluwire) says it has tailored the offer to the broad and diverse passenger mix at T4.

“We supply our stores with a strong line-up of high performance and well-known brands,” says PGC Head of Business Development and Marketing Kenneth Howe. “This focus on key brands serves the exceptional international base of both leisure and business travellers as well as the domestic travellers served by T4.

“We complement the branded range with essentials such as auxiliary power sources, charging cables and adapter kits. We have seen success with this approach across all the core traveller groups, because staying connected

has become more important than ever. The travellers on Asian, European and Middle Eastern routes are a core focus, but we are well balanced with a strong tie to our US domestic customers.”

Engaging the consumer with innovative services – among them the Blu Lounge where travellers can use and charge their devices – is a key element in delivering a fresh retail proposition.

“In all of our brands and locations PGC is focused on engaging and delighting travellers,” says Howe. “With Bluwire we accomplish that through the inclusion of exceptional technology, and meaningful ways for T4 passengers to engage with it – from product demonstration to personalising the experience by having a traveller play their own music on our featured technology.” PGC says it plans to evolve this theme of service and the personal experience in the future.

Amid fast-changing trends, purchasing for the tech category in travel retail is

a perennial challenge. PGC says it is partly insulated from this by its focus on consumer needs. “Nevertheless,” it acknowledges, “we still face challenges with scarcity of high-demand product and the overall explosion of the industry.”

There are other challenges too. “In light of the tremendous growth of the category we also see competition as a factor, both traditional competition with technology footprints growing in general merchandise shops and to a lesser extent customers browsing and experiencing our fantastic products but choosing to purchase online instead.

“[Also] the inherent challenges of airport retailing are a challenge in the tech category. The time-bound nature of our customer base poses challenges for weighing and acting on purchase decisions, especially at the high end. At the other end of the spectrum speed of service is a major factor, preventing customers from walking away or choosing not to browse due to perceptions of time of service.”

But there are solutions. “PGC addresses the first [of these challenges] by informing our staff so that they can convey valuable purchasing information to customers and by offering our goods at compelling and competitive pricing.

“With regard to speed of service, Pacific Gateway has deployed mobile PoS systems to ensure quick service, the ability to break queuing lines quickly and improve the overall convenience of purchases.”