

Baggage Services at Nederlandse Spoorwegen

Public Summary | Sam van Rosendaal

During the COVID period, trains have been considerably quieter. Now that the pandemic is showing signs of retracting, the crowds are starting to return to the train. When the pandemic is over, a problem that is known to NS from before the pandemic is expected to return. When trains get more crowded, for instance during the rush hours, baggage causes an issue. With people bringing large amounts of baggage, seating space is sacrificed. With public transport being expected to grow in passenger numbers, the baggage over-abundance will likely escalate to a point where annoyances will lead to a drop in customer satisfaction. The purpose of this project is to find a solution to combat the over-abundance of baggage on the train, by designing a conceptual framework for a baggage policy where both travellers and staff have a clear visual of what is and what is not allowed on the train.

Research was done to the definition of baggage and the existing rules and policies at NS. Also, the different types of baggage that passengers bring was analysed using a questionnaire. Next, the significant baggage items were identified in order to find reasons for exceptions in the policy. Lastly, other industries such as aviation and bus / coach lines were investigated to find inspiration in their policies and motivations. The baggage policies of both aviation and bus / coach travel were found to be similar in the sense that they shared a division in different baggage types, each separated by limits in size and sometimes weight. This final piece of research has formed the base for the remainder of the design process.

After research, an analysis was done to find the interests of the main stakeholders: NS, Passengers, and Staff. Possible physical solutions for the baggage problem were discussed and eventually the conclusion was drawn that a well-constructed policy would be the most sufficient way of controlling baggage behaviour. Knowing this, the design principles of NS were analysed and used as a guideline in the further design process.

To define the Baggage Service Policy, the main problems with the current baggage policy were defined. It was found that the current policy was too vague to be considered a reason to maintain it. In addition to that, the lack of people who knew the policy actually existed after doing informal research was reason enough to spend time defining a way to communicate the Service Policy to the public.

The ideal Baggage Service Policy was found to consist of a limited amount of free baggage items and then a number of additional options requiring a dedicated baggage ticket. To find a constructed balance in the number of free items, a similar separation was made as the one used in aviation and bus / coach lines: hand baggage, large baggage, and special baggage. Hand baggage is limited at 85 cm. in each direction, with a maximum amount of 3 free pieces. Large baggage is limited at 150 cm. in any direction, with a maximum amount of 1 free piece. Special baggage has its own set of rules which is customised for each separate item. The total number of free baggage items a person is allowed to bring is 3 pieces, meaning that large and special baggage items swap out a hand baggage slot. If a passenger wishes to bring more than 3 pieces of baggage, a baggage ticket can be bought. Baggage tickets allow the passenger to bring 1 additional piece of baggage. A passenger can buy up to 2 baggage tickets.

- hand baggage



- large baggage



- total

