HOW CONTACTLESS PAYMENT & SERVICES TECHNOLOGIES ARE CHANGING AIRLINES

News / Airlines

Over the last couple years, contactless payment and services technologies have been playing increasingly larger roles in modern airlines all over the world. In 2019, WeChat Pay partnered with Yandex.Checkout to provide contactless payments for the more than 50 retail stores located inside Russia's Sheremetyevo International Airport. This was a significant development in digital payments, especially considering how the airport is a key location for both European and Asian travellers.

Meanwhile, this year, following Wizz Air UK's announcement of new travel routes , the company also encouraged passengers to complete onboard purchases using contactless payment methods. In this case, digital payments are paired with the airline's concerted efforts to ensure the health and safety of passengers who will be travelling during the global health crisis. This has been a key driver in the transformation of payment technologies. In fact, duty-free commerce, onboard purchases, and retail are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of how these new contactless technologies are changing the way airlines do business across the globe.

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AirAsia, which operates in different airports across Japan, Philippines, Malaysia, and other countries has begun implementing contactless kiosks as part of its robotic process automation (RPA) upgrade. Paying for tickets is just one of the many things passengers can do through their new RPA-enabled features, which can be used for printing baggage tags as well as boarding passes. AirAsia's contactless kiosks work with the company's mobile app to give travellers the option of a wholly contactless check-in process. And apart from helping their passengers to comply with new international health and safety standards, AirAsia's RPA upgrade also leads to improving internal productivity. "RPA will allow our workforce to automate mundane and repetitive tasks, which will free up valuable time to focus on other tasks that require thinking and experience-based judgment," details Azli Mohammed, the company's Chief Transformation Officer.

This underscores arguably the most significant way in which contactless payments and services technologies will change the world's airlines through efficient data consolidation. Alongside the rapid digital transformation of airline-related transactions comes a wealth of customer and business data, which airlines can use for any number of purposes – including navigating new airline regulations.

Apart from cutting edge commerce technologies, the airline payment solutions on FIS Global highlights how they also involve regulatory and licencing challenges as well as the expansion of distribution channels. With business data being gathered through contactless payment and services channels, airlines that actively consolidate data for business intelligence will be able to quickly adjust to new aviation-related regulations, which apart from payment processes now include the strictest health regulations as well. This is particularly true for airlines operating via London's Heathrow Airport, where new health and safety requirements have been put in place in order to minimise physical contact.

The new technologies that enable contactless payment and service processes for travellers go way beyond customer convenience. They also open a range of benefits for airlines – from increased productivity and regulatory compliance to data consolidation and better business intelligence. As physical distancing requirements continue to be imposed across airports and aviation operations across the world, contactless technologies will continue to play a larger role in the entire global travel industry.

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