OBT Hack

How forward-thinking organizations embraced the travel managers’ call for more innovation in the Corporate Booking Tool space and got involved in a 28-hour unique hackathon.
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Executive Summary

In 2015 IATA established its first Travel Manager Advisory Group (TMAG), in Europe, to engage with the business travel value chain in order to understand how the New Distribution Capability (NDC) standard would affect this community in terms of challenges, opportunities and benefits.

Over the past years, this group of over 30 passionate professionals across Europe and North America created a vision for the future: they generated ideas for new airline products and services for the business travel community (Taking The Reins report) and reflected on the future TMC value proposition in a new and fast evolving distribution landscape (Time To Fly report).

The group realized that what is key to make NDC a reality is that the value and benefits enabled by this technologic standard is reflected in traveler-facing tools – in other words the Online Booking Tool (OBTs). The momentum was here.

So, TMAG focused time and energy on developing a call to action for the OBT community.

As a result, IATA conducted a special event - traditionally aimed at a tech audience: a hackathon (#HackAIR). This marathon for developers specifically targeted OBTs with the purpose of highlighting innovation in this sector and demonstrating their ability to develop new capabilities from NDC content.

Within a 28-hour coding marathon, twelve teams developed prototypes of solutions enabled by NDC APIs (Application Programming Interface) as well as travel-related APIs.

The ideas generated fell into five broad development areas:

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“Supporting innovation in the OBT space is really important to me and my industry peers. The technology we utilize is a vital component to managing our travel policy and availability of rich content is essential to providing the experience our travelers expect. I was excited to be part of this event and to be among OBT providers who clearly have the same focus and desire to innovate.”

Nikki Foster,
Travel Category Manager,
Veritas Technologies LLC
#HACKAIR MENTOR & JURY MEMBER

Bleisure travel /ˈblɪʒə/ is a portmanteau of “business” and “leisure”, and, it refers to “the activity of combining business travel with leisure time”.

Across the 12 companies participating, three broad product strategies appear to have emerged:

1. Development of new NDC content and booking capability – build aggregation capabilities
2. Enhancement of existing features – integrate rich content and new services that were not available in a non-NDC world
3. Go beyond NDC… – Build features and new experiences around what NDC enables

A full list of solutions developed by the teams who accepted the challenge can be found in this document. And while the actual ideas might be useful to airlines and to any business travel service provider looking to create value in the travel technology space, it is the potential for innovation, true enhancements taking into consideration travelers and company needs and the demonstration that travel buyers see an urge to enhance the OBT proposition which matters the most. So welcome to the story of #HackAIR, where travel managers who care decided to foster innovation and challenge key tech players to become better.

Get your running shoes on.

A Parallel Insight in 2019

In addition to fostering innovation in the Online Booking Tool (OBT) space, the TMAG also concurrently turned the lens on themselves and have thought about the evolution of the travel program and their future roles. As a result, IATA has facilitated a design-thinking exercise, referred to as a “Propathon”, to develop their view of the Short and Long Term Changes Required to Accelerate to a Managed Travel Program in a New Distribution Landscape. The insights and results of that exercise can be seen in the Step on the Gas report.
Innovate... or Die: the Need for OBTs to step up

What particularly stood out in TMAG work and recent discussions, is that if there is one sector in the industry that particularly needs innovation, it’s the OBT sector.

As we witness more and more tangible NDC developments across the industry - with major announcements every week from different players of the value chain, the key for NDC to become a reality is to get traveler-facing booking tools to invest more efforts and budget in developing new capabilities from NDC content. Especially in a context where most of the bookings are already happening online for eligible flights and where there is a rising appetite from travelers asking for more modern and similar tools to the ones they already use (and love!) in their daily life.

The OBT forms a key component of any managed travel program: the latter has to be supported by a solid distribution/service platform (resulting from joint efforts and combination of TMC and OBT services) in order to deliver value and unleash its full potential.

Travel managers are very aware that upgrading their travel program will come with a certain number of benefits and even tackles HR interests with impacts on employee satisfaction and on talent acquisition and retention.

Looking beyond the travel manager’s lenses, it seems obvious that it is about taking the airline / travel manager / OBT / TMC relationship to the next level. There is a common industry interest in accelerating NDC developments in a fast-evolving distribution landscape – and airlines are in high demand for that.

So, the time has come to foster true innovation!

“The reality is that corporate travel should be easier to buy. We need to bridge the gap between what the consumer tools offer today and how quickly they are evolving, and the capabilities of the corporate booking tools. I’m excited we have so many open-minded players joining IATA hackathon. Our industry is ready to see what innovations can be developed in order to bring OBTs to the new distribution era, and ultimately improve the user experience and value proposition for business travelers.”

Diane Lundeen Smith, Global Travel Sourcing Manager, MS Travel, Microsoft

“From an end-user perspective i.e. the traveler, the value of a travel program manifests itself through their company Online Booking Tool. What cannot be found in the corporate tool in terms of content, features or User Experience generates frustration, distrust and has ultimately an impact on travel program adherence.

We are all consumers before being business travelers and it is not an option to elevate B2B tools and bring more value to all parties”.

Aurélie Krau, Consultant & Tech Geek, FESTIVE ROAD

“It’s all about collaboration. It is critical for an airline to be able to display the diversity of our products and services in B2B tools the same way as in consumer tools. This allow us to make sure business travelers get the best experience and travel buyers create more value. The hackathon was a great opportunity to interact with the community of developers. We heard how they use our API and develop innovative features to modernize Online Booking Tools and allow us to optimize our indirect booking channels.”

Cliff Trotta, Director Sales, Distribution and Commercial Planning, Iberia

#HACKAIR MENTOR AND JURY MEMBER
As a direct result of its TMAG’s guidance, IATA has powered a hackathon specifically designed for corporate booking tools, with the presence of corporate buyers and industry experts providing insights and mentoring teams of developers.

IATA’s #HackAIR hackathon series have been around for 3+ years now, travelling the globe (learn more IATA’s AirTech-Zone) and looking at innovative solutions to take airline retailing to the next level.

Why a hackathon?
A hackathon is a perfect environment to encourage open innovation: share ideas, meet new people, network, LEARN. It’s a win-win situation. IATA have been witness to what innovations can be achieved in the hackathon process. Why wouldn’t that be the case in the business travel tech sector?

Who was invited and who came?
Any user facing technology which allows the booking of air products in a corporate environment was invited. Each company invited sent a team at their own cost.

A total of 12 teams composed of software developers, innovators, product managers and marketers embraced the challenge (the event was at full capacity). They were established companies, start-ups and even outsiders who took this opportunity to explore development opportunities in the business travel sector.

A list of all invited companies is available at the end of this document.

Despite the efforts in focusing time and energy on engaging the OBT community on behalf of TMAG, many renowned industry OBT names and new entrants didn’t show the level of interest in this hackathon that the TMAG would have liked. There may be many reasons for this of course, but we persevered and want to express huge admiration for those that committed.

The commitment of companies present at the event was exceptional and creative ideas were brought to life and truly highlighted new perspectives for the next generation of Online Booking Tools – enriched with NDC capabilities.

Where and when? Madrid, Spain, June 2019

What was the focus? IATA has worked together with TMAG and Festive Road to develop challenges aimed at guiding participants on development areas that refer to actual needs and pain points and echo innovation areas travel managers want to see.

**Challenge #1 | CONTENT & UI**

How to develop innovative features, offer exhaustive content and various ancillaries while providing an enjoyable user experience?

**Background:** Travel managers want to offer a better experience to their travelers through richer content and a better user interface. The idea is to go beyond comparison based on price and schedule and better leverage ancillary services (e.g. in-flight WiFi, in-flight menu, seat selection, priority boarding, priority luggage delivery, extra luggage allowance, fast track, lounge access, airport transfer…).

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"We have always been hackathon supporters. What you can achieve within such a limited time frame is exciting and clearly demonstrates the power of efficient API implementation. This time, we welcomed the challenge to explore the business travel sector and to redesign the traditional way of booking trips for work purposes. Interacting with Online Booking Tools with a similar mindset has been very constructive and is good for the industry!"

David Friderici, Vice President & Head of Product Management and Strategy - Airline Travel Services at IBS Software Europe Limited
Challenge #2 | PERSONALIZATION

How to mix effectively corporate contracts with individual recognition—while granting control on travel policy specifics?

Background: The consumer world in which we all live in has been increasingly influencing our habits and we expect more from tools we are using in our professional life. Personalization is the new normal. One size doesn’t fit all. It is not an option: corporate booking tools need to evolve accordingly and to develop capabilities that meet both travelers and company needs.

Challenge #3 | DATA

How to foster the new data power to enhance visibility on costs by providing aggregated reporting?

Background: Travel managers want a holistic view on spending. Thanks to NDC connectivity, ancillary services for example can now be booked at Point of Sale (POS), offering a much better and real-time visibility on costs and providing more accurate information on travelers’ behaviors. This shall now be reflected in the reporting capabilities booking tools offer.

The developers’ playground: what data was made available to developers

NDC APIs:

Travel APIs:

“...We’re excited by the potential for NDC to improve the business travel experience, but having to build a bespoke integration with each airline is a huge barrier to adoption. We’ve designed our API platform to make that way easier, so you only have to build one easy integration. The hackathon was a unique opportunity to get feedback, prove our solution in the wild and support innovation.”

Tim Rogers, Head of Airline Partnerships, Duffel

Bringing to life the first IATA Hackathon dedicated to OBTS

PHASE 1

Set the scope: develop challenges

Challenges have been developed and validated by TMAG with the objective of providing guidance to developers on actual industry needs/pain points and areas where innovation is needed

Engage with the OBT community

Established companies and stakeholders already knowledgeable on the NDC standard and very well familiar with the corporate travel world were primarily targeted.

Round 1: invitations were issued and sent out to OBTs*. Acceptances were managed on a first come, first served basis due to limited availability.

Round 2: promotion on social media for other companies wanting to join the hack – depending on availability. Any traveler-facing tool was eligible.

* A full list is provided at the end of this document

PHASE 2 – Ideation I

Eight days before the start of the hackathon, every participating team had the opportunity to submit their ideas and collect feedback from mentors on a collaborative platform.

They could also get access to the different API documentation to start nurturing their ideas.

PHASE 3 – Hackathon

Kick-off: initial pitch

Each team had one minute to pitch their idea to the jury and mentors and collect feedback (in the form of red/green cards)

Ideation II & Coding

A 28-hour coding marathon with constant interactions with mentors (including buyers’ insights) and API providers providing tech support.

Workshop

Golden rule: no outside support allowed, all lines of code had to be developed on site.

Delivery of a workshop on business travel specifics – sharing insights into the work of TMAG and current industry and buyers’ challenges

Final demonstration

Each team demonstrated the solution they have developed within this 28-hour time frame - in front of all participants and jury members – followed by a Q&A session.
PHASE 3 – Hackathon

Jury deliberation

The jury members deliberated to select the winning ideas based on 6 criteria:
1. Use of NDC API
2. Challenge solved
3. Originality
4. Innovation
5. Business potential
6. User Experience

Who were the judges:
- Nikki Foster, Travel Category Manager, Veritas Technologies LLC
- Cliff Trotta, Director Sales, Distribution and Commercial Planning, Iberia
- Michael Peters – Co-Founder, Product, Research & Development, Kambr
- Stéphan Copart, Head of Project and Innovation, IATA
- Aurélie Krau, Consultant & Tech geek, FESTIVE ROAD

PHASE 4 – Socialization

- The winning ideas were collated and presented back to the industry via AirTechZone and NDC Hub newsletter
- Upcoming IATA events – winning teams will have the opportunity to present their solutions at future events.
- All team ideas were collated and presented in this paper

Publication and distribution:
This paper is intended to drive interest and debate into what types of OBT innovation travel buyers and their travelers would derive value from; initiate the dialogue between buyers, OBTs, airlines and the value chain in-between; and to demonstrate that for these travel buyers, there is a real interest in the potential for NDC enabled content.

“Digital transformation in the airline sector is a reality: we are moving from airline distribution to airline retailing. At IATA we have been engaging with many innovators for years. While we are in the process of launching our incubation program, this 12th IATA AIR Hackathon was different from the others. I was thrilled to witness the appetite for innovation of Online Booking Tools who have joined us to revolutionize the way we book business trips. IATA programs like NDC and ONE Order bring exciting changes to the business travel industry”.

Stéphan Copart, Head of Project and Innovation, IATA
#HACKAIR JURY MEMBER
Winner ideas
NON-CORPORATE: NDC OBT Prize

#Wellbeing

**Team name:** FLAPS  
**Company name:** Awesometrip  
**Team members:** Kit Brennan, Mark Corbett  
**Contact details:** kit@awesometrip.com & mark@awesometrip.com

**URL to online demo**

**Description:** The Flaps team created a solution that makes the comparison of employees’ hourly rate versus the cost of ancillary services that can make them available in order to be productive.

i.e. the travel manager can enter the estimated cost of employee’s hours (USD100/hour). If in a specific airport the estimated waiting time at security is 25 minutes at time his/her flight is leaving, the system will cross check the employee hour cost with fast track cost (USD10) in order to make the employee available for work.

The solution also provides a dashboard with all ancillary services consumed by the company. This enable the travel manager to see the costs of all ancillary costs versus the time recovered by employees.

**Value:** traveler value, corporate value

**An interview with FLAPS**

You are “outsiders” and competed in the “non-corporate category”. **Why was it important for your team to take part in this first IATA NDC hackathon with a track dedicated to OBTs hackathon?**

We feel that the Online Booking Tools are trapped 20 years in the past, with little of the innovation we have seen in the consumer travel sector. We saw the hackathon as an opportunity to explore innovative ideas, surrounded by key stakeholders and influencers in the travel industry, and a fantastic opportunity for us to work together as a new team.

**In your opinion, why do travel buyers expect more innovation from OBTs?**

OBTs are in our opinion, limited in their ability to deliver true value to the consumer. Often difficult to use, poor UX/UI, and a budget exercise rather than tool to maximize the potential of a customer sale, or deal negotiation, or whatever the reason for travel.

**What pain point have you been trying to solve during the hackathon?**

We targeted the specific pain point for corporate buyers demonstrating value of ancillary products. Why bother? It’s another expense. Another thing to justify against tighter budgets. By focusing in on a clear financial metric and comparison, our goal was to speak in the language necessary to increase ancillary sales whilst improving overall experience for the overworked and undervalued traveler.

**What is your key takeaway from this hackathon experience?**

Hackathons are a truly wonderful, immersive, experience, where you push your skills to the limit under a lot of pressure to succeed. It’s wonderful to see IATA fostering an environment of innovation.

**Next steps: what are your plans regarding the prototype developed in Madrid? Will you push the features developed to production?**

Kit and Mark have now joined forces to run AwesomeTrip, and have several products in development. In an ideal world, we would continue to work with IATA & the event sponsors to trial our product, build our benefits and features, and then take to market with our first clients already using the OBT.
NON-CORPORATE:
Developer Prize

#UX

Team name: Nearsoft
Company name: Nearsoft
Team members: Liliana Reina, Hector Benitez, Francisco Hernandez, Claudio Cossio
Contact details: Liliana Reina - lreina@nearsoft.com

Description: Nearsoft has built a solution focused on TMC’s to manage medium size businesses, trips and policies, to optimize their travel strategies. At the same time, they want to give the company the ability to offer to their travelers the flexibility to add personalized ancillary services to give them a better travel experience.

The TMC will have an app within Freshdesk and will be able to see the company’s travel policy, their loyalty program as well as reporting on past travels and the traveler’s profile, which will be filled by a flight preferences form and automatically updated with their travel history.

On the other hand, they’ll be able to perform the flight booking right from the helpdesk ticket, sending the best options compliant with the travel policy to the travel manager for approval, as well as a form to the traveler to let them know what would be included on their flight fare, and letting them choose seating and baggage preferences and add extra ancillaries for the managers approval. If these last ancillaries chosen are not approved, the travelers will be able to add them at their expense through the same booking.

Value: traveler choice

An interview with Nearsoft

Why was it important for your team to take part in this first IATA NDC hackathon with a track dedicated to OBTs?

Our focus was to create and launch a cloud solution for corporate travelers and be part of the industry change. The NDC hackathon was the perfect platform so IATA, agencies and airlines can work together to foster innovation in the industry, so Nearsoft could participate through a hackathon and showcase a booking solution in order for travelers to engage through an OTA/TMC helpdesk.

In your opinion, why do travel buyers expect more innovation from OBTs?

The available solutions for travel buyers and TMCs are robust and complex solutions, but they lack flexibility and customization. Corporate travelers need OBTs to offer them a new experience for travel booking, not only to compare fares and choose the best offer, a platform that can adapt to an organization’s travel policy and personalization are key to deliver value.

What pain point have you been trying to solve during the hackathon?

We focused on flight customization through the company’s travel policy and the traveler’s profile. Our goal is for the traveler to be able to add ancillaries to their flight at their expense, giving visibility and transparency to the organization. Tracking and reporting will help them evaluate the expense for future trips, adjust budget or even change their travel policy.

What is your key takeaway from this hackathon experience?

Companies nowadays care about offering their travelers flexibility and personalization while booking their travel. The business travel industry needs to offer that possibility, opening up the options so organizations can keep providing a great travel experience to their employees.

Next steps: what are your plans regarding the prototype developed in Madrid? Will you push the features developed to production?

We are still working to finish up our solution, we don’t have an exact ETA to launch to production, though we’re working closely with potential users to build the solutions, features focused to their needs. Through the networking part of the hackathon we have made very important connections to the industry and we are in early discussions for a potential pilot.
CORPORATE PRIZE:
Best Content and UI

#UX #personalization #Bleisure

Team name: RoadHack
Company name: Roadmap
Team members: Rogier Verkaik, Micha van Eijk, Glenn Mosdall, Gaby Verwegen, Jeffrey Verheul, Vahagn Dolbakyan
Contact details: Roadmap. Phoenixstraat 49, 2611 AL Delft The Netherlands. Phone: 003185 489 5845

URL to online demo

Description: Roadmap presented an idea that brings together all the needs of the traveler, travel manager and the market in one solution.

The solution is tailored to company’s travel policy, travelers’ preferences and market availability. From the travel manager’s perspective, they can adjust and update their policy through an easy web interface which reflects automatically in the tool. This will drive productivity and increase the compliance of the travel policy.

From the user perspective, this is what the solution does:
You work for a company called Roadmap. You have a business meeting in Amsterdam and you need to fly over. Your business relation adds the meeting to your calendar and includes the office address. Through an integration with your calendar, we detect that you have meeting out of your HQ. Automatically, through our tool, you are given suggestions on which flight to book based on the availability of all airlines within your corporate travel program and tailored to your preferences based on a profile and past behavior. We’ll place you in your favorite seat next to a window, and include WiFi so you can be productive. And yes, we also support your healthy lifestyle, adding a gluten-free meal to your flight is no problem! You prefer to make it a bleisure trip like 30% of all your peers. As you have to pay for it yourself, we provide additional hotels in your selected price range.

Your flight and hotels perfectly match the budget, so you don’t need to ask for approval. The personal credit card flow allows the traveler to book ancillaries out of the travel program and immediately fulfill payment. With a single press on the button, you can book your preferred trip and all details will appear in your favorite corporate travel app.

Value: Traveler value, traveler choice, corporate value

An interview with Roadmap

Why was it important for your team to take part in this first IATA NDC hackathon with a track dedicated to OBTs?
We were on a mission: to show the fun and value of NDC through developing and designing a solution that holds value for travel managers and travelers. We also wanted to explore what opportunities NDC opens up for Roadmap and how we would tackle flight bookings in a way that matches what our customers are used to getting from us.

In your opinion, why do travel buyers expect more innovation from OBTs?
User experience, which is usually driven by innovation, is a key element to compliant booking. It also greatly contributes to getting the next generation on board and keeping your most talented people happy when they are on the road.

Like in any field, innovation breaks down old systems, and gives room to new and improved solutions that benefit the traveler and travel manager.

What pain point have you been trying to solve during the hackathon?
We wanted to combine three stakeholder needs and solve their problems. The travel manager wants to show what is in policy and what’s not. The traveler wants to have a lot of freedom and has personal preferences. The airline industry has developed NDC and needs a solution for the fragmenta-
tion in channels. We solved all these pain points by delivering a practical solution that is in the now and shows flight options based on availability, traveler preference and is filtered by travel policy. Imagine the headache it can prevent!

**What is your key takeaway from this hackathon experience?**

When it comes to solving problems, stay in the now and see what would bring most value in the present moment. This allows you to take multiple stakeholders and cater to each of them. Also; closely listen to what the actual problem is. Like with any good solution: it’s simple yet effective.

**Next steps: what are your plans regarding the prototype developed in Madrid? Will you push the features developed to production?**

We have been showing the solution to our customers, since validation of solving their problem is key for Roadmap to push anything to production. We also presented something that the market, especially the airlines, are not yet ready for. If we decide to take this direction, we’ll have to scope it down first.

CORPORATE PRIZE:
Best Personalization

#UX #Personalization

**Team name:** Flight Club  
**Company name:** Egencia  
**Team members:** Alexandre Serviès, Nicolas Cortinez, Julien Thimonier, Cristian Hedes  
**Contact details:** Sébastien Bardin, sbardin@egencia.com, +33 1 70 82 64 51

**URL to online demo**

Description: Egencia’s team at the Hackathon presented a solution that personalizes the offers according to the traveler’s needs. The solution works as a recommendation system, data-driven behind the scenes, leveraging NDC rich air content and traveler’s booking behaviors. Apart from the historical bookings’ deduced preference, the user can also let the system know what is more interesting for them depending on various criteria e.g. only long-haul flights with WiFi. The system learns from that for future recommendations.

Once search is performed, only relevant options come out in the screen with different scenarios of products presented in a transparent and intuitive way to the traveler.

The tool also shows what other customers (travelers from your own business and travelers with similar booking patterns e.g. “road warriors”) prefer on that specific route given their previous bookings.

The solution was designed first of all as an API that could be easily integrated to any OBT and could learn from its whole user base, to bring content as relevant as possible to travelers for a more optimal user experience.

**Value:** traveler value

**An interview with Egencia**

*Why was it important for your team to take part in this first IATA NDC hackathon with a track dedicated to OBTs?*

Expedia Group is no stranger to NDC — since 2012, we’ve been a member of IATA’s Passenger Distribution Management Group Advisory Forum and consulted with our airline and GDS partners, leveraging our global industry knowledge and expertise to shape what the next NDC industry development challenges and priorities could be.”

Jean-Claude Grosselin, Vice President Technology and Development, Egencia, an Expedia Group brand
to ensure delivery of a seamless customer experience for our global customers at every stage of their journey, from supply to distribution, payment, and customer service. NDC is now at a stage where we believe showing its capabilities for corporate travel can help shape what the next NDC industry development challenges and priorities could be. More internally, it is in our culture to involve our technology teams in thinking about future industry changes and how to anticipate them. Participating to the IATA NDC hackathon contributes to that.

**In your opinion, why do travel buyers expect more innovation from OBTs?**
The consumer and/or business travelers of B2C websites simply expect B2B websites to work with the same level of innovation and ease of use. Historically, business travel has been way too long to translate innovation from the B2C world, like recommendation systems.

**What pain point have you been trying to solve during the hackathon?**
Similar to a lot of industries today, the business travel sector is set to become more customized and personalized thanks to advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML). Business travelers have access to multiple flight and fare options and the ability to compare and choose, they are however desperately in need of more smart guidance and more customer-centric experiences. This is what the prototype illustrates.

**What is your key takeaway from this hackathon experience?**
Defining a standard is always a complex activity and to build it we need a collaborative effort between airlines, OBTs, TMCs and software providers. This hackathon was a great opportunity to experience this collaborative effort and to seize the opportunity to influence how the standard will evolve.
Other ideas

#Wellness #Personalization

**Team name:** ARC Attack  
**Company name:** ARC  
**Description:** The app shows travelers the values of all unused tickets from both their direct and indirect booking channels, and automatically applies these values to their next purchase.

The app also shows each itinerary’s Trip Friction level, so that travelers can choose trips with lower Trip Friction. The tool gives travelers trip-specific “Friction Funds” tailored to their traveler profile and the importance of their trip.

Travelers can then decide how they want to use their funds to purchase a better cabin experience, lounge passes, priority boarding, etc.

The tool makes it easy to track spend and friction funds by traveler and tracks the road warrior attrition rate each month to show the benefits of spending “Friction Funds”, and the value of capturing unused tickets.

**Value:** traveler value, corporate value

#UX

**Team name:** Corcel  
**Company name:** Individuals (non-corporate category).  
**Description:** Team Corcel has built an online booking tool aimed at simplifying travel management for small & medium businesses. From a travel manager’s standpoint, the tool incorporates extensive set-ups options to configure the company’s travel policy and monitor and forecast costs. From a traveler’s perspective, the tool offers the following features: personalized flight search as per the company’s travel policy, search results including rich content, instant purchase capability taking into the consideration the traveler’s personal information and preferences.

**Value:** corporate value

#Personalization

**Team name:** Golden State Coders  
**Company name:** Innfinity Software  
**Description:** The solution focuses on ancillary content and bundles with the objective of giving travel managers the ability to access more offers and allowing the traveler to buy within policy using strictly NDC sourced content. The tool covers the configuration of a multi-level travel policy, the ability to source bundled offers and to filter ancillary services appropriate to the traveler’s in-Policy options - clearly stating what ancillaries are out of policy.

**Value:** traveler choice

#Social #Personalization #Bleisure

**Team name:** Koedia  
**Company name:** Koedia  
**Description:** The core idea: a standalone solution that can be plugged to any OBT/intermediary - integrating the “Traveler’s Social Hub”. The traveler decides what profiles they want to plug in (e.g. LinkedIn, personal contacts, Facebook) and then creates notification rules, e.g. notify my meeting attendant in case I am running late, notify my relatives I have arrived at my destination, notify the hotel I will need a late check-in. In addition, the solution suggests on-trip smart networking (suggestions are location based) and provides additional services such as restaurant or meeting room booking capabilities.

**Value:** traveler experience

#UX

**Team name:** PKFare  
**Company name:** PKFare  
**Description:** Coming from the Leisure Travel world, PKFare’s ambition is to build an OBT answering the needs of both travel managers and business travelers and offering a consumer-like look & feel in terms of UX and options. By using airlines, branded fares, ancillary products and other travel products from third party companies, PKFare want to help travel managers and business travelers to have a simple, transparent and efficient flight tickets booking experience.

**Value:** traveler value

#Bleisure #UX

**Team name:** Rapido  
**Company name:** IBS Software  
**Description:** With Rapido, the ambition was to re-invent the whole business travel booking and management experience - leveraging the power of NDC by 1) Introducing innovative, simple, intuitive and configurable travel shopping features for offers [Flights, Ancillaries, Hotels, Cars] based on company policy; 2) Enabling a minimum number of user actions derived from company travel forecast and history and endorsing company policy rules; 3) Simplifying the Offer and Order management, by replicating
favorite travel patterns; 4) Offering bleisure travel options in tandem with reducing overall company spend based on travel context and travel policy; 5) Forecasting future travel requirements and past company travel history to derive cost optimization.

**Value:** traveler value, traveler choice, company value

#UX

**Team name:** Travel Police  
**Company name:** Caravelo  
**Description:** Travel Managers often feel like being the police or the bad cops. They need to both enable business needs and also reinforce travel policies to make the most of the travel expenditure. "Travel Police" OBT helps business travelers who want to arrange meetings or attend conferences by simplifying the booking process and reducing last minute / high-cost bookings.

**Value:** corporate value

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**So, What Now? – May the Magic Last...**

There is naturally an expectation from TMAG corporate buyers that features developed and showcased during the hackathon become part of the OBT's implementation roadmap. But of course, they are not delusional. They aren’t under the impression that they can suggest things and they will just happen.

A hackathon is first and foremost a playground: it is an open innovation environment in which participants get creative and test their ideas. Teams end up demonstrating prototypes. And while a 28-hour coding sprint sets a solid basis for product development opportunities, associated challenges were not considered at this stage and solutions cannot be pushed into production without further testing, validation and involvement from product teams at the respective companies involved.

It is now up to each company that participated in this unique hackathon to consider further engagement and to present their solution to their clients or to the industry at large. We have provided details on their ideas in this report along with contact details of the winning teams.

**Here’s what developers had to say**

The hackathon was a unique opportunity for IATA’s NDC team of architects, for airlines as well as for corporate buyers to collect feedback from the community of developers who play a central (and yet behind the scenes) role in building the next generation of Online Booking Tools.

We have heard they have been facing challenges around three main areas:

1. **Content** – Airlines must integrate more rich content and more ancillaries in their NDC APIs for developers to be able to build creative features that are reflected back to travelers when they shop and book on OBTs.

2. **Integration/Implementation** – The way airlines document their APIs is not consistent. Furthermore, it may be cumbersome to integrate one API at a time. Speedy and easy implementation is key to guarantee speed-to-market.

3. **Payment** – while travel managers want to offer more services to travelers, all services may not be covered by the travel policy and have to be paid by the traveler. However, the current architecture does not offer the ability to split payments in the event of a traveler wanting to cover the cost of an ancillary service, for example.

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"With the digital world changing at a rapid pace, there are a lot of opportunities to be found in the business travel sector. Hackathons create a perfect environment to spark creativity and I have personally enjoyed the efforts from all the teams to deliver added value in improving better corporate booking tools. More and more companies see a correlation between employee satisfaction and their ability to personalize their employees travel experience. It was exciting to dedicate my time and engage with players. I hope the industry is now provided with relevant inspiration to exploit the future capabilities in terms of technology, distribution and personalization."

Michael Peters – Co-Founder, Product, Research & Development, Kambr  
#HACKAIR MENTOR & JURY MEMBER
Conclusion

The demand for an enhanced OBT value proposition by buyers across Content & UI, Personalization and Data & Reporting is set.

Of course travel managers want to see the development of new products and services that will add value to their businesses and provide the opportunity in the value chain to add more value too. But they also see the opportunity for an enhanced relationship – both between their travelers and their programs and between their companies, their airline suppliers and those value chain participants who support the process.

This unique hackathon has demonstrated that the future of Online Booking Tools can be bright with creative ideas. The key now is to make this a reality to engage all parties and foster more innovation via industry collaboration.

If you like the ideas contained within this paper, start talking to your technology partners about them. Ensure your TMC and airlines partners are involved at the right stages too.

If you don't, perhaps you will still find attractive the principle of an enhanced corporate booking tool and the creation of more value-add services and a better traveler experience and then maybe, you'll start your own sprint and have your own story to tell!

Thank you

Our Sincere Thanks to The Following Hackathon Participants…

The Hackathon Creatives…
All the 12 teams
Anderson Pacchioni  IATA
Olivier Hours  IATA
Yanik Hoyles  IATA
Marta Alcocer  IATA
Claude Muller  IATA
Aurélie Krau  Festive Road

The Judges…
Nikki Foster  Veritas Technologies LLC
Cliff Trotta  Iberia
Michael Peters  Kambr
Stéphan Copart  IATA
Aurélie Krau  Festive Road

Host Organization
COMUNICA+A
Host Airline
IBERIA

Gold Sponsors

Supporting Organizations

The Travel Manager Advisory Group participants, who were unable to attend the Hackathon due to work commitments, undertook a review of and have validated the challenges.

And of course...YOU, because the journey is only just beginning and if you have read this far then you clearly have something to contribute too.

This paper was written by Aurélie Krau, Consultant and Tech Geek, Festive Road and edited by Paul Tilstone, Managing Partner, Festive Road and the IATA NDC Team.

IATA funded this report and provided administrative and editorial feedback and support during its development. The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of Festive Road based on its research and analysis, and do not necessarily reflect the views of IATA or its member airlines. Want to know more about IATA’s New Distribution Capability and how it will affect the business travel industry? –visit the NDC website and/or contact the Hackathon team.
Appendix – Who was there?

We’re delighted to present a list of all the companies who were invited:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 AmTrav (a2b)</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 ARC</td>
<td>Attended</td>
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<td>3 Caravelo</td>
<td>Attended</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Claire / 30 seconds to Fly</td>
<td>Invite unanswered</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Clicktravel</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 SAP Concur</td>
<td>Attended</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 CSBT (DSC Plus)</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Cytric / Amadeus</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Egencia</td>
<td>Attended</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 GetThere / Sabre</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 KDS</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Locomote / Travelport</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Iola</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<td>14 Onesto</td>
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<td>15 PSNGR1</td>
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<td>16 Roadmap</td>
<td>Attended</td>
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<td>17 Rydoo</td>
<td>Cancelled</td>
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<td>18 Salestrip (Salesforce)</td>
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<td>19 Serko</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<td>20 Traveldoop</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Travelperk</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 TripActions</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<td>23 W TMC</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 Hitchhiker</td>
<td>Invite unanswered</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 Infininity Software</td>
<td>Attended</td>
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<td>26 Mtrip</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<td>27 Nexttravel</td>
<td>Invite unanswered</td>
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<td>29 Pana</td>
<td>Invite unanswered</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 SAM / FCM</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<td>31 Travel Labs (Tempore)</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<td>32 Travelbank</td>
<td>Invite unanswered</td>
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<td>33 Voya</td>
<td>Invite unanswered</td>
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<td>34 Deem</td>
<td>Invite unanswered</td>
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<tr>
<td>35 Upside</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<td>36 WhereTo</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<td>37 Ekotrip</td>
<td>Invite unanswered</td>
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<td>38 Fairjungle</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<td>39 Okarito</td>
<td>Invite unanswered</td>
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<tr>
<td>40 Tapttrip</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>41 Koedia</td>
<td>Attended</td>
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<tr>
<td>42 AirGateway</td>
<td>Confirmed but cancelled</td>
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<tr>
<td>43 Nearsoft</td>
<td>Attended</td>
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<tr>
<td>44 PKFare</td>
<td>Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 IBS Software</td>
<td>Attended</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Important note: We would like to re-iterate that there are many reasons why companies may have declined or cancelled participation in the hackathon. We just felt it was important to ensure readers knew how extensive our invitation list was and who could/couldn’t make it. All invitees were advised that a list of invitees would be published.

You never know, we may run an OBT Hackathon in 2020 so there’ll be another chance.

Want to sprint again anyone?!