IATA presents the New Simplifying the Business (StB) Program

Tomorrow’s passenger journey will be simple, from travel shopping to airport security
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IATA presents the New Simplifying the Business Program

Air transport today is an integral part of the global economy. The industry moves people and goods across the globe quickly and efficiently, fostering economic development, greater human understanding and international trade. In the future, as economic interdependence grows so will the need for fast and secure transport, facilitated by a successful aviation industry. But our industry has been in survival mode for as long as we can remember. Today’s environment is no exception, as we struggle to contend with a deepening economic crisis, increasing government regulation and oil price uncertainty.

To put ourselves on a path toward sustainable profitability, we must innovate together to provide the foundation for new, efficient ways of doing business, enabling the creation of new products tailored to specific unique customer needs, providing better service and preserving healthy competition. Today consumers face numerous pain points in their journey, from the travel shopping experience to long lines at security.

Since 2004, the industry has completed transformational projects through the StB program and delivered projects on e-ticketing, common-use self-service kiosks, bar coded boarding passes, automated baggage rules etc, saving the industry up to $18bn. The first set of StB projects is coming to a natural end, and in 2011 the StB think-tank was created to identify the next set of transformational projects that will help the industry to “prepare for tomorrow’s passenger”.

Last year the StB think tank identified 5 goals (airline products, passenger data, real-time interaction, hassle free, and a seamless journey) which provide the framework to guide us to a more efficient industry and a new customer experience, in a transformed environment that embraces innovation. Now in its second and final year in its current format, the work of the StB think tank will conclude with the identification of a new set of transformational work programs, set out in this document. These will be the focus of a renewed StB program designed to deliver the 5 goals which aim to change the passenger experience and revolutionize how we travel by 2020.

Sincerely yours,

Eric Léopold
Director, Passenger
IATA
A DAY IN THE LIFE –
A TRAVEL EXPERIENCE
IN 2020

Caroline, 38, is an eCommerce consultant. She and her husband live in the countryside outside of Milan.

It is Tuesday 22 September 2020, and Caroline is looking to book a long weekend trip with her partner – somewhere with great cultural and culinary options.

She is hoping to leave Milan on Wednesday evening to be able to get to her destination at a reasonable time to make the most of the stay. She activates the voice notification service on her personalized travel cloud, describes her requirements through her mobile phone (date, activities, flight time, time difference and so on) and asks for a recommended destination based on experiences reported by her friends, as well as her own preferences.

The suggested destination is Cape Town, and immediately, flight options appear. Her travel cloud has intuitively presented a virtually complete itinerary. Because Caroline’s buying behaviors are held in her travel cloud, the offers are personalized. She often goes away for the weekend with her partner and her buying patterns have been noted. The airlines know she does not always fly business, but sometimes upgrades her flight experience with greater seat pitch and extra pillows. They also know her partner is a vegetarian and prefers a window seat.

For the flight and airport experience Caroline chooses extra leg room, lounge access and a priority boarding option. She books the suggested boutique hotel and selects from a choice of restaurants, but decides to wait on the excursions till she gets there.

She makes her final selections in her shopping cart and pays with her phone. She receives a summary of her entire trip which corresponds to all of the elements in her shopping basket, from the flight to the hotel reservation, restaurants and entertainment.

The voice notification reminds her that her e-passport will expire in about 9 months, including visas and biometrics. But it’s OK: the visa process is electronic and doesn’t involve any heavy paperwork like it did in the past. The visa is granted directly by the State and confirmed to the airline, eliminating surprises at time of boarding or on arrival in the country.

At the same time, her cloud informs her that their e-visas comply with the governmental requirements, her flight is confirmed and she and her partner are ready to fly.

On the day of travel they drop their bags at one of the downtown locations, on their way to the airport using public transportation. Their bags have an electronic tag that is built into their cases, and as a result they are known to the system. When arriving at the airport, there is nobody queuing in the very small departure hall: in the past there were people everywhere, queuing for check-in (which no longer exists as a process because passengers are all checked-in by default), for security, etc. Their passports are electronic and contain their biometric identifiers which act as their single token identifier and will correspond with their security checks and border controls.

They proceed through security. It is fast, seamless and barely noticeable. The design of security check point is such that although it is embedded with sophisticated technology, it does not feel intrusive. The couple is quickly assessed as not being a security risk. Immigration checks for passport and visa were done at the same time along with revalidation of information sent by her to the South African authorities at the time of making her reservation.

They get through from the curb to airside in a matter of minutes. Caroline has received two messages from airport retailers informing her of discounts on their favorite designer labels. They take the time for some duty free shopping and the items they purchase will be delivered upon arrival of their return flight.

The final check is at the gate using the single token verification and they get through and board the aircraft.

During the flight while enjoying their previously ordered meals, one vegetarian and the other carb free, a member of the crew, as would an onboard concierge, approaches the couple to welcome them on board and to apologize once more for the delay she incurred receiving her bag on her last trip. As she is connected through Wi-Fi while airborne, she is informed by the hotel that their room upgrade had been confirmed as requested. The crew member notices on the couple’s itinerary that they have not ordered a car at the airport and asks if they would like to order one. They gladly accept the offer and take the opportunity to add a short excursion to Table Mountain. The car is ordered and paid for as it is added to their shopping basket.
The travelers know that their bags will be picked up and delivered to the hotel, as the information will be automatically electronically pushed to the hotel address, as per the information made available to the airline. On arrival the couple passes through immigration using the automated border control gate with their single token; the ready-to-fly status also means ready-to-arrive, just an automated biometric identity check is done to ensure it all matches. They leave the airport after a very pleasant experience and start to enjoy their weekend.

During their transfer to Table Mountain, she enters some comments about her trip in her travel cloud, to share her experience with her friends in case they are looking for a nice trip in the near future. She updates her social media sites with the following status: “Very pleasant journey. All went to plan. We arrived here feeling great, and have time to see the magnificent views of Cape Town from the top of Table Mountain. Flying is such a beautiful thing, and so simple.”
**GOAL 1: AIRLINE PRODUCTS**

**Where we are today**

Many airlines have invested heavily in their direct sales channels (e.g. web site) by deploying Customer Relationship Management (CRM), loyalty, dynamic product inventory systems and affinity search and pricing engines, to improve their retail capability and the customer experience they are offering. In many cases, this customer centric retail-based strategy has worked well for them. For airlines, there are two key benefits of this direct retail approach:

1. **Direct interaction with customers, enabling customer relationship management and personalization.**
2. **Increased speed to market of new products, enabling product innovation and differentiation, also providing visual displays of their products.**

Consumers have come to expect this customer-centric, retail approach, where the consumer is king, and which has been adopted by many other industries (such as consumer goods with Amazon and music with Apple’s iTunes for example). Consumers expect airlines to compete through product choices and product personalization, as well as price and schedule – offering customized value instead of a commodity.

Unbundling the product has become increasingly popular with some carriers. It involves breaking down the journey into separate components to allow customers to pick and choose what they value. Some customers might prefer lounge access with an economy fare, while others may want to ensure a seat with extra leg room.

Unfortunately, the existing indirect channel tells a different story. This channel still mostly manages the travel experience as a commodity. It was not designed to support product differentiation and innovation nor was it designed to support product personalization. For example, as of today, the indirect channel is limited in offering and displaying the full range of products and services to enable travel agents to give the customer a personalized choice of fares and services that might be available from the airline.

About half of airline tickets worldwide are sold via Global Distribution Systems (GDSs), meaning that airline revenue opportunities from ancillary services are restricted. In 2011, ancillary revenues were worth around US $32.5 billion to the industry, according to an Amadeus and IdeaWorks report. This represented a 43.8% increase on 2010, almost exclusively through direct sales.

For customers to be better informed and offered greater choice, air transport must develop a model that works across all channels, that focuses on customers and provides a true retail experience.

**Vision 2020**

The future will be a travel industry where customers can choose to access the products they desire, with ease, and benefit from personalized and dynamically packaged offers. Airlines will be able to tailor products according to an individual’s buying habits and agreements that they, or their employers, might have with an airline. They will be able to offer these products and services through all channels if they choose to do so.

**Programs of work**

IATA launched the e-services project in January 2010 and the New Distribution Capability project in January 2012.

**E-services**

The Electronic Miscellaneous Document (EMD) is a “method to document the sales and track usage of charges”. In other words the scope of EMD is to facilitate the fulfillment, tracking and accounting of the ancillary sales. This project will come to a close at the end of 2013 when EMD will be rolled out across the industry.

**New Distribution Capability**

The aim of this initiative is to enhance the airline indirect distribution channel by developing a set of industry standards for the transmission of data that will facilitate product differentiation, increased sales of ancillary products and services and personalized offerings. For passengers, this initiative will offer more choice of products and services, more personalization and more transparency.

The industry will benefit from a model which is retail like (shopping cart), customer centric (personalized packages) and which offers differentiated shopping (for example upsell, cross-sell) as the customer chooses.
GOAL 2: PASSENGER DATA

Where we are today

Today, harmonization between countries on the collection and distribution of passenger data is limited and is complicated by an increase in both privacy and security regulations affecting passenger data by more and more governments. Airlines are liable for fines when passengers are denied boarding due to missing data or documentation. Passengers are confused due to the inconsistency of the information required depending on different regulations.

In most cases airlines are required to collect relevant data prior to departure. Depending on where the passenger interacts with the airline, this may be online, at check-in, at bag drop or even at boarding. This process can cause delays in the check-in process and on occasion, results in denied boarding due to documentation not being correct to allow the passenger to travel, as airlines may not be able to validate whether the passenger has the right documentation until they reach the gate.

As a consequence, carriers have had to invest in their own IT systems to meet the different government requirements, or contract with independent data processors. This has resulted in additional costs to carriers and separate, often incompatible solutions across the industry.

Vision 2020

In 2020 passengers will know that they are ready to fly, because governments will have confirmed that they can in advance. And becoming “ready to fly” will be simple.

Program of work

Through a closer relationship with authorities, the industry is helping to shape and harmonize the regulatory framework. Previously, the standards for the transmission of such data were not always harmonized. In 2011, several data-alignment initiatives conducted with various countries were successfully concluded. IATA proposes one new program of work.

E-Border

The Australian government has led the way in the last few years with the “e-visitor program”. It’s the passenger who executes the process and the government that confirms if the visa application has been successful or not. This is direct interaction between passenger and government. There are other countries with similar programs for example the US with the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) which is more like a waiver than a visa.

The industry and passengers would greatly benefit from adoption of a program that is similar to the Australian program in a globally harmonized manner, with an extension that allows passport data to be electronically verified, similar to how banks verify credit cards. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is the appropriate body to move this forward with input from the industry. Governments that have been approached are aligned and as with ESTA in the US, the process costs can be recovered. This is a significant task that will require government support globally, but that can unlock huge benefits for the industry and the customer.

The E-Border program will establish the deployment of standardized data requirements and remove paper from the system. The next strategic phase will be for the industry to aim for governments to adopt a passport validation system complemented by global e-Visas which, depending on the risk profile, are completed by the passenger around the time of booking or in the consulate or embassy. This will simplify the process and allow the validation to be moved away from the airport and to the government in advance of the journey, which will also enable better border control.
GOAL 3: REAL-TIME INTERACTION

Where we are today

Passengers suffer from uncertainty and stress associated with queues, flight delays, cancellations and bag mishandling. Optimization of modern technology could go a long way to ease the pain, by allowing access to information in real-time.

Today the lack of customer contact information creates further frustrations for passengers, airlines, and airport staff when dealing with irregular operations. Social media and smart phones deliver immediate information to passengers that are not necessarily available to airline and airport staff who manage customer service and expectations. So in some cases the passenger is getting more information about what’s happening than the employees at the airline or airport.

Airlines do a good job with contact information for frequent flyers but that only covers a small portion of their customer base, and the majority of airlines do not have all the crucial passenger contact data available, making it very difficult to implement any true customer experience management solutions.

Vision 2020

Real-time and contextualized communication between airlines and their customers will transform the passenger travel experience. Cooperation across the whole value chain to maintain this relationship will build loyalty and bring benefits for all.

Programs of work

IATA will launch 2 new programs of work in this area.

Customer Contact Information

To be able to deliver excellent customer service the airlines need to have sufficient passenger contact details available to reach the passenger, including when the passenger has already commenced the trip. This will enable proactive and real-time messages; it will also allow the passenger to request relevant real-time information when needed.

In many processes related to passenger air travel, having the contact details of the traveler is important. For example, the airline might want to let a passenger know of a disruption, inform her on the tracking of her baggage, or offer a special service to drive customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Currently, while there are some standards on how certain passenger contact details could be transmitted, there are no rules as to when and what details must be communicated from one entity to the next, for example from the booking source to the airlines, the passenger to the airline, or an airline to a partner airline.

So to overcome the problem of incorrect or missing information, standards should be set to clarify which elements need to be sent with which message, and possibly for which purposes they should and should not be used – all established within the existing regulatory framework. And ideally the passenger contact information should be provided to the airline at the time of booking just like in an online retail experience.

Customers to have easy access to real-time airline data, at airports

The industry and the customer need to be able to interact at anytime and anywhere. This is essential for the industry to provide better service for customers. Good connectivity will build the personalized relationship that all parties need. Currently access to Wi-Fi is fragmented, there are no global standards and high roaming charges hinder access. Airlines and their partners need to agree on a solution that will make access easy, instantaneous and less than one click away.
**GOAL 4: HASSLE FREE**

**Where we are today**

The biggest pain point for passengers today is the hassle associated with airport processes and controls. Passengers experience uncertainty and stress due to inconsistency and unpredictability of processes at airports which can be better integrated than they are today. There can be long wait times, in addition to different procedures to be followed at different airports around the world. The goal is to move as many steps as possible off airport.

**Vision 2020**

The airport experience is fast: curb to airside is seamless. It is predictable, secure and globally consistent.

**Programs of work**

IATA has a number of different initiatives already in place, and some new programs are proposed below, the combination of which will lead to a seamless airport experience for the passenger.

**Fast Travel**

Fast Travel will satisfy the passengers' demands for self service options across their journey, from boarding pass to baggage collection. By 2020, 80% of global passengers will be offered a complete self-service suite based on industry standards.

**Checkpoint of the Future**

Security processes are evolving to be risk-based and IATA’s flagship security program, ‘Checkpoint of the Future’ is built around this principle. In the long term, the project will build toward a paradigm shift in screening that includes a fully integrated model for passenger differentiation, biometrics and advanced screening technologies to further improve security while minimizing the need for passengers to unpack or disrobe.

**Automated Border Control**

As the passenger credentials for both departure and arrival immigration clearance have already been verified, including risk assessment, by the relevant immigration authorities (see Goal 2), all that is required is to ensure that the passenger is the person that he/she states to be. That can be done in a fast and low intrusive biometric way, whereby only exceptional cases are to be handled manually.

**Check-out (no more check-in)**

At the time of booking a passenger should be considered checked in. Seating may be assigned either by the passenger at the time of booking or by the airline at the moment that the passenger passes the security checkpoint. This will ensure that the airline knows precisely who will fly, which allows the fast and efficient completion of flight release for which exact passenger numbers are required.

The elimination of the check-in process will further enable airlines to simplify the business, save time and reduce costs.

**Fast and simple common bag drop**

The ideal scenario for the future would be for passengers to be able to drop their baggage off even before they reach the airport. In the short term the industry would benefit from a global common standard for bag drop and airport processes with the aim to create a more consistent customer ground experience. This can be achieved by having the baggage tagging process completed before the passenger reaches the airport, through factory in-built, or airline supplied, permanent baggage tags or simply home printed baggage tags. These new processes could enable a much faster and simpler bag drop experience.
A single token for all elements of a journey would significantly streamline and simplify the travel process. The single token would correspond to everything from travel documents, access on board the aircraft to a bag identifier and all of the ancillary purchases bought at the time of booking.

To get there the industry needs to set an interoperability blueprint as a first step. There are questions, such as what will the token be attached to? It could be linked to biometrics or ePassports. This in turn could address the necessity for boarding passes and passport checks at the gate by building the two elements into part of a single electronic token. The “boarding pass” as we know it now will cease to exist.

And, if all of these processes are completed around the time of booking, off airport (see Goal 2 - Passenger Data), with the passenger validated by the government as ‘ready to fly’, this could be one of the key enablers for a seamless and intuitive travel experience.
GOAL 5: SEAMLESS END-TO-END JOURNEY

Where we are today

Customers cannot experience a seamless integrated journey of a consistently high quality with reduced stress levels if travel partners are not connected. Currently there are no reliable connections between airlines, railways, hotels, rental car and other travel related companies. When a flight is changed, for example, the airport pick-up service may not be notified, or the cruise ship that is connected to the flight has not been informed, these elements create a disconnected travel experience for the passenger.

The center of all elements that make up a journey from start to finish is the traveler. Today all of the sections of a journey are kept in separate information repositories with various travel service providers; there are different accounts for different airlines, car hire companies, or hotel chains for example. These repositories are standalone pockets of information, precluding the possibility of seamless travel in certain key areas of the travel experience. The lack of a standardized industry framework hampers opportunities for technological development, improvement of the travel experience, and ancillary offerings.

Vision 2020

All travel partners, covering the whole trip, including the customer, will have the ability to exchange information with each other across the entire journey, with permission of the customer.

Programs of work

IATA will launch two new programs of work that will provide the capability for the customer to have access to all travel elements together in one place, with technology that allows travel partners to exchange vital information with each other, and the traveler, in a single repository.

Airline Industry Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)

This concept is about enabling a set of services “publish and subscribe” which is a contract between the customer and the service provider (or API provider).

- From a customer point of view this is about the customer being in control and interoperability across the travel experience;
- From an industry point of view it is about the need for a set of standards that will allow the eco-system to interact and exchange messages because all partners will have agreed on a common messaging standard.

In summary, it’s about creating the capability for a standard interface across the industry value chain. It means that all parts of the journey experience will be able to talk to customers: a late flight will trigger messages to the other travel partners who will then be able to adapt their service or product accordingly; a new meeting in the calendar will trigger changes to the itinerary and trip details. Ultimately it could allow the traveler to have all of her information interconnected in one location linking together credentials across all her travel partners.

This approach will foster the creation of new services to simplify the travel experience, automate information provision and minimize information inconsistencies, errors and duplication and put the customer in control of her travel information. It will also allow travel partners access to accurate passenger information enabling them to communicate with each other and the customer more effectively.

Airline Industry Data Model

A passenger-centric airline industry data model will provide an invaluable base for airlines to manage the customer experience. The data model will enable airlines to link real-time passenger data flowing from a variety of sources, including reservation centers, airline web sites, mobile devices, and social platforms. An airline adding an analytics layer will provide it the key insights it needs to personalize the travel experience at every passenger touch point.

The data model will enable interoperability across the entire spectrum of services providers and agents, who work with airlines to provide a seamless travel experience. An industry agreed and open set of data standards will ease the entry of new players, stimulate innovation and increase the pace of change.

Accurate customer contact information is essential for all the components of the new passenger travel initiatives and the industry data model, the combination of which will serve as the backbone for the industry and a catalyst for change.
The new StB program

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<td><strong>Vision 2020</strong></td>
<td>The future will be a travel industry where customers can choose to access the products they desire, with ease, and benefit from personalized and dynamically packaged offers. Airlines will be able to offer these products and services through all channels if they choose to do so.</td>
<td>In 2020 passengers will know that they are ready to fly, because governments will have confirmed that they can in advance. And becoming “ready to fly” will be simple.</td>
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<td><strong>Where we are today</strong></td>
<td>Commodified products and a dominance of a small number of large players. Airlines cannot offer passengers personalized packages due to lack of visibility of their full product range.</td>
<td>Passengers send passport and visa information to airlines. The airline sends that information to governments. The airline is held responsible for the integrity of the information, and liable for fines.</td>
<td>Passenger information is incomplete and fragmented.</td>
<td>Travel partners, airlines, railways, hotels etc. are not connected, which can lead to a disjointed and frustrating travel experience for the customer.</td>
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<td><strong>Programs in place</strong></td>
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The StB think tank has identified a new development which could further transform the airline industry. It consists of streamlining the airline back-office financial process.

Since the 1970’s and well before the internet was invented the airline industry has been at the heart of e-commerce. Passengers have benefited from a near real-time automated reservation exchange that has enabled passengers to have one ticket for one journey over multiple airlines. This has served the industry and its customers well to date, but the current processes and systems lack flexibility to serve the customer and fulfill buying expectations in today’s world of eCommerce merchandizing, not to mention the huge costs for the industry that this model generates.

In a new transformed model, where airlines will treat customers uniquely based on a relationship and not just a transaction, what should become of the notion of Ticket, PNR and Passenger Revenue Accounting? Any simplification of the “order to cash” process should deliver benefits in the following areas:

- **True Customer focus:**
  Customers will be recognized and remembered as opposed to being treated as a one-off transaction.

- **Acceleration of innovation:**
  It will be easier and faster to innovate; airlines will be able to offer more products and services with dynamic packaging, greater benefits will be unlocked from the New Distribution Capability (NDC) standards.

- **Cost savings:**
  Process simplification could drive significant back office cost savings.

- **Greater flexibility:**
  It will provide the industry with a greater ability to adapt to structural changes e.g. mergers, or joint ventures.

IATA will bring together a group of airline experts who will establish the detailed scope of this new topic. This group will report back to the 2013 World Passenger Symposium with an assessment of the opportunities and benefits and a recommendation for next steps.
CONCLUSION

The Simplifying the Business program is all about delivering value. We need to have a common vision across the value chain of what needs to be achieved and the value that it will bring to the industry and to its customers. Once we have that, good ideas, upon which we can cooperate, can form the foundation for further innovation. In other words, when people and companies see the value that is to be gained, they are ready to work together.

This paper is the result of just that. A dedicated group of airline people and experts from air travel and other industries working collaboratively to fit together the pieces into work programs; looking into the near future to ensure that the needs and ever growing expectations of consumers are met, and that the whole of the value chain has the necessary technological and regulatory framework in place to enable it to flourish.

The paper is shared at the annual World Passenger Symposium where the air travel industry meets, reviews progress, identifies new trends, adjusts industry roadmaps and agrees on industry standards, with a single and committed voice.

Aviation is an important force for good in our world, enabling journeys of discovery, bringing goods to market and reuniting friends and families. In its first hundred years, commercial aviation has changed the way that the world lives and works together. And we have only just begun. Working together, we can drive change to deliver even greater value in the next century of commercial air transport.

Simplifying the Business (StB) does not belong to IATA - it belongs to the airline industry as a whole. From e-ticketing through to today’s new programs of work, StB remains a call to action which is recognized as bringing transformational change to benefit the entire aviation value chain and the customers it serves.

IATA will lead this new program on behalf of and in collaboration with the entire air travel value chain.
CONTRIBUTIONS

IATA wishes to thank all contributors to this paper. The names of participating airlines and strategic partners are listed below.

Airline Delegates

The following airline delegates are members of the StB Think Tank and were appointed to propose a way forward for Simplifying the Business.

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Oracle
Out of all the choices for favorite things to do during a flight, ‘playing games’ was the least popular. Even less popular than ‘catching up on work’!

We know because we asked.

Do you know what passengers really think?

We know because we asked air travelers of every age, background and gender in more than 100 countries.

Independent, in depth and unbiased, the IATA Air Passenger Survey gives unrivalled insight into what passengers want, how they behave, why they make choices and what they spend their money on.

If you can step into the heads of your customers, you can stay a step ahead of the competition.

To find out more, email paxsurvey@iata.org or visit:

www.iata.org/paxsurvey