Transforming Your Business Through Technology

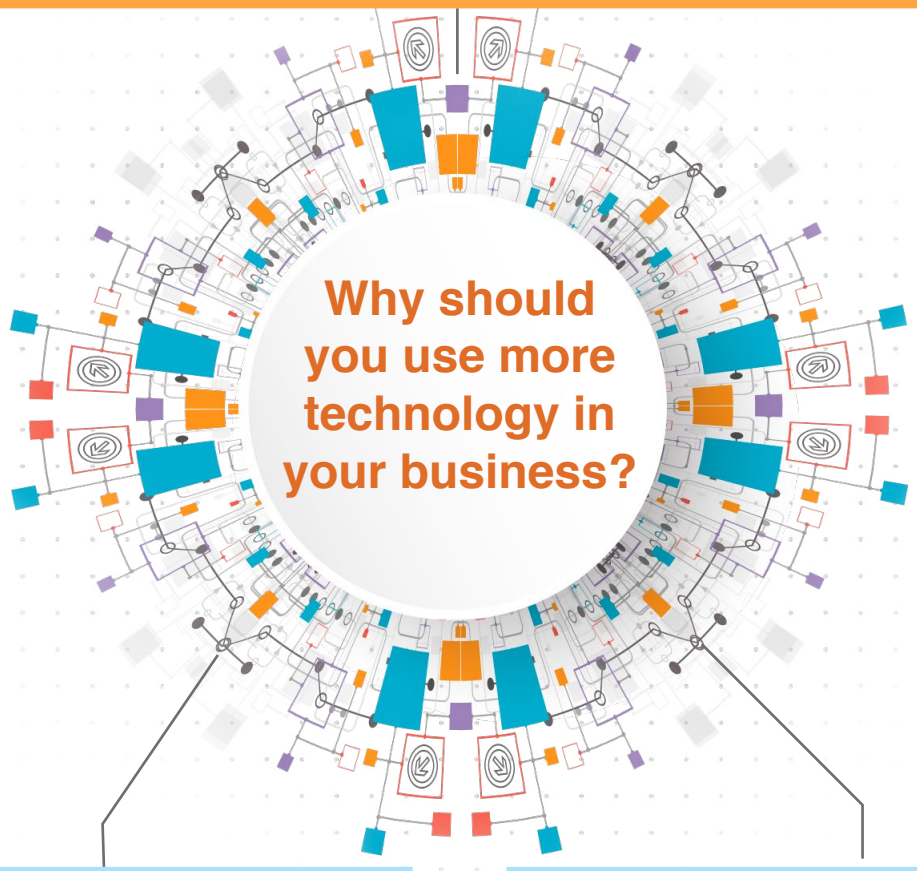
A Technology Guidebook For Travel Agents

Singapore TOURISM BOARD

NATAS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TRAVEL AGENTS SINGAPORE

Technology holds the key to not only improving the way your business is run today, but also in transforming how it could be run in the future. To thrive in the digital age, it is increasingly important for businesses to optimise technology to enhance the customer experience from start to finish, and do what could not be done before.

This guidebook will provide you with a basic introduction to the types of technologies that you can use in your business, including a list of solution providers and assistance available to you.



Why should you use more technology in your business?

1 Increase productivity which can lead to manpower and cost savings

"With the prevalent use of technology in our day to day business, we saw it timely to build the iOperations system. The system is now undergoing user-testing but I foresee significant time savings for my staff which leads to cost savings too. The manual liaison with suppliers and processing of their claims will be automated so that my staff can focus on higher value work."

Dominic Ong, Star Holiday Mart

2 Expand your customer base which can lead to higher revenues

"To keep up with the current trend where consumers are booking services directly online, we developed a B2C booking platform using STB's Business Improvement Fund. The platform has not only minimised the need for manual data entry, it has also expanded our reach to direct consumers and increased our revenues. Customers are also happier as the portal is a quick and convenient way for them to make a booking with real-time confirmation and immediate payment!"

Francis Giam, Discovery Tours & Travel

Take a look at your business processes. Are there areas where technology can be used for greater gains and lesser pain?

Suppliers

Hotels, Flights, Transport, Attractions, Tours

How are you managing your suppliers and ensuring information from suppliers are updated internally?

Marketing

Do you have an online presence to tell customers about your services/products?

Is your website user-centric and mobile-friendly?

Is your website or social media channel updated regularly?

Product

Is product information from different sources stored centrally for all business units to access?

Management

Can data be extracted and reports be auto-generated for management to analyse?

Sales & Reservation

Are there areas where time-consuming steps like data entry, calculating price of tour packages can be automated?

Finance

Are your finance reports still being created manually on spreadsheets?

Can processes like filing claims/checking invoices/paying suppliers be made less tedious?

Operations

Are exchanges with suppliers always done through multiple phone calls and emails?

Can documents for customers (eg. tickets, vouchers, itineraries, etc.) or suppliers (eg. job orders, signages, etc.) be provided in soft copy instead?

Customers

B2B / B2C

Are you able to analyse and anticipate your customers' needs?

Have you considered ways where technology can be used to improve your customers' experience?

The above diagram is meant to depict a general model of the travel agent business

How May Technology Help You

Enhance customer experience for better sales conversion

Websites / Mobile applications
A website or mobile application with e-commerce function is necessary for customers to access your products and services anytime, anywhere

Social media platforms
Such channels provide an opportunity to connect with customers and enable them to build a relationship with your brand

Customer relationship management systems
Harness your customer data to better understand their profile, improve satisfaction, create loyalty and better target your marketing efforts

Virtual reality / augmented reality tools
Explore innovative ways where technology can provide a fun and novel experience to engage your customers

Improve productivity and reduce costs through automation

Integrated front-to-end systems
Connect systems or modules used by different business units to improve internal work processes and maximise efficiency

Quotation management system
Build itineraries from various travel components and generate them quickly into quotations, reduce errors and improve the turnaround time for the customer

Centralised product database
Manage your product information (eg. costs, mark-ups, validity dates etc) conveniently through a central database for greater reliability and accuracy

Operations management systems
Enable your operations staff to automate the manual work in liaising with suppliers, thereby eliminating inefficiencies to create manpower savings

Provide support for better yield optimisation

Back-office systems
Employ the use of HR and accounting management software for better accuracy and greater accountability of staff and financial information

Data reporting systems
Collate data in an effortless manner across your business to generate reports that can help you to make strategic business decisions

Aggregators
Access travel products from multiple suppliers through a single online platform where you can book and pay with real-time confirmation

Online payment gateways
Allow customers to make payment at their fingertips and let staff monitor these transactions easily

Basic features to consider for the solution you adopt

Are they cloud-based?

Systems which are cloud-based allow businesses to store and access their data over the internet instead of having the information sit remotely on a server. Depending on the needs and size of your business, having a cloud-based system offers many solutions. Other than lower maintenance and hardware costs, the benefits of having a cloud-based systems is that your staff, customers and suppliers can access information on bookings 24/7

Can they enable API integration?

API allows systems to 'talk'. If you are looking for information from your e-commerce website, supplier database, agent booking channel, payment gateway, etc. to be seamlessly connected with your internal systems, API integration is necessary. For businesses, this feature can eliminate the need for staff to handle manual data entry and hence reduce errors

Technology solution providers

Websites / Mobile Applications, Social Media Platforms

Improve sales by building your online web presence

iFoundries	Provides conversion-optimised websites and digital marketing solutions for growing businesses by using a combination of inbound marketing methodology and marketing technology tools. Email: andy@ifoundries.com I Website: www.ifoundries.com
LDR	Provides location-based mobile application and e-learning solutions. Its web-based authoring platform Pocket Trips™ enables development of interactive site content that can be triggered by location-based technologies such as GPS, image recognition and Bluetooth smart technologies on users' mobile devices. Email: enquiries@ldr.sg I Website: www.ldrtech.sg
Ncode	Provides consulting and implementation services in web-based and mobile projects, and assists clients in formulating suitable online strategies, implementing corporate branding and conceptualising web presence for their business. Email: info@ncodeconsultant.com I Website: www.ncodeconsultant.com
Pixely	Provides web development and design, content management systems, e-commerce, mobile development, and internet marketing. Email: sales@pixely.sg I Website: pixely.sg
Swisscrum	Provides an e-commerce multi-channel travel solution, Tourismate, targeted at SMEs with integrated social media marketing. Swisscrum also provides cost-effective e-marketing consultancy services to boost sales via mobile channels and social media. Email: jeremy.lim@swisscrum.com I Website: www.swisscrum.com

Virtual Reality / Augmented Reality Tools

Enhance customer experience by engaging them using virtual / augmented reality

EON Reality	Provides virtual and augmented reality experience for the tourism and entertainment industry, with experiences ranging from mobile phones to holographic displays, multi-wall 3D rooms, and interactive domed theatres. Email: desmond@eonreality.com I Website: www.eonreality.com

Travel Management Systems

Manage your customer travel bookings with ready travel management systems

Athena Innovations	Athena Bookings is an integrated travel management solution for travel agents to handle their business process flow, and support various travel agency core businesses such as corporate ticketing, leisure travel, tour operators and wholesalers. Email: sales@athena-innovations.com I Website: www.athena-innovations.com
Pytheas	TravelCloud is an online travel management solution for travel agents to launch their online travel business for tour package booking, manage their sales and customers, and integrate to suppliers like GDS and payment gateways. Email: info@pytheas.travel I Website: www.pytheas.travel
Tocco Travel	Travel Mobility System (TMS) allows travel agents to dynamically construct a complex travel package (with air, hotel and land tours) and distribute them via multiple online channels. Email: vincent.lai@toccotravel.com I Website: www.toccotravel.com
Tourplan	Tourplan is a software for tour operators, travel agents and destination management companies to source and package product, provide quotations, create online distribution channels with accounting and reporting functions. Tourplan is available in Standard, Distribution, Connectivity, and Enterprise editions. Email: sales@as.tourplan.com I Website: www.tourplan.com

Develop your customised travel management system and automation of business processes

EQ Soft	Provides travel software development and customisation with 3rd party API/web service integration, intelligent dashboard solution, and consultative advice to clients in business process re-engineering. Email: ContactUs@myeqsoft.com I Website: www.myeqsoft.com

Technology solution providers

Back-office Systems
Improve backend processes using HR and accounting tools

Payboy	Provides a web-based Human Resource Management solution that can enable businesses to generate payrolls, manage wages, leaves, attendance and other HR management functions. Email: sales@payboy.biz I Website: www.payboy.biz
QuickBooks	QuickBooks Online is a product of Intuit, and provides a cloud-based accounting software that can enable businesses to manage and track their financials. Email: kamlesh_mahtani@intuit.com I Website: www.quickbooks.intuit.sg

Data Reporting Systems
Enhance your business reporting by using tools to automate data preparation and report generation

GFK	Provides digital travel intelligence that captures and analyses travellers' online behaviour on smartphones, tablets and computers. GFK helps businesses to design multi-device channel communication strategies and optimise the online and mobile experiences delivered. Email: anthony.tan@gfk.com I Website: www.gfk.com
Holistics Software	Provides a data reporting and preparation solution that can automate the basic data preparation work required, and make it easy for businesses to query, visualise and share information from their own database online. Business users can access live data when they need it without the need to wait for reports to be updated. Email: vincent@holistics.io I Website: www.holistics.io

Travel Product Suppliers
Access to wider range of travel products such as flights, hotels, attractions ticketing

Amadeus	Amadeus is a Global Distribution System that provides technology for the travel sector, from initial search to making a booking, from pricing to ticketing, from managing reservations to managing check-in and departure processes, and connects key players in the travel industry from travel agents, corporations, airlines, airports, hotels, railways and more. Email: ian.cheah@amadeus.com I Website: www.amadeus.com
Citytixs	Provides an electronic ticketing system that offers attractions, theme parks, restaurants, retails and transport services a unified platform to distribute their products to consumers, travel agents and resellers. Citytixs also allows all the various experiences to be bundled together into card-less city passes. Email: sales.support@citytixs.com I Website: www.citytixs.com
GlobalTix	Provides an online electronic ticketing platform GlobalTix for the travel industry, focusing on attractions, activities and F&B. Partners such as travel agents will be able to access a one-stop shop for their travel needs, customise their own packages and re-distribute to their own sub-agents. GlobalTix also provides customised solutions for online stores and mobile apps. Email: enquiries@globaltix.com I Website: www.globaltix.com
Sabre	Sabre is a Global Distribution System (GDS) that provides technology for the travel industry. Sabre provides software, data, mobile and distribution solutions for the airlines and hotels to manage critical operations, including passenger and guest reservations, revenue management, flight, network and crew management. Sabre also operates a global travel marketplace by connecting travel buyers and suppliers. Email: marketingservice.tnsg@sabre.com I Website: www.sabre.com
Travelport (Galileo)	Travelport is a Global Distribution System (GDS) that connects the world's travel providers with online and offline travel buyers in a proprietary B2B travel marketplace. Travelport enables travel agents access to branded fares and ancillary products from different airlines (including LCCs), hotel properties, car rental and much more. Email: yvette.yeo@travelport.com I Website: www.travelport.com

SME Centre

If you need business advice, you may visit an SME Centre

Supported by SPRING Singapore, the network of SME Centres provides small and medium enterprises with easy access to business advisory to help them start, sustain and grow their businesses. The one-stop SME Centres provide services including business diagnosis, advisory on government schemes and capability workshops. SMEs can visit any of the SME Centres for assistance.

Website: https://www.smeportal.sg/content/smeportal/en/home.html

Singapore Tourism Board

If you have identified a technology solution to adopt and need funding support, grant schemes are available

If you are looking to adopt a technology solution to improve your business capability –

Business Improvement Fund (BIF) – encourages businesses to embark on technology development, redesign of business model and processes in the tourism sector to improve productivity, competitiveness and enhanced consumer experience.

Website: https://www.stb.gov.sg/assistance-and-licensing/grants/pages/business-improvement-fund-(bif).aspx

If you are looking to use technology to enhance the customer experience (eg. for tours) –

Experience Step-Up Fund (ESF) – encourages businesses to develop new tourism experiences which enhance overall visitor experience and satisfaction in Singapore.

Website: https://www.stb.gov.sg/assistance-and-licensing/grants/pages/experience-step-up-fund-esf.aspx

SiTF Singapore infocomm Technology Federation

If you are aware of the technology solution you need and looking for suitable vendors, consider MatchIT:

Singapore infocomm Technology Federation (SiTF) is Singapore's premier infocomm industry association. It comprises corporate members ranging from local startups to established MNCs. SiTF advocates for the ICM (Information, Communications and Media) industry, helps to accelerate the adoption of ICM technology and promotes innovation.

SiTF works closely with various stakeholders to promote emerging technologies in areas such as Digital Media, Cloud Computing, Wireless, Security and Governance. SiTF also provides platforms to help members with opportunities to increase their market presence and business outreach.

The MatchiT programme is run by the Singapore Infocomm Technology Federation (SiTF). It is a free web service that matches your business IT requests with SiTF's network of solution providers.

Website: www.sitf.org.sg

Brought to you by:

www.stb.gov.sg

www.natas.travel

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