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NDC: Display and Going for the Last Mile

This is the final piece of our three-part blog series on NDC. On our first two posts ([here](#) and [here](#)), we talked about how airlines and the industry will distribute content via New Distribution Capabilities, or NDC, followed by why content with demonstrative value to the customer is critical in driving mass adoption.

In our third offering today, we'll discuss the importance of enabling business travelers to consume this content – at the point of sale – in a way that's efficient and engaging.

There is a classic philosophical thought experiment that asks: If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound? If we apply a

similar logic, with an NDC twist, one could ask: If NDC's infrastructure is in place and content with clear value to the traveler is available, will it matter if travelers can't intuitively view what's on offer and make easy comparisons that lead to an informed purchasing decision?

While NDC addresses some of the elements needed to make rich content available via any channel, it doesn't really address the challenges of displaying richer content. For example:

- How do we efficiently differentiate and retail new airline products and bundles?
- How do we compare airfares and bundles across airlines to assist travelers and travel counselors in making an efficient and informed decision?
- How do we improve the user experience using rich content and measure the impact?
- As the medium itself becomes increasingly complex, how do we account for an evolving platform that includes mobile and virtual assistants?

It's clear that if we solve for distribution and content without display, we gain minimal to no value. In effect, NDC becomes a two-legged stool unless the limitations around how you actually shop for airline products, bundles, and services are addressed in a way that satisfies not only travelers' user experience, but also airlines' retailing opportunities, without significantly increasing the cost to operate such a system.

We can achieve this only through an omnichannel solution that makes it easier to understand and purchase rich content across all airlines. An alignment around a global standard, like ATPCO's Next Generation Storefront (NGS), or something similar, is a necessary first step and is the most efficient way we can do this across all channels.

CWT strongly supports a global, collaborative approach and believes the road to enhanced display today is best navigated through NGS. We are encouraged by the momentum we are building: ATPCO's NGS advisory board has already successfully created a North America standard, and is rapidly pursuing global alignment. To fully support this third leg – display – that will enable NDC to stand on its own, global engagement, buy-in, and action across the entire ecosystem is critical.

To date, there has been a lot of attention paid on NDC's infrastructure and customer-driven content, the subjects of our first two blogs, but the benefit of solving challenges related to both are lost if we don't get enhanced display that provide consumer-grade experience right. The industry needs to come together and solve this 'last mile'. In retail parlance, the last mile is typically the most expensive and inefficient – and utterly inescapable – you need to close that last mile in order for products to ultimately reach the end-users.

A lot has been made on how complex this New Distribution Capability standard is. In these three blogs, we argue that the journey to realizing NDC is quite straightforward – as long as we collaborate as an industry and align our goals on delivering value end-to-end with our customers always top of mind.

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