New Distribution Capability (NDC)
Together Let’s Build Airline Retailing

2018 NDC Implementation Forum – 2
Meeting Summary

28 – 29 August 2018

Meeting Venue Information:
IATA Spain and Andorra,
Torre Europe, Paseo de Castellana 95, Madrid 28046
September 2018 Imp Forum highlights

- 39 organizations, 56 participants; anonymized meeting feedback from participants at this link https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-M6BJJDNNL/.

- Implementation insights highlighted trends from the NDC Certification Registry. For example, this graph is a good indication of how soon after a schema is released it is adopted for the 1st time and reaffirms the industry's convergence to 17.2 in the last year. Other trends, including capabilities being implemented are also shared in the presentation.

- 7 Leaderboard airlines shared capabilities in their NDC roadmaps. Refer to the presentations on the meeting site on AIRTechZone.
Thumbs up went to message flow work. The message flow sub group is helping to address the request for consistent workflows for similar use cases. One flow was presented and implementers confirmed the value of what was being documented as implementation guidance. Flows have been posted on #messageflowstandardisation on the AIRTechZone forum.

NDC through the lens of an IT-centric TMC: Using an NDC TMC Reference Architecture as a framework, implementers saw an example a TMC investing in their own Order database and the value of having flexibility for reporting, analytics and customer service. TMCs are trying to find the opportunity to sell products quickly and efficiently, and not necessarily just to redesign the old way of doing things with new schemas. The availability of airline support/helpdesk high is priority to those consuming the API. Other observations include airline deviations from the schema and finding consistent flows among airlines.

Airline Support – how did airlines respond? Airlines recognize the need to raise their level of support and IT capabilities. Some already having support teams in place, and others have this in their roadmap. Providing implementation guidance and sample instances to demonstrate implementations is also useful to airline partners.

Perspectives shared from an agent: Agents receiving airline offers from their NDC channels compare the capabilities with current GDS-sourced content. When there is perceived missing functionality, agents need help understanding whether it is an airline or implementation limitation, a true gap in the standard or education on how things are done differently. Agents are also looking to their local airline sales account managers to educate them on what NDC means for their airline.

Customer focus – the input form challenge: Designing a user experience that takes into account the right data a customer must provide and at the right time of the flow, is key to successful conversion. Implementers had the opportunity to see examples of market-specific data requirements and the impact on the customer workflow. The challenge is to find the right balance, and the standard needs to support accepting / disclosing different data requirements at different points of the workflow.

2 ONE Order pilots – ISO presented a good example of 2 end to end pilots highlighting parallel accounting aspects of NDC and ONE Order vs. ONE Order standalone. Both proved to be valid and demonstrated a pathway into ONE Order in a phased approach.

The ONE Order Program is progressing steadily into the Industry capability & adoption phase.
Dealing with hybrid flows: Some participants expressed the challenge of supporting existing processes based on Edifact, with NDC XML messaging (also a challenge today for LCC XML based interactions). One example is the process GDSs support today to synchronize name changes between the host and GDS PNRs. One airline recommended an approach that keeps the channels separate i.e. processes in existing channels could remain in place, while the NDC channels support scenarios that adhere to the NDC principles.

Another topic in this theme is the current agent process of schedule led searches (e.g. a passenger already knows the flight number for his trip). Some participants shared the view that a similar flow should exist in NDC. Other LB airlines highlighted that they implement this using the existing schemas. There are existing IATA standards to obtain an airline's schedule and allowing a follow up NDC AirShopping request with the known flight number. These discussions will continue in the message flow groups to document the flows where the flight number is known.
A payment POC was introduced (led by Maureva) that looks at redirection in an NDC context. It looks at the airline who will redirect the customer to use its preferred payment methods. It also demonstrates an approach for an airline to have a consistent approach to cover all accepted FOP and expand to new payment forms.

Preliminary findings are highlighting a correlation between the payment time limit and the time spent on the hosted capture page. Further, some airlines may use PSP services that impact the price of the final order (e.g. currency conversion, surcharge calculation). These are airline implementation considerations in the overall flow, to ensure the correct prices are disclosed to the customer.

Reality check on Servicing: A round the room on 'what does servicing mean to you' highlighted that different stakeholders across the value chain have different views – all important. A key takeaway was that as the industry discusses 'servicing gaps', it is important to understand the perspectives being shared.

"What does Servicing mean to you?"

- Any interaction post Order creation
  - Airline initiated – Involuntary
  - Customer initiated – voluntary
- Any customer request
- Be clear about who is responsible for what
- Comes with the ability to do research on the history of changes
- Handling NDC changes alongside current tools and processes
- Consider future impacts of servicing without tickets (ONE Order)

A look at implementing OrderChangeNotif in 17.2 – 18.2 to communicate what in the Order has changed. There are various aspects to consider, e.g. 1) business scenarios that trigger sending the message (schedule change / service no longer available etc.), 2) how to structure the change in the message, 3) the message sequence flow and 4) the delivery mechanisms. The group reviewed together the usage of the data elements in the existing schema. Sellers expressed that until there are any changes to the schema, they will follow up with a subsequent Order Retrieve (Order ID) to obtain the latest snapshot of the Order. This will allow them to identify what has changed and assess the impact of the change on their customer.

Presentations, participating organizations and feedback are all posted on AIR Tech Zone.

~ Thank you! ~
And there was dinner! Freshly prepared fish and meat for 40 of us!