



Transaction. Interaction. Convergence.™

Spire Payments implement latest payment technology for The Original Tour – the worlds’ largest bus-tour company

The Original London Sightseeing Tour Ltd., trading as The Original Tour, was founded over 65 years ago and was the first sightseeing tour of its kind. It was formally introduced by London Transport as ‘Service J’ for the Festival of Britain in 1951 and has now grown to be the largest and most popular open-top sightseeing hop-on hop-off tour operator in London. At the time it was described as a non-stop circular tour of London operating with double-decker buses from Buckingham Palace Road in Victoria. It was the first incarnation



of the open-top sightseeing tours that are now a familiar sight in cities across the world including Paris and New York. The very nature of the business requires the capability to take payments from customers in a wide variety of locations including bus stops, kiosks and most significantly operators on the buses. In London alone this accounted for 120+ POS terminals, the majority of which relied on mobile GPRS communications.

In 2016 there were some important changes on how POS terminals communicated with central payment systems, in particular security protocols. Many older terminals, such as those operated by The Original Tour, could not support these changes. This alone was a significant problem but other factors compounded the need for action.

The deployed terminals were also approaching their PCI expiration date (standards mandated by the card schemes), which if ignored would result in The Original Tour being liable for any fraudulent transactions taken on their deployed terminals. In addition the ageing technology performed poorly during periods of high GPRS demand (lunch times), demanding constant maintenance with a large number of helpdesk calls and remote swapping of failing hardware: a terminal every 5 days.

In summary revenue streams were impacted significantly due to the inability to take card payments at peak times (due to poor comms), failed terminals, poor battery life while not being able to accept the latest payment methods including contactless, Apple Pay, Samsung Pay and Android Pay.

Challenge

The logical solution to the situation was to upgrade the entire terminal estate with the latest POS technology. The challenge, however, was any disruption to day-to-day business would impact revenues significantly. This would include coordinating the seamless replacement of the entire terminal estate taking into account they are deployed throughout multiple locations, dynamic training of staff, provision of online and telephone support and finally the provision of new accessories such as carry cases and charging bases.

Solution

The Original Tour selected Spire Payments to manage the project based on the multiple factors:



- Extensive experience in seamlessly upgrading legacy estates
- Complete range of state-of-the-art POS terminals meeting the latest security standards
- Fully-approved payment applications
- Ability to accept all payment types, chip & PIN, contactless, Apple Pay, Samsung Pay and Android Pay
- 24/7 multi-lingual help desk
- Award winning support infrastructure including 24 hour swap capability

Over the course of six days a progressive roll-out plan was executed whereby terminals were deployed, staff training provided and follow-up calls made to ensure the roll-out went smoothly.

Results

After 6 months operating the new terminal estate the benefits are significant:

- Help desk calls have reduced by 56%
- Terminal swaps reduced by 71%
- Number of card payments increased

“We have been aware for some time that our ageing estate of terminals was impacting business, but the disruption potentially caused by upgrading was an even bigger concern. However, Spire Payments were true to their word and the upgrade went incredibly smoothly resulting in a seamless transition to the latest technology. Increased battery life, more robust

GPRS communications, quality hardware and the ability to accept the latest cards payments has seen a positive impact on our revenue. I would urge any business facing a similar problem with an ageing estate of terminals to contact Spire Payments”, John Harris, Head of IT, The Original Tour.

Benefits of upgrading an out-of-date terminal estate:

Increase sales

Exploiting the power of the latest point of sale devices reduces transaction times which in turn reduces queues and minimises the risk of shoppers deciding not to purchase goods due to long waiting times to pay.

Never turn a customer away

Shoppers are demanding merchants accept a wider range of payment methods such as contactless cards and mobile phone applications such as Apple Pay, Android Pay etc. The latest point of sale devices support these as standard.

Reduce the risk of not being able to take card payment

New devices are more reliable due to the fact they are new and also exploit the latest technologies. This reduces the risk of failure and not being able to accept card payments until a replacement terminal is provided.

Increase customer loyalty

The ability to support loyalty schemes on the latest point of sale device is becoming more common, which in turn promotes customer retention.

Additional revenue

Revenue can be earned by allowing third parties to advertise on the screen on your point of sale device thanks to large colour displays.

Increased protection for your customers

Newer payment devices implement additional physical and logical protections against theft, including card data encryption capabilities known as SRED.



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