Platform integration

Ensuring internal payment processes are secure and streamlined is crucial to businesses keen to keep their ecosystem reliable

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Consider the journey a note takes from the hand of a customer to an organization's bank account. What if an operator could track that note throughout its entire journey in real time?

Within every organization lies a unique internal payment ecosystem, a complex, interconnected network of hardware, software and back-office systems. When that ecosystem is fully functioning, it enables an organization to understand its payment positions in real time, protect payments from shrinkage and maintain accurate records of transactions. In other words, a fully functioning ecosystem allows operators to track each payment in real time as it travels through the payment management process.

Unfortunately for most organizations, the payment ecosystem is not fully functioning, resulting in narrow gaps of cash exposure. These gaps allow the organization to lose track of the payments travelling through it. At best, these lost payments are simply misclassified on paper and result in the misallocation of resources or the missed opportunity for robust and accurate data collection. At worst, these payments disappear forever through error or shrinkage.

Below: **Suzo Happ's CashComplete Connect software platform automates the entire payment process, from initial payment to reconciliation**

Right: **The CashComplete RCS-700 reduces working capital, increases speed and accuracy in processing cash, and increases security both for employees and the cash itself**

Gaps can exist for many reasons. For some operators – despite attempts to automate the payment management process as much as possible – there is still a significant amount of pencil and paper manual entry and reconciliation. Manual processes are ripe with error and at high risk of shrinkage through process gaps that allow physical exposure of the payment medium.

For other operators, automation has been achieved but in a piecemeal fashion built up over time where various pieces of the ecosystem – from hardware to software to back-office systems – have been integrated one by one, often from different manufacturers. While better than manual processes, the different pieces of the ecosystem do not communicate well with one another. Bridge programs can be created to aid in communication within the ecosystem, but they can be labor-intensive, costly to create and subject to error.

Intelligent connectivity

When hardware, software and back-office systems begin to speak to each other, the gaps in an organization's payment ecosystem begin to close. One step in the process knows what to expect from the previous step. Validation, reconciliation and accuracy are assured and no payment is left untracked.

Intelligent connectivity is precisely what Suzo Happ had in mind when creating the vision for its CashComplete Connect software platform.

This software automates the entire payment process, from initial payment to reconciliation. Hardware, software and back-office systems are integrated to give users complete, real-time visibility of their payment management operations. Armed with access to reliable, timely and actionable payment data, transportation providers can optimize on-site, route and corporate-level productivity and service, reduce working capital and improve cash shrink due to errors and theft.

Consider using this type of technology with intelligent cash boxes, for example. These boxes can store both the payment machine's identity and the cash box contents, which are then transferred automatically via RFID to a back-office bulk-processing system that processes and consolidates cash ready for banking. The automatic

transfer of data ensures accurate reconciliation between the cash and its originating payment device and can assist in generating automatic alerts if the correct or expected value of cash is not processed.

This is just one simple example of the impact integrated payment platform technology can have on the daily operations of a business. It takes the challenges that operators are currently working around and provides long-lasting and reliable solutions.

Unique challenges

Integrated payment platform technology meets the unique needs of the industry it serves. When developing CashComplete Connect, Suzo Happ learned quickly that payment management processes are far too complex for an out-of-the-box solution. Certain capabilities, such as real-time visibility of payments, accurate end-of-day reconciliation and increased security are without doubt universally useful, but other capabilities varied in importance and process by industry.

To meet these more varied needs by industry, Suzo Happ developed multiple editions of its platform. CashComplete Connect – the transportation edition – launched in July 2019 and was built specifically to meet the payment management needs of the fare or payment collecting transportation industry, inclusive of bus, rail, metro, parking, kiosks and so on.

In discussions with its international customer base, what Suzo Happ was finding was that the transportation industry struggled with supporting self-service payment options that accepted cash, managing the overall cost of accepting cash and utilizing human resources most effectively. Transport operators continually face the need to ensure staff are front-of-house providing customer service. However, this reduces the ability of employees to oversee payment-related processes and cash handling in the back office.

In a case like this, the operator may employ a recycling cash solution, such as CashComplete RCS-700, which automates all back-office operations so that staff spend less time on administration and can focus more on customer service rather than cash management.

Bridging the gap

To enhance protections around accepting cash payments, operators may employ a bill validator and recycler such as Suzo Happ's Bill-to-Bill solution, which provides authentic bill recognition and protects against counterfeits through advanced sensor technology.

Using automated technologies to bridge process gaps helps operators be more customer-centric, minimizes back office time for all staff and mitigates some of the risk inherent in the acceptance of cash payments.

Other benefits of this integrated payment platform unique to the transportation industry include bringing cash and ticket data together to give users a complete picture of payment operations in one integrated, customizable view. The software fully integrates with ticket transaction systems and the data is available at several levels, including the sales collection employee or device level. This gives users the ability to log and track employee or device status to view real-time balances, transactions and statistics. Advanced analytics support long-term planning efforts, such as route management, cash management, and resource optimization.

Above: **Suzo Happ's Bill-to-Bill product offers authentic bill recognition and features sensors that protect against counterfeits**

Lowering the barriers

Most transport operators have payment management ecosystems that, while functioning, are not optimized. These systems cannot reach full functionality until the process gaps are closed. It can feel daunting to consider changing or rebuilding elements of the current ecosystem, but implementing an integrated payment platform may not be as difficult as one might think.

In the case of Suzo Happ's CashComplete Connect platform, the solution was built hardware-agnostic, allowing transportation providers to leverage the benefits of the integrated platform with their existing hardware and removing the barriers of intelligently connecting the hardware, software and back-office systems within the payment management ecosystem.

Integrated payment platforms are the future of payment management, keeping an organization's unique payment ecosystem healthy and fully functioning for years to come. ■

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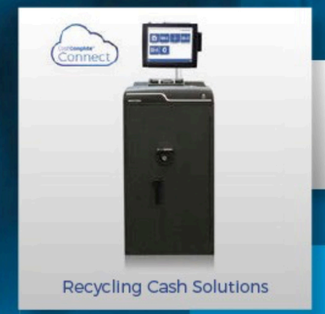
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