



GAINING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FROM **GDPR** **COMPLIANCE**

D-FLO POWERING SECURE TRAVEL COMMUNICATIONS



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About d-flo

d-flo was founded in 2011 to develop innovative communication solutions to help companies manage the document and data flows that underpin their transactional communications – and to do business better with their customers and suppliers as a result. As a specialist within the travel sector d-flo helps the likes of Great Rail Journeys, Hurtigruten, Neilson Active Holidays, Olympic Holidays, Riviera Travel, Sunvil and Super Break to automate and secure their comprehensive travel and crisis communications.

Lee Hayhurst, editor, Travolution

There are so many new regulations coming down the path in 2018 it's been dubbed 'the year of compliance'. Travel firms face new rules governing package travel sales, the outlawing of credit card charges and stricter data protection rules under the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

It's probably the last of these that is causing travel firms the most headaches, particularly as they are now operating in a world awash with data and facing growing demands to personalise their offering. Indeed, in a survey of travel buyers by Travel Technology Europe conducted ahead of this year's show, the biggest challenge was cited as GDPR compliance.

So all travel firms are looking for advice and help to ensure their approach to collecting, storing and discarding data is up to scratch because the penalties for failure are potentially ruinous. The new rules have been drafted specifically as a countermeasure to the activities of internet giants like Google and Facebook and to take account of the shift to data being stored in the cloud.

A level playing field should be welcomed, but the rules apply to all and experts believe regulators will look for some small-scale early prosecutions to establish their authority and lay the ground rules. At the centre of the new world order under GDPR is the concept of customer consent to use their data for marketing and other services. Here travel firms face a dilemma.

Do they go for the 'nuclear option' like pub chain Wetherspoon and delete their entire database or do they find a way of re-consenting their valuable client lists? As was pointed out at Travolution's annual summit last year, this in itself could be non-compliant as if firms don't have consent it could be argued they don't have consent to go back to ask for consent.

Whatever firms choose to do, it's clear we're moving into a new era of hyper-sensitivity about personal data just as technologies mature to enable it to be exploited like never before. The best advice is firms must take this seriously and strive to operate in ways that advance customer service. Improving client satisfaction through use of data is the key to future success.

THE IMPACT OF GDPR ON BUSINESS

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into force 25th May 2018; it is an evolution of the Data Protection Act, harmonising data handling requirements across Europe.



Being a regulation it will eliminate national differences since consistent implementation across the EU is required. It also serves to update data protection legislation taking into account the worlds of social media and cloud storage for which data protection is essential.

As GDPR applies to any EU citizen data, personal or professional, irrespective of where data is processed, international companies must comply when processing EU citizen data so retaining its importance for the UK post Brexit.

Key changes brought in by the regulation impacting businesses and public bodies include:

- Modified regulation concerning Data Controllers & Processors
- Stricter rules concerning acquisition of consent from individuals
- Increased rights of individuals over their own data
- Clarity on the role and working practices of Data Protection Officers (DPOs)
- Major changes to breach incident obligations
- Significantly increased data breach fines
- Privacy by design obligations

In practical terms this means travel businesses need to act now to achieve compliance; contracts with suppliers and partners need to be rigorously reviewed and updated to protect customers and their data. Marketing communication processes need a shake up so it is clear on what basis the travel company has the right to communicate with an individual and if consent driven, that all the new rules are met. Most importantly in the world of travel where data is stored for extended periods of time, travel companies must review and generally improve the security of data storage, access policies, along with retention and deletion processes.

Business processes and technology solutions need to have security and privacy in-built to attain the privacy by design obligations. For the Board, it's not an option to hope a major data security breach doesn't happen, the financial and reputational consequences are potentially so severe that GDPR compliance and continuous process improvement must be part of strategic plans in the same way that everyone lives and breathes revenue plans.

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DRIVING POSITIVE CHANGE FROM GDPR

In the short term GDPR compliance will be challenging for the travel industry. It will inevitably increase costs and resource requirements through the need for improved process, technology and training.

Despite this, for those that seize the opportunity, GDPR compliance, through improved protection of your customers, can be a stepping-stone to increased customer loyalty, improved brand reputation and revenue opportunity.

To reap these rewards travel businesses need to:

Protect customers' data

The data gathered from customers should be stored and processed in a secure manner using best practice policies and technology. Best practice retention and deletion policies need to be defined to minimize risk. When, by necessity, data is passed to external suppliers, data security should be protected by both contractual commitment and audit.

Communicate securely

A business can't be isolated, (especially in travel) regular communication with customers is essential. Ensuring that marketing communication is re-thought and becomes targeted, relevant and secure will deliver improved opportunity. Most importantly, for those customers that are engaged in a booking journey it is essential to ensure that any communication is secure, relevant and tightly managed – this will in turn deliver revenue improvements.

Protection of your business

In addition to implementing technology that keeps data secure businesses need to train employees to understand the requirements for data security and the processes they must follow. Data processing should be monitored using technology so errors and potential fraud can be highlighted and addressed.

MAXIMIZING BUSINESS FROM COMPLIANCE

By achieving GDPR compliance and protecting customer data, a travel business will minimize the risk of experiencing a data breach and suffering the accompanying financial and reputational damage. But, having got this right, there is a far greater prize on offer – increased business.



In travel, customers part with significant sums of money for their dream trips so it is unsurprising they are cautious about the businesses with which they spend their hard-earned money. Become a travel company that truly cares about keeping their customer's data secure - you will build a loyal customer base, improve your brand reputation and open up more revenue opportunities.

But there is no second chance if you get it wrong! With severe negative financial and reputational consequences for data breaches, you will suffer heavily.

For the last four years d-flo have been providing a market leading documentation and communications platform to the travel industry so partnering with such a specialist will give you the capability to introduce GDPR compliant processes for all your booking journey communications. From the outset security and privacy were at the heart of the platform so as a customer you can be confident that your documentation and communications will be GDPR compliant.

LET D-FLO SECURE YOUR TRAVEL COMMUNICATIONS WITH TRAVELCOMMS

It's a given that personal data is treated with the **highest level of security** when processing **customer bookings**. However, it is often overlooked how many manual processes are required to create the supporting documentation for customer communication.

It is manual processes that pose the greatest risk to a business from errors, fraud and data breaches that in turn have the potential to cause the most damage to brand and reputation.

Having been designed from the outset to be secure, TravelComms will ensure that your documentation and communication processes become better controlled and managed.

TravelComms can orchestrate the processes involved in aggregating data from additional sources and providers (whether on premise or in the cloud), transforming and delivering it as highly personalised and relevant communications via the chosen customer channel. Automation, to minimise data handling, increases security from both human error and potential fraudulent interference. TravelComms delivers a consistent, reliable and robust back-office documentation and communications platform.

By processing, storing and delivering customer communications using secure methods a travel business will continually build trust with their customers. A high level of trust builds value in the business leading to new and repeat business. TravelComms ensures privacy is built into your communications helping you to build loyalty and trust with your customers.



Secure document delivery

Customers demand the immediacy proffered by digital delivery requiring this to be achieved securely. Using d-flo's cloud-based email and SMS delivery services, TravelComms' powerful track and trace capability ensures a travel business can confirm when a communication was created, delivered successfully (or not) and specifically for email, when it was opened and how many times. These delivery statistics can assist with mitigation in the case of a data protection breach.



Secure self-service

Enabling customers to securely self-serve their documentation can be easily enabled with TravelComms. By leveraging a travel company's investment into a "My Booking" portal, TravelComms can e-present travel documents and automatically notify the customer of their availability to view or download. Avoiding the need to email documentation (containing personal information) provides a greater level of security by removing the chances of it ending up in the wrong hands thereby eliminating fraudulent activity.



Secure document storage

Every document generated by the TravelComms engine is automatically stored in the content centre. Additional documents from other sources (such as tickets, vouchers, etc.) can also be uploaded to collate a complete record of all documents related to each customer booking. Document categories with user permissions and associated retention policies ensure documents are accessible to relevant viewers stored securely for the appropriate length of time before deleted from the system to comply with the necessary data protection obligations.



Secure user auditing

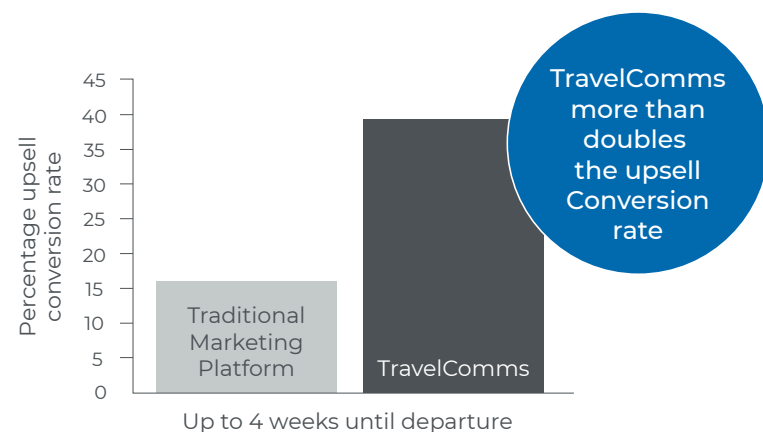
Comprehensive audit capabilities of the TravelComms platform police every user interaction to provide detailed insight that enables a travel business to protect itself. All user activity that involves interaction with customer documentation is tracked and date/time stamped giving a travel business the tools to mitigate against fraud. Additionally, reporting rules can be set up so that supervisors are alerted to any suspicious activity.

DRIVING UPSELL REVENUE WITH TRAVELCOMMS

Now you've secured your customer communications and you feel confident that you are GDPR compliant how will you ensure that you continue to maximize your upsell revenue while keeping customer data secure?

GDPR doesn't prevent you from marketing to your customers but consent must be unambiguous and customers need to be given the right to unsubscribe. By including your offers as part of contractual deliveries of itineraries, tickets, vouchers and transfer details, there is no requirement to offer opt-outs. So why use your standard marketing communications platform to deliver upsell offers to an existing contracted customer? TravelComms customers don't need to. When you have a booking you have the right to communicate relevant information to that customer and TravelComms facilitates that.

Using the booking journey information to enable targeted and highly relevant communications and many of the traditional marketing tools (A/B split testing, heat maps and engagement tracking) to continually improve conversions rates, TravelComms provides compelling success in this area.



Across a number of major UK tour operators TravelComms has a proven track record of achieving upsell conversion rates that at certain parts of the customer journey are over double that of traditional marketing platforms.

A COMPELLING CONCLUSION

By deploying the right technology and processes, **GDPR compliance is achievable** and will help travel businesses to build trust, loyalty and confidence in their brand.



By implementing the TravelComms platform, customers will have built privacy into the entire documentation and communications processes throughout the whole booking journey, which means they will have:

- Secure automated document processes
- Secure travel document storage
- Secure customer communications
- Secure auditing

However, for those businesses that choose to partner with d-flo for travel communications there is an even greater opportunity to be exploited - the ability to drive out highly targeted and relevant upsell communications that deliver industry leading engagement and conversion results. Companies using TravelComms that leverage this possibility have been proven to gain a competitive advantage.