



“GETTING REAL TIME
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JOANNA WILD,
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES,
THOMAS COOK UK



CASE STUDY THOMAS COOK

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Thomas
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THOMAS COOK USES NOVO SKYPOS SYSTEM FOR IN-FLIGHT SALES

A substantial part of Thomas Cook Airlines UK's profits comes from its in-flight retail operations. With budget airlines pushing ever harder on profitability and fuel prices seemingly always on the up, in-flight refreshments are now more likely to become an optional extra than part of the cost of flights.

Thomas Cook already had a system for making in-flight sales using handheld devices, but they were beginning to show their age and were coming to the end of their working life. According to Joanna Wild, Director of Customer Services at Thomas Cook Airlines UK, the old systems "can be temperamental and the sales process is often very slow because of this." Such was their desire to streamline and capitalise on in-flight sales, they made the decision to invest in new handheld computers – and after much testing they decided on Novo TouchPC™ Falcons.

The software and infrastructure were designed and created by Novo Ivc, a UK based organisation, who boast an impressive track record in such systems.

Because each Falcon is equipped with Novo Ivc application software, which in turn runs on Windows CE platform, total compatibility with the Pro Logistica back office application is straight forward.

The advantages of using such a modern platform are greater than the obvious avoidance of software conflicts; now sales will be able to be tracked in real-time and re-stocking and ordering can be carried out live so that every product is available on every flight, whereas before, certain items would run out without the office knowing until it was too late. "Getting real time information on sales for each flight will enable us to respond to trends and stock accordingly," explains Joanna.

A few paces have been taken in other directions towards full retail potential. Switch cards are now acceptable for the first time, allowing passengers travelling light on cash to reach for the plastic when they need refreshing.

"The Falcons will enable us to offer a much quicker cabin service and eliminate potential irritation for both passengers and crew," agrees Joanna. Encryption makes the system secure, and all transactions can be augmented with banking and cash-tracking modules to make accounting and auditing transparent, secure and simple.

Also, the sales system can be enhanced by allowing special offers such as 'two for the price of one' deals and other discounts. Although Thomas Cook is sensibly introducing the system gradually, Joanna recognises that the system has much more to offer and is confident that it will stroll through any future in-flight retail developments. "This is very sophisticated kit," Joanna points out, "and we fully anticipate being able to introduce additional customer services with it in the future."

No doubt Thomas Cook, the company's Victorian founder, would have recognised the ingenious use of technology and the intelligent application of science, as that is exactly what inspired his generation.



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