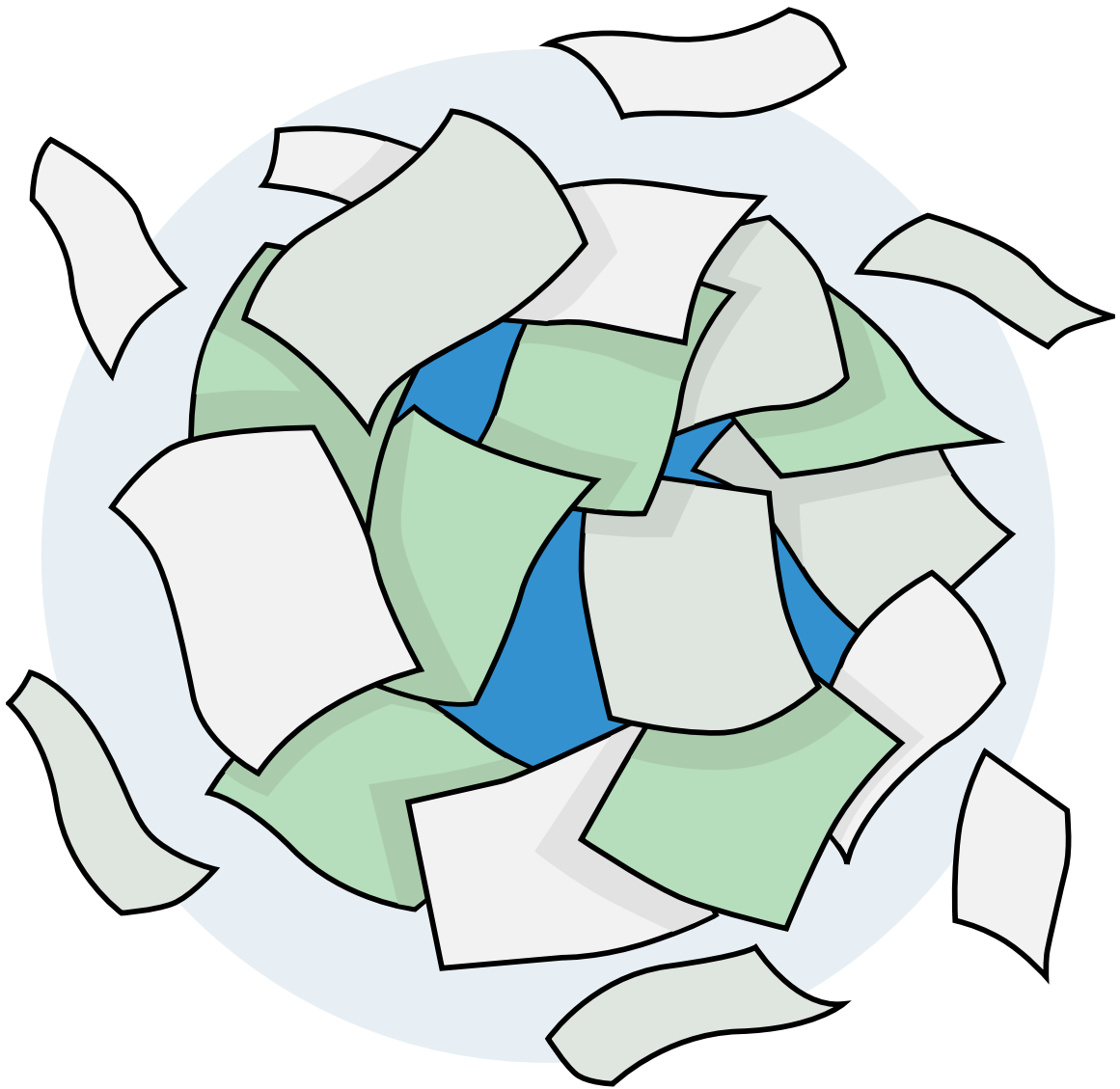


Go paperless

(Before your customers go elsewhere)





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The most important business decision you will make this year (probably)

What's driving your most urgent strategic decisions regarding your tour operator or attractions business?

- Increasing your footfall?
- Improving your customers' experience?
- Reducing your impact on the environment?

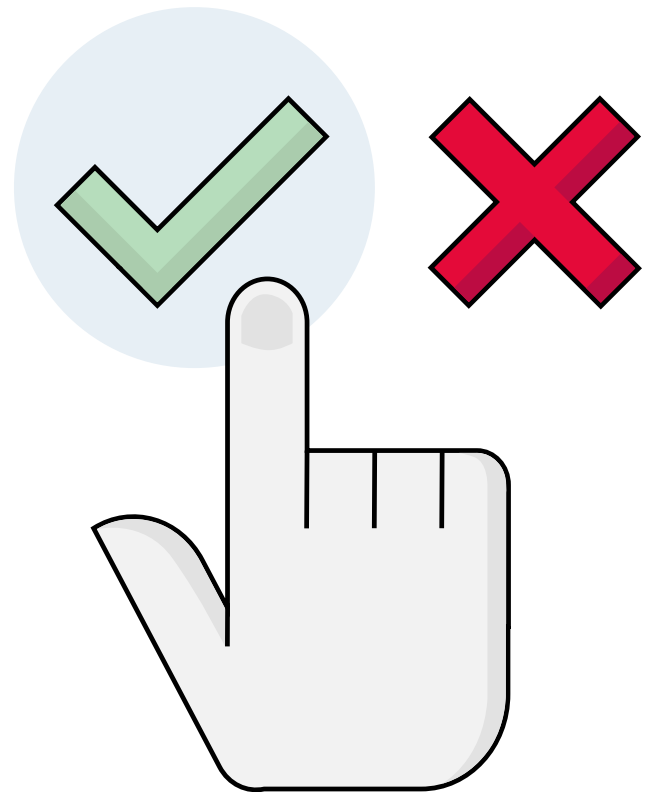
By choosing to go paperless, many of our customers are discovering that they can accomplish all three.

As our industry bounces back from the pandemic, many businesses are taking this unique opportunity to breathe, reboot and rethink their processes. Of the major emerging trends, one is a potential rainmaker for your business: adopting a paperless way of working.

Pre-Covid, paperless solutions were already revolutionising parts of our sector, boosting those businesses that had invested in taking the plunge. However, many areas of the industry are still paper-reliant.

The post-lockdown landscape has given us the chance to do things differently: investing in the tech that will transform your bottom line and enhance customers' experiences whilst consigning the antediluvian paper-heavy way of working to the dustbin.

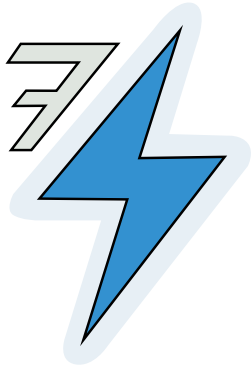
In this eBook, discover how working paperlessly will boost your business. Find out how other tour and attractions operators have quickly and easily implemented paper-free processes. Assess the remaining barriers currently preventing total adoption of paperless working – and be inspired by the solutions that are fast eliminating them.



So don't be held back by "this is the way we've always done it". Paperless is here to stay; bringing you closer than ever to your customers, unlocking your business's potential in unexpected new directions and helping you meet the sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) targets that will reinvigorate both our economies and our planet.

There's been no better time to turn over that new (non-paper) leaf...

7 brilliant ways paperless will boost your business



As business gets moving again, you need to squeeze out every last drop of value and find increasingly innovative ways to thrive and be profitable. For many tours and attractions, one no-brainer answer to has been to eradicate the costs and headache of producing and disposing of paper tickets, vouchers, flyers, maps, menus, admin and receipts.

Paperless could be a blessing to your balance sheet. Without paper tickets, you will no longer have the burden of costs such as printing; staffing and maintenance for checking tickets; or clean up and waste management for disposing of them. Imagine the savings you could make if visitors' tickets are stored instead on their phones.

In addition to saving money, consider the lucrative possibilities for other revenue streams. By using virtual tickets and logging onto virtual queues, customers will spend less time queueing and hanging around, so they will have more time to spend more cash in profit-boosting areas such as your refreshment zones and gift shops.

Storing tickets on customers' smartphones will help you avoid the false economy trap of the earliest eTickets:

savings made from reducing production costs were eaten up by increased waste disposal costs. Customers printing out tickets at home meant thousands of tickets printed on A4 paper - instead of the much smaller traditional tickets used at attractions or by tours - increasing the amount businesses needed to spend on waste management.

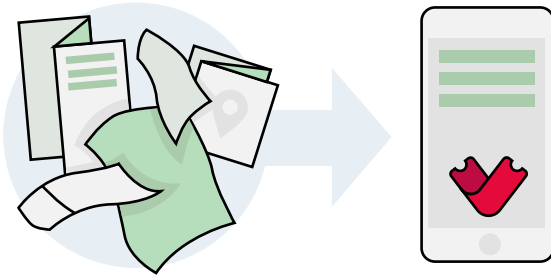
Mobile tickets will help you better control your capacity, ensure appropriate staffing levels and keep visitors safer. Mobile tickets are mainly bought in advance, giving you more accurate data to predict attendance and therefore manage projected footfall.

Your employees will be better equipped to provide superb service to customers. As digital tools are active in real time, your staff are able to access the most up to date information, therefore better answering customers' questions as to when the next bus will be arriving or when the queues for the most popular attractions will be shortest.

Digital processes bring you closer to understanding your customer, offering an overwhelming marketing advantage over paper. By reducing or eliminating barriers to gathering unadulterated data, use the superb insight gained to offer customers an enhanced, highly personal experience; increase customer loyalty; and grow your customer base.

Beef up your environmental credentials. Nowadays customers are factoring environmental cost into their purchasing decisions - particularly among younger demographics. Studies show that a whopping 90% of customers are more likely to both trust and be loyal to a company that tries to make an environmental impact. Why not cash in on that green pound!

Eliminate these classic customer pain points – forever



Imagine if you could guarantee exceeding your customers' expectations? By moving to digital solutions and ditching paper, you will take a leap in the right direction.

Invest in interactive apps and stop overloading customers with multiple pieces of paper: flyers, tickets, maps, receipts, joining instructions, itineraries, menus. Instead, you can use apps to help your customers navigate and plan their day or activity. It's like you're putting a mobile concierge in their pocket! Today's tour or attractions visitor expects a seamless and personalised experience. By providing apps which let them select their preferences, you are helping them create their perfect experience.

Customers will appreciate that you care for the environment and their wellbeing. Surveys show that reducing environmental impact is a crucial factor for travellers and visitors. As well as a healthier planet, right now customers are concerned about their own health. Decreasing the potential for physical contact will make many of your customers feel safer. Some physical distancing measures may need to remain in place for a while longer, so scanning phones rather than handling tickets may become the norm. Using digital to deliver visitor information should also significantly reduce to spread nasty bugs – or something more serious. And no-one wants to risk getting sick on holiday.

Helping your customers get maximum value and enjoyment will boost your marketing, not least through rave reviews. Venues already using digital ticketing are reporting faster onboarding and processing, massively reducing customers' queuing time. Apps offering interactive maps enable visitors to make much more of their limited time: they can plan and navigate more easily, and get real-time updates on live wait times. By providing customers with all the information they need in one place, your apps save them wasting their valuable time scouring myriad websites, social media, flyers and maps – to name but a few.

Tourists will be thrilled by innovative, paper-free processes which increase their security and flexibility. Customers who are visiting from elsewhere usually don't have access to printers so they have to bring print outs with them from home, cluttering up their luggage. If they get vouchers but run out of time to use them, straight into the recycling they go, or are stuck on fridges until expired. Digital tickets and vouchers, however, can be safely stored on visitors' phones until they need them can often be transferred to friends if unused.

Give your customers – often far from home – peace of mind. With digital solutions, their personal data is securely locked away rather than printed out (where it might fall into unscrupulous hands). Their booking and ticket information is automatically backed up so it can still be used even if their device is lost. Digital transactions also allow customers to avoid the temptation of using touts: if events are sold out, customers can automatically be added to a waiting list and be offered first refusal on cancellations.

Paperless tours and attractions really could be easier than you think...

Before going much further, let's explain what we mean by 'paperless'...

Originally, a paperless office meant a work environment in which paper is eliminated – or greatly reduced. This is usually achieved by converting paper documentation into digital form, a process unimaginatively called “digitisation”.

The concept can be extended to communications outside the office as well.

How paperless works in practice:

- Digitisation of documents including contracts, invoicing, staff management (shifts sheets or rotas), schedules, sign-in sheets, reconciliations, legal waivers;
- Communication by email, text, social media instead of mail;
- Interactive web-based or electronic advertising on websites, travel sites, media sites, social media sites, tie-ins with travel operators, visit city sites; and
- eForms instead of forms, applications and surveys to capture and share data.

When it comes to the tour and attractions sectors, paperless systems can be applied to almost every public-facing aspect of your business, as well as the back office ones described above:

→ Digitisation of most customer-facing correspondence:

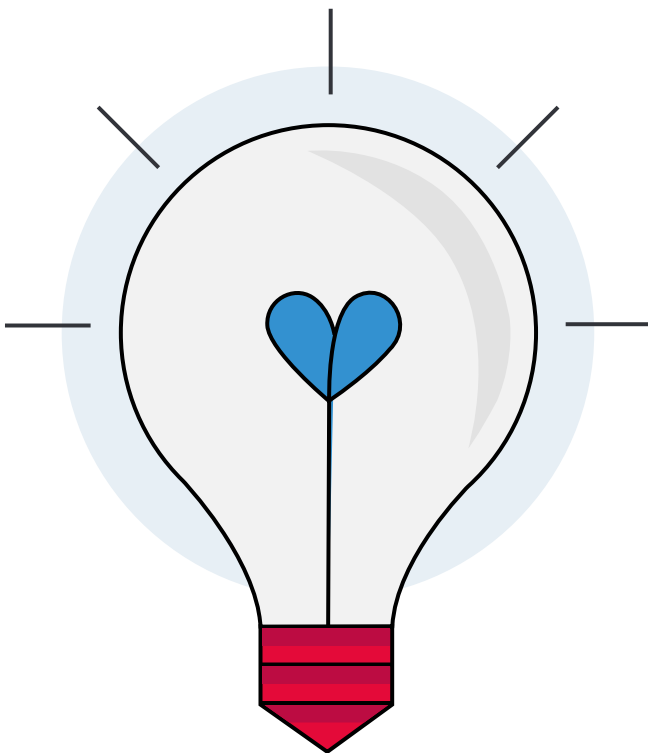
- tickets
- vouchers
- gift cards
- membership and loyalty cards
- maps
- flyers and brochures
- menus
- receipts
- timetables

→ Instead of guidebooks and schedules, visitor and customer apps offer personalised and targeted interactive content and real time updates.

→ Staff rotas, customer/passenger lists and sign-in sheets are generated, used and updated electronically.



Inspiring case studies from paperless pioneers



Many tours and attractions have already successfully reduced their (and their customers') reliance on paper. The rise of digital ticketing and visitor-focused apps is helping businesses in our sector enhance visitors' experience whilst increasing their market share and turnover. Discover what paperless solutions are available to you right now. Here are a few that are reaping great rewards for some of our customers:

Ticketing

Gaining admission to experiences, transport or venues is a huge generator of paper: printed tickets, wristbands or customers' own printouts. To manage queues inside attractions, deli counter-style tickets are often used as well, all adding up to a weighty paper trail.

Many bus, tram and rail transport systems around the globe have replaced paper tickets with contactless or mobile payments (such as Bluetooth), electronic or smart passes. Let's see how a popular option - Bluetooth - works:

- Passengers download your app and set up a secure account which they top up.
- Beacons confirm a passenger's location at which point the passenger touches a button on the screen to for an on-screen pass that they show to the driver.
- Once the passenger has completed their journey, they are automatically billed with the cheapest available fare according to distance travelled and duration.

Customers have responded enthusiastically to the increased convenience of mobile purchasing. Many attractions who initially switched to digital ticketing, often for socially conscious, environmental reasons are reporting reduced expenditure and increased profitability as a result.

Most major airlines, bus, train, and hospitality companies offer mobile tickets - a trend which is fast spreading to non-transport businesses including zoos, entertainment and sports venues. Museums are increasingly adopting mobile ticketing platforms; to appeal to the digitally-savvy and to better engage museum-goers through digital media.

We have some way to go before we have reached universal adoption but, based on the success of paperless rollouts, a paperless ticketing future is looking inevitable.

Digital vouchers

A hop-on hop-off bus tour client was on a mission to reduce paper vouchers. They launched API¹ technology to enable partners to book their tour products in return for QR codes. These QR codes were then embedded in eVouchers to be scanned by tour staff when customers wanted join a tour.

Following a successful trial involving ten global partners, the initiative was rolled out to a wider audience. The partners found that they could better manage resources and customers feedback was that they love how user-friendly it is: they no longer have the hassle of printing out vouchers!

Apps

The same hop-on hop-off bus tour client has also launched an app designed to enable travellers and tourists to maximise their city break time - including being able to track in real time where their next bus is. The

interactive app shows ideal tour routes and itinerary suggestions, detailed maps pinpointing tour bus stops and walking directions to access them. Users can plan where to alight to discover local landmarks and discover fun facts about the biggest and best city attractions.

For customers, the most exciting feature is the level of personalisation the app offers them. Drawing on their preferences, location and purchasing history, users are sent helpful suggestions and relevant notifications including special offers, service updates (including detours and closures). Responsive two-way messaging also allows customers to quickly contact the tour company - very useful for last minute plan changes.

In the words of our client, "customers can decide if they have time to take that all important selfie, sit back and enjoy a coffee, or wander around city landmarks without worry."

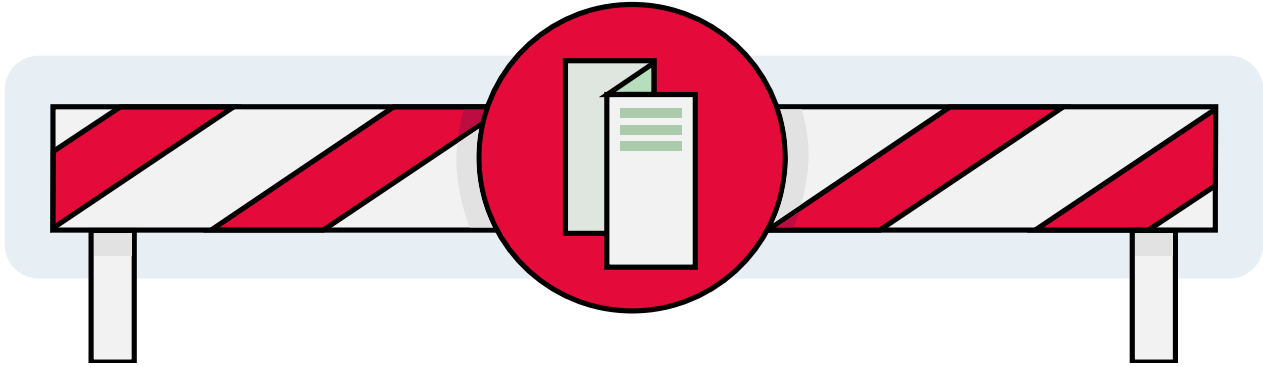
Reducing waste to lower carbon footprint

A leading zoo wanted to reduce their carbon footprint, including the amount of waste they produce. In an initiative designed to appeal to climate-conscious visitors, they decided to replace traditional paper maps with a mobile guest app featuring an interactive map.

Using GPS to display their exact real-time location, with just one tap visitors can now easily plot their quickest route from A to B. They can plan their day and access exclusive offers, as well as receive highly-targeted messages based on their location and behaviour. The app also displays up-coming talk schedules and information on the zoo's vital conservation work.

¹ For most of us who don't know, API is short for 'Application Programming Interface', a fancy way of describing a software intermediary which allows two applications to talk to each other.

Which of these stubborn barriers are preventing you switching from paper?



Like most evolutionary processes, change doesn't occur overnight. The need for social distancing and the increased urgency to combat climate change has accelerated paperless progress. But some significant barriers still remain.

Regional disparity

The implementation of paperless transport payment, for example, varies between countries and regions. Whilst many parts of Asia and Turkey have been well ahead of the curve for a while, much of Western Europe and the USA are lagging behind.

In the UK and Europe, 70% of all train tickets are still bought offline. Fewer contactless transactions are carried out in Britain (250 every second) than in most other developed countries. Pre-Covid, only 50% of Londoners routinely used contactless cards for transactions under £30. Most long-distance train passengers in the UK still travel with paper tickets and equipment for contactless ticketing can only be found at 125 out of 2,563 railway stations across Britain (25 of which within Greater London). The UK government has promised to introduce paperless

rail tickets across England and Wales, so the uptake in paperless transport payments should improve significantly.

Old habits die hard

People are sentimental. We love to celebrate and hold on to mementos of much-anticipated and greatly enjoyed experiences. Precious souvenirs often take the form of a ticket stapled or pinned to a commemorative programme or flyer. Many travellers or visitors prefer the romance of tangible, hard copy tickets to newer, digital tickets.

Many of us still love brochures. A 2018 survey of 2,020 respondents across 17 European and North American cities found that, on average:

- 79% of visitors picked up a brochure,
- 85% of visitors became aware of an attraction or business as a result of picking up a brochure,
- printed brochures were the next most popular source of information for trip planners after the internet, with a usage rate of 52%,
- 61% of visitors planned to purchase tickets or merchandise they learned about from a brochure, and

→ 73% of visitors would consider altering their plans because of a brochure.

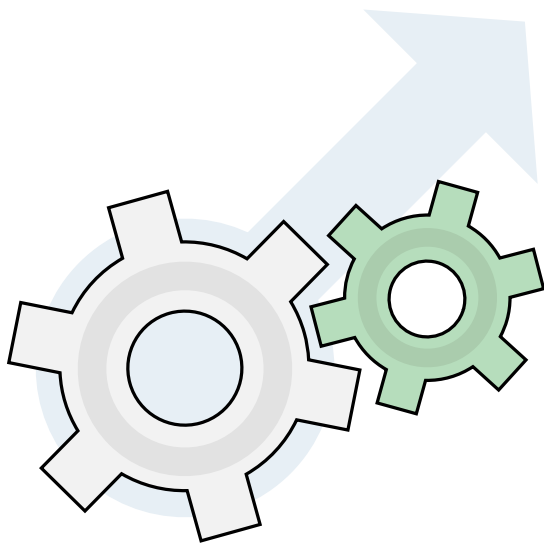
This survey was carried out before the global pandemic so it would be interesting to see results of comparable research in a post-Covid-19 landscape, with customers' reasonable concerns regarding virus transmission and our increased reliance on (and comfort with) digital alternatives to hard copy.

Many barriers are personal, many are institutional. Some customers still do not have, or are reluctant to use, bank accounts. Some venues still require visitors to produce

printed confirmation or registration emails. There are also many tour and attraction businesses who have embraced paperless but still incorporate an element of paper in their marketing, awareness-raising and customer interaction.

Many of our paper-loving habits – whilst steadily decreasing – are still substantial enough to slow the progress of a total switch to paperless. But, hearteningly, we know that habits can be broken. When email was in its infancy, paper consumption boomed because many users were printing out correspondence to read, rather than reading it online. Now? Not so much!

Ingenious solutions to help you overcome them



It is hard to imagine paperless being possible without the enormous technological great leaps forward we've witnessed so far in the twenty-first century.

Better data protection

Customers are not as reticent to supply their personal information thanks to a timely increase in regulation to protect personal data, combat identity theft and stop data breaches. Companies that manage or store personal information are required by law to take proper care of that data. With the right software precautions, paperless office systems are now more secure than traditional filing cabinets not least because it is possible to track who exactly is accessing each document.

Shrinking start-up costs

Businesses might not have been prepared to stump up the obvious investment costs (hardware, software and skills) needed to make the leap to paperless. And there are also hidden costs: productivity loss while new systems are set up, for example. Technology costs have decreased relatively, making systems significantly more

affordable than in preceding decades (although still not cheap!). In the post-Covid landscape, contactless payment mechanisms are now essential for many businesses. And regarding productivity loss: many tour and attractions operators took the opportunity to install paperless processes while they were forcibly closed during the lockdowns.

Technological breakthroughs

As with any technological great leaps forward, a significant teething period existed as three significant barriers prevented wholesale adoption. Firstly, multiple software products often led to compatibility issues. There were also problems with system stability and security. Finally, once hardware and software was installed, businesses found that employees and clients did not necessarily possess the appropriate technological skills to use them.

Now solutions are now available in the form of increased standardisation, better system stability and security, and

staff training closing the skills gap. All helping to fuel the increased adoption of paperless processes.

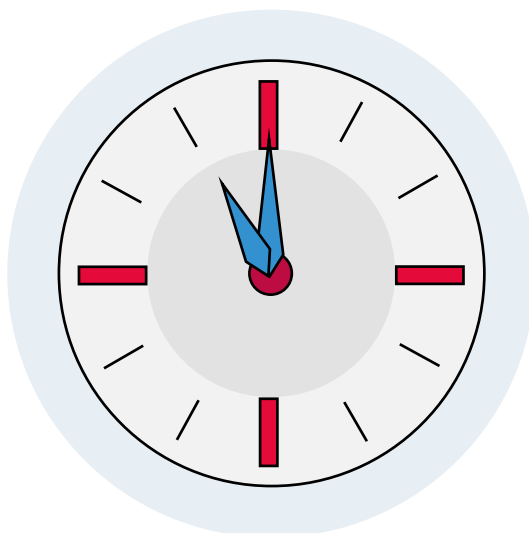
The pursuit of 'appiness...

The best thing about apps is that the sky's the limit! Across our sector, new apps are constantly being launched, all designed to boost customer enjoyment - paperlessly:

- Mobile travel companion apps providing en route essentials including day planners, city guides, featured tours and attractions, as well as vouchers.
- Now that laptops and tablets can be used on most flights, many in-flight magazines are available (in different languages) on airlines' digital platforms.
- Smartphone-compatible maps.
- Major cities - and some countries - offer leisure or explorer cards: prepaid plastic cards facilitating ticketless (ie. paperless) and cashless use of local transport and main attractions as well as outlets including shops, bars, restaurants and vending machines.

There's been no better time to act. Here's why...

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, many tour and attractions businesses were already adopting paperless processes. This was driven by improvements in technology giving operators more bang for their invested bucks; a fast-growing demographic of environment-concerned, digital savvy customers; and the overwhelmingly widespread use of smartphones. (A recent study revealed that 81% of Americans own a smartphone.)



The innovative technology now exists to boost your footfall and turnover whilst also helping customers enjoy a more seamless experience (particularly if they are domestic or international travellers and so limited by time and – to an extent – by budget). That technology happens to be paperless.

Covid-19 accelerated the push for paperless as visitors seek to minimise physical contact points. At the same time,

there is a snowballing global agenda to drastically reduce carbon emissions and waste to combat the increasingly damaging impact of human-generated climate change.

If – like many other businesses in our sector – you are still heavily reliant upon paper, you now have the unique opportunity to explore how you can reduce that reliance. Not grasping that opportunity right now poses a very real risk to the future success of your business.

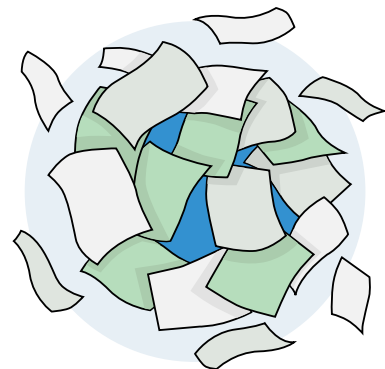
Our love of paper is costing the Earth. Literally

In the post pandemic landscape, almost half of consumers say that COVID-19 has made them more concerned about the environment.

Paper production has been shown to be deeply harmful to the environment. Manufacturing contributes significantly to deforestation and produces harmful levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), carbon dioxide (CO₂) – commonly referred to as greenhouse gases. Waste water discharged from pulp and paper mills contains solids, nutrients, and dissolved organic matter that are classified as pollutants which damage the delicate ecosystems of fresh water bodies.) Printing inks and toners use environment-damaging volatile organic compounds, heavy metals and non-renewable oils. Deinking recycled paper pulp results in a waste slurry which often ends up in landfill.

Now add to this the environmental impact of disposing of all your waste paper...

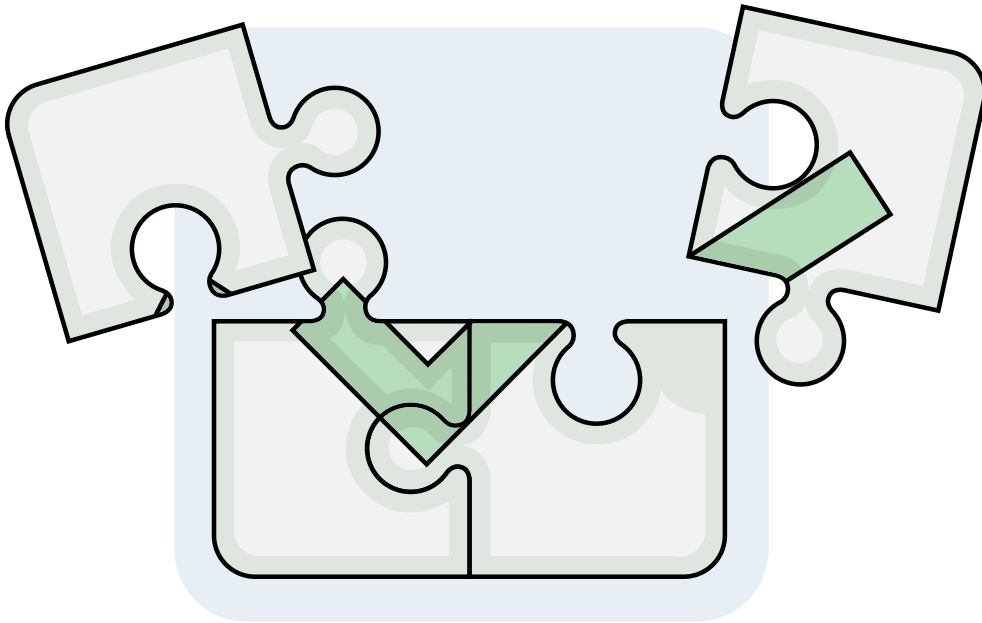
There is no doubt that great efforts have been made by the paper industry to find environmentally-friendly solutions and any progress that helps our planet



is commendable. In 2018 the American Forest and Paper Association produced a sustainability report delivering the counter-arguments that paper product manufacturing, (especially in North America), supports the ecological and economic balance of sustainable forestry. The report also claimed that North American paper manufacturing decreased greenhouse gas emission by 20% over an eleven-year period and advised that recycling can help reduce the environmental impact of paper.

However, many tourism businesses feel that, right now, paper-free digital solutions are the way forward – both for the environment and their business.

The smartest conclusion you'll read today!



Travel, tourism and entertainment - as with other areas of modern life - is increasingly 'smart'. Like self-driving cars, virtual and augmented reality apps and automated customer services, the ever-expanding genius and possibilities of artificial intelligence are already boosting businesses in our sectors.

And for smart, you need digital.

As the curve is inevitable, really smart is being ahead of it. At the pre-Covid World Travel Market held in London it was clear from the number of digital solution exhibitors that the paperless evolution is more than a trend - it is

determinedly mainstream. A significant bulk of the exhibits showcased digital booking systems and numerous 'payment solutions'.

Whilst it is unlikely that paper will entirely vanish from our customer-facing, marketing and administrative communications, for the most part the writing is clearly on the wall.

It's time to go paperless. For your customers. For your business. For our sector.

For our planet.

Any questions?

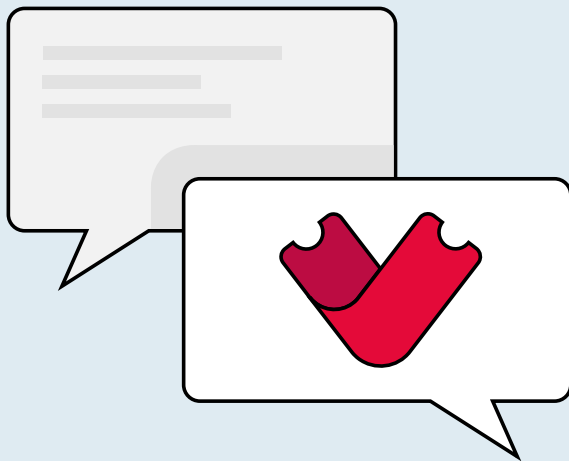
Keep calm and ask Ventrata

The time to embrace paperless is now. The lockdowns necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic have provided us all with a unique opportunity to rethink how we do business.

Make sure you are using platforms which will allow you to digitise. If you are struggling – or you are finding that you are stuck with paper – then clearly your technology isn't up to scratch!

Come and talk to us. We'd love to discuss with you how our ticketing platform solutions will help you boost your business.

Contact us now for a demo or just an initial chat to see how we can help.



www.ventrata.com



www.linkedin.com/company/ventrata/



www.facebook.com/ventrata247

If you'd like to find out more about paperless solutions, there is lots of useful information at the Environmental Defense Fund (www.edf.org). And you can calculate your paper usage with this handy tool: www.papercalculator.org.

