

Getting engaged

Building a social media following, developing appropriate content and engaging with followers all takes work and expertise. While some airports have dedicated initiatives to build on these platforms, others might find the task overwhelming.

Paul Brugger, founder and CEO of TIC Technology, Ireland, sees a business opportunity in addressing that capability gap. The company's BizTweet solution has recently attracted attention from the media, including the BBC's *Click*, which named it the Best Software Application of 2013, and more recently IATA which awarded the app a Passenger Innovation Award at the IATA World Passenger Symposium 2014.

Brugger describes the application as a method of intelligent automation of social media engagement. "BizTweet works on intelligent recognition of social media profiles," he explains. "At its base it is decision-making technology that we initially developed for financial systems. It evaluates customers' questions and provides appropriate responses based on advanced language analysis. It deciphers and analyzes incoming tweets and then uses the information from your data to formulate an automated personalized reply to your customer."

The key advantage of a solution like BizTweet, Brugger suggests, is that it can provide response in real time, 24 hours a day, even when live service personnel might not be available. "It can be used for operational messages," he says, "but it doesn't take away the human side. It can help reduce the workload on personnel and offers new services, extending the service hours available. On the day of travel, it can push messages to passengers that are relevant to their trip – information on delays, for example. It can be used for marketing, commercial messaging – making information relevant to the passenger."



RIGHT: BizTweet helps airports to better engage with passengers on social media platforms



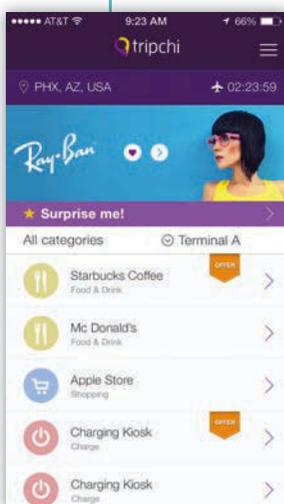
Tripchi

Independent third-party app Tripchi aims to step-in, helping passengers discover airport facilities. At its heart it is a promotions channel for airports and their concessionaires, which provides relative push notifications to passengers based on their preferences and authorizations.

As Chandra Jacobs, Tripchi's CEO explains, "We provide concessionaires with a platform to conduct targeted marketing campaigns and incentivize travelers to visit your business and increase your sales. Tripchi will ultimately provide analytics and insight about traveler behavior, buying intent and preferences, which can be used by brands to increase campaign efficacy and include offerings that are better-tuned to traveler preferences.

"Tripchi compiles data on guest tastes and interest when at the airport. If a user is an avid reader, we can easily suggest the airport bookstore nearby in the terminal, or if a user loves craft beer we hook them up with best place for a pint. We also provide the relevant descriptive data of each vendor, letting our users know what, when and where these services can be obtained," Jacobs says. "Using our flight countdown clock, we take into consideration whether you have enough time to complete the interaction. If you only have 45 minutes until take-off, we certainly wouldn't suggest you sit down for a three-course meal."

While the app's open APIs can link up with beacons and NFC, they are not required. The Tripchi app capitalizes on GPS for its localization, and developers are looking at Google Indoors for refinement.



the airport and increase engagement on social media.

"We've partnered with the BBC, supporting the *Airport Live* TV show in 2013. We trended for three nights that week," he comments. "We've partnered in many ways, such as the collaboration with *Doctor Who* for its anniversary and with *Top Gear*. We did a lot of stuff when we supported the Olympics. We've engaged with celebrities like Andy Murray. All this helps develop a critical mass. Each time, we were able to learn from those instances and carry it forwards."

Ellam also believes that crossing channels, referring a follower from Twitter to Facebook to learn more, for example, is good practice.

"We're putting out a broad spectrum of content that represents a lot of elements of the airport," he explains. "Whether that's the operational side, the aircraft that are flying in, the human stories of people all on their own, people at the airport who work here and visit here. We might talk to you on Twitter and resolve your query but we can also give you a link to Facebook and say, 'If you are interested in that stuff, there are some great images over here.'"

"It's about being deliberate in your channel management as well, which has really worked for us – understanding your audience and the sentiments within your audience," Ellam continues. "You use CRM to look at your customer profile, then create appropriate content and make sure you're putting that out there to engage the right people at the right time."