



# Air cargo digitalization in a time of pandemic

Christopher Shawdon, Head of Business Development

*In this tumultuous year we have seen much change. Now, when I go to a pub in England, I am welcomed at the door, asked to sanitize my hands, and then to scan a QR code using a government app to help contact tracing. At my table, I scan another code to see the menu, place my order, and pay for it. Everything is contactless. COVID-19 has been disruptive for my pub experience, but I see similar “low-touch” innovations in my professional life as well.*

CHAMP is working with a large provider that wants to see the first or last mile transactions recorded in real time. Because their truckers don't want to install different apps for each of their clients, like the pub we simply put a QR code on the dispatch order. The truckers can just scan the code with their smartphone camera and record their applicable statuses in a QR-linked web page tailored to their route. They can also record a picture which is visible immediately for any action needed. Like in my pub, a QR code comes with almost zero cost to adopt, is contactless, and it improves the customer experience.

I couldn't go to a pub now without using an app, but that app helps the pub deliver services with fewer people. CHAMP is seeing huge interest in Cargospot Mobile (our mobile handling app) from ground handlers, which include some of the largest in the world. It covers just about all the functions in our handling system on Android and iOS devices. Just like my pub management, our handler clients can see the manpower savings and improvements in customer experience from automation and mobility.



I mentioned that I pay for my pub orders when I place them; I don't expect any other option. An equivalent with air cargo is the adoption of PayCargo, which provides electronic invoicing and settlement solutions for the global shipping industry. Just like I pay in the pub using the payment provider set up on my phone, CHAMP has integrated PayCargo in its core cargo system, Cargospot, so that clients can make it easy for forwarders to pay charges in a contactless way.

This year we have exposed many powerful APIs. One can be used on a customer website to show their real-time availability and price by flight. Another carrier uses a different API so that their sales staff can view and manage customer shipments through a customer relationship manager (CRM) rather than having to log into Cargospot. Yet another carrier is using our APIs to offer their domestic transportation services through consumer retail sites to capture new e-commerce business. And a handler has used our weight scale API to ensure that they measure weight at acceptance and calculate the correct charges. But what is exciting us even more, is that by exposing our APIs through a gateway, third parties are creating value for clients beyond our areas of expertise.

With much aviation still grounded at the time of writing, there is a lot of excitement about a new technology solution called CommonPass. That system, set up by the World Economic Forum, can record a vaccination or COVID-19-free test result in a way that shows it is from an authenticated organization and applies to the person holding the certificate. A similar standards-based approach that we are working in air cargo is to enable low energy Bluetooth devices on shipments to be able to communicate through different ground handlers because they are following the same standards. Another example is our newest APIs that work across multiple organizations meaning that any forwarder, for example, can use them with multiple carriers. In the same way that CommonPass can help restart secure air travel through standards, so air cargo needs standards with new technologies to get their value into our client supply chains.

As consumers, we now expect almost everything to be digital. The same applies to our work. My pub was forced to introduce significant changes but, like them, if there is one key learning for air cargo technology, it is that we must also rethink our processes and how we engage with customers to deliver new value.

