

# NDC EXCHANGE

Accelerating interoperability  
across the ecosystem



atpco +  routehappy  
by atpco

**SITA**



**DIRECT CONNECT MARKETPLACE FOR THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY  
WITH A SIMPLE DELIVERY OF OFFERS AND ORDERS**

# NDC EXCHANGE

## WHAT IS NDC?

NDC (New Distribution Capability) is a program IATA is driving, and it's done more than just align the industry to strive for a common standard. It has served as the platform for an industry-wide conversation on the evolution of airline distribution.

Airlines have been exploring how to directly sell their offers on the Internet for nearly three decades. In response to changing consumer demands and evolving technology, airlines spent the last decade establishing direct connections via APIs, causing an ever-widening product gap between the indirect and direct channels.

In the last year, IATA has been working to gain industry adoption and opened a much broader conversation among not only airlines, but also GDSs, technology companies, travel agencies, and corporate buyers. This adoption phase would not have been possible without first building the robust standard that contemplates all aspects of the end-to-end process.

Product innovation has been constant, but adoption has been challenging. The missing element is the lack of industry infrastructure to support the new capabilities. What made the existing distribution model successful was its efficiency and breadth provided by companies like ATPCO, OAG, ARC, and the GDSs. Getting airline products to market is efficient and consistent because there are both the standards and the infrastructure needed for global distribution. But new product development has outpaced the infrastructure.

The creation of a centralized “exchange” will move the needle. The time has come—the rest of the industry is joining with airlines to make direct connections a greater part of the distribution model. The products are there, and so is the standard. All that's missing is an infrastructure to support broad industry adoption.



## OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO NDC ADOPTION

Despite the undeniable benefits of direct connect technology and its continually increasing rate of adoption, the actual number of NDC-facilitated bookings has been growing at a slow pace. Why? Airlines and travel agents discovered it could be challenging to connect their different technologies, inertia made it hard to replace established business processes with new alternatives, and enabling existing processes to evolve with new distribution capabilities is tricky.

ATPCO and SITA partnered to create a solution that eliminates these barriers to the industry-wide adoption of NDC.

ATPCO's expertise is the management and distribution of fare and fare-related data to ensure pricing accuracy—along with a widening range of ancillary data and recently added rich content from Routehappy by ATPCO—across all channels. SITA provides the technology and infrastructure for message-handling and data-connectivity services. Combining the resources of these industry experts and distribution leaders led to the creation of a new NDC platform for everyone that focuses on delivering the product broadly while overcoming implementation challenges for both airlines and sellers.

## ACCELERATING INTEROPERABILITY ACROSS THE ECOSYSTEM

The current model of direct connect distribution relies predominantly on connecting every airline to every point of sale. A single large airline can be connected to hundreds of sellers at a time. Managing this volume of connections individually is already a complicated process that requires significant resources. Even worse, this method is expected to become increasingly complex, time-consuming, and costly as more and more connections are established, standards continue to evolve, and direct connections approach industry-scale adoption.

To support the evolving direct connect needs of the travel industry, ATPCO and SITA developed a new generation of infrastructure: NDC Exchange. NDC Exchange is the only industry-owned solution providing an easy and cost-effective way for the industry to exchange offers and orders through all channels by enabling smart connections of all fare- and fare-related data.

This industry-trusted, neutral hub enables airlines, aggregators, and travel sellers to use the powerful capabilities that the NDC standard offers to conduct business directly through a single application programming interface (API). The NDC Exchange enables industry partners to build all their connections on one platform and extend their reach to all traditional and non-traditional distribution points. Joining a community-driven marketplace where those connections are already established, or are easy to establish, opens the door to infinite business opportunities.

This cloud-based platform offers scalability and translates messages in real time, regardless of the standard, format, or structure being used. The messages can be easily exchanged, enabling interoperability across the ecosystem.



# A SIMPLE VIEW OF HOW IT WORKS

Each company could use a different format, or schema, for their messages, as could each of their partners. Using a common data model, NDC Exchange translates these multiple message formats so that all connected parties can communicate with each other easily.

Simply put, NDC Exchange is like an industry marketplace that makes it easier for sellers to gain access to airline content. It functions as a one-stop shop for sellers to choose the services they want with a complete view of all the offers, including everything from fares, scheduling, and fare rules to ancillary services such as seat, meals, and baggage.

## **KEY PLAYERS: SUPPLIERS**

Airlines are the suppliers who want to distribute their offers to multiple preferred points of sale, the sellers. NDC Exchange removes technology barriers, making it possible for airlines to provide offers and deliver orders by easily connecting to their sellers via one connection.

This solution simplifies distribution, allowing airlines to fully control how their offers are sold in the marketplace and to manage their partnerships more efficiently. NDC Exchange also enables airlines to maintain consistent branding on their product displays in many channels, improving the flight and ancillary shopping experience.

## **KEY PLAYERS: SELLERS**

A seller can be any entity that provides airline offer services: travel agencies, aggregators, metasearch, travel management companies, corporate booking tools, or even airlines who sell their partners' offers. The more of the suppliers' content that is available, the better the sellers can craft that winning offer for the travel buyer and boost revenue.

Sellers need a single source for obtaining comprehensive content from hundreds of airlines so that they can meet their customers' needs. Being connected to NDC Exchange—just one platform that is a single source for all airlines' content—makes it extremely easy.

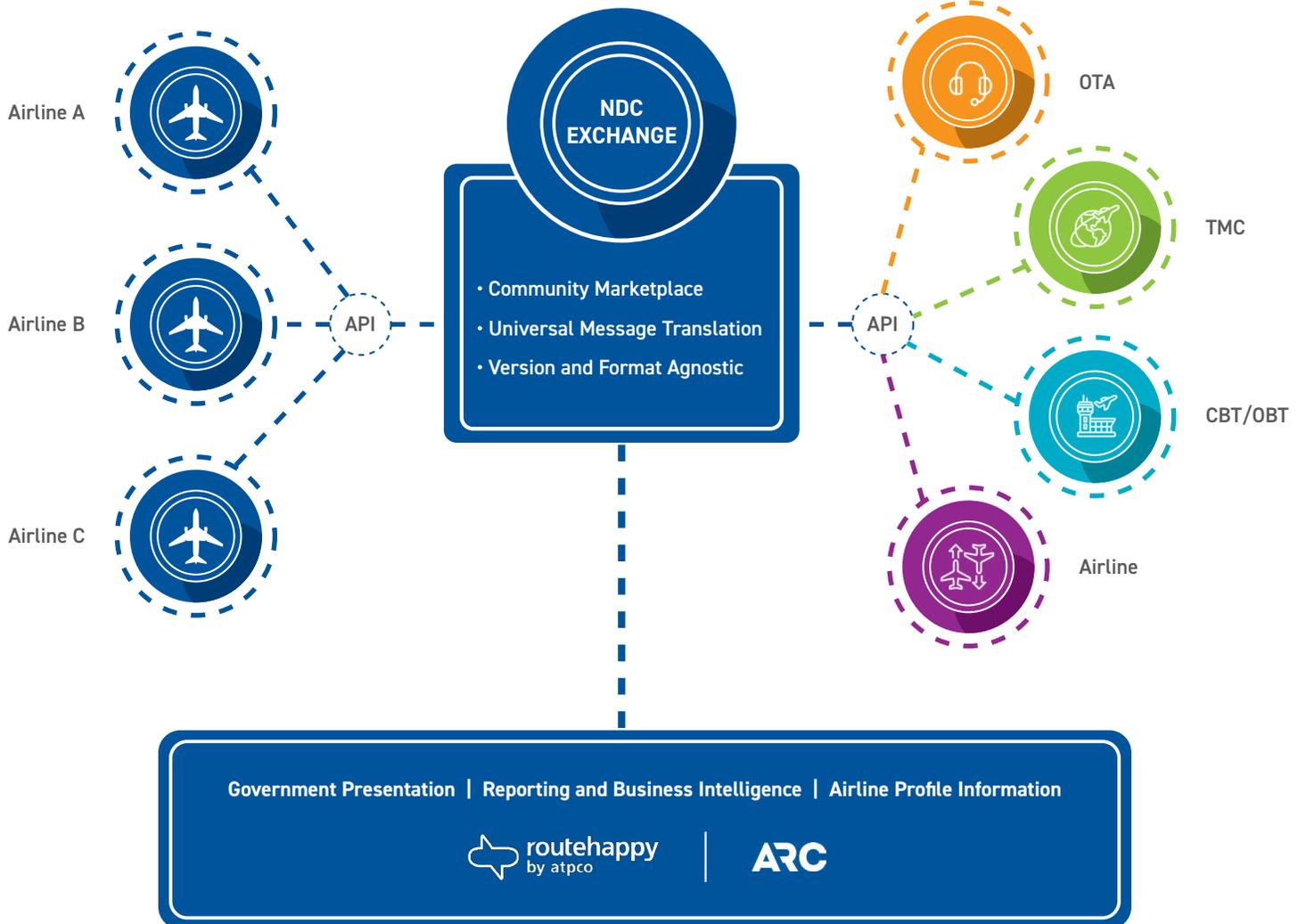
## **KEY PLAYERS: OTHER SERVICES**

NDC Exchange enables integration with other travel industry service providers, including with ARC and IATA BSP settlement. These other services are part of NDC Exchange and offer additional value to both suppliers and sellers. With the integration of rich media content from Routehappy by ATPCO, suppliers can easily integrate their rich content into the messages to create an enhanced shopping experience.

# HOW IT WORKS

## Suppliers

## Sellers





# A DEEPER DIVE INTO WHAT **NDC** **EXCHANGE** OFFERS



**MORE THAN**

**30**

**DIFFERENT SCHEMAS  
AND VERSIONS ARE IN USE**



## **SCHEMA EXCHANGE AND DOMAIN MODEL TRANSFORMATION**

The coexistence of multiple messaging standards makes it increasingly complex for industry players to connect. Today, more than 30 different schemas and versions are in use, including NDC, OpenTravel, Open AXIS, and proprietary versions. Developed by ATPCO and SITA, NDC Exchange is a neutral hub connecting offers from airlines to travel sellers in a cloud-based, highly scalable environment. NDC Exchange utilizes the SITA community messaging environment and ATPCO's data distribution powerhouse to ensure high security and accuracy and to support future capabilities. It also draws on the extensive experience of ATPCO and SITA in providing industry scale throughput services for fast connections and transactions from a global network of data centers.

## **TRADITIONAL AND NEW DISTRIBUTION COMPATIBILITY**

NDC Exchange makes it possible to combine traditional and new distribution capabilities, facilitating the transition to direct connect distribution. For example, NDC Exchange provides seamless integration with traditional settlement services (ARC and IATA BSP). It can also include direct connect content into traditional distribution channels that already support downstream requirements, such as audit and revenue accounting services.

## **INTELLIGENT FILTERS**

Intelligent filters allow suppliers to control the type and volume of requests they accept. Integrating with ATPCO's Airline Profile, the filters ensure that queries submitted are aligned with the supplier's set of business requirements. This way, suppliers can control who can access what content within their system. This filtering, which can be done on elements such as service type, point of sale, market, and route, will also be available to sellers so they can control how and where they shop, based on their customers' needs.

## **COST SAVINGS AND ACCELERATED DISTRIBUTION**

NDC Exchange saves costs associated with development and maintenance, including labor, hardware, and IT vendor expenses. NDC Exchange provides suppliers and sellers with ready access to all the parties connected to the service, regardless of the message standard. This not only allows for easy access to many distribution points (sellers and suppliers), but also speeds time to market because airlines no longer need to develop and support new connections or message standards, or more frustratingly, wait for their partners' release schedules.

## **COMPREHENSIVE DATA AND RECORDS**

With NDC Exchange, airlines can feed their current and historical data to a centralized repository, which can then facilitate auditing, market analysis, and competitive monitoring. The solution enables an airline to make better-informed decisions based on critical business insights and gain full control over product offerings.

## **INTEGRATION WITH ROUTEHAPPY BY ATPCO'S RICH CONTENT**

Today's traveler wants a better flight shopping experience—one that is customized, with each offer differentiated by the comfort level and ancillaries they value. NDC Exchange brings together Routehappy's rich content with ATPCO's Branded Fares and Optional Services data, bringing the flight shopping experience to life by matching airline offers with relevant rich content, such as branded messaging, photos, and videos. This integration means airlines and travel sellers can create unique offers with distinctive rich content that is displayed consistently across all sales channels.



# THE BIG PICTURE FOR NDC EXCHANGE

## THE INFRASTRUCTURE WE NEED

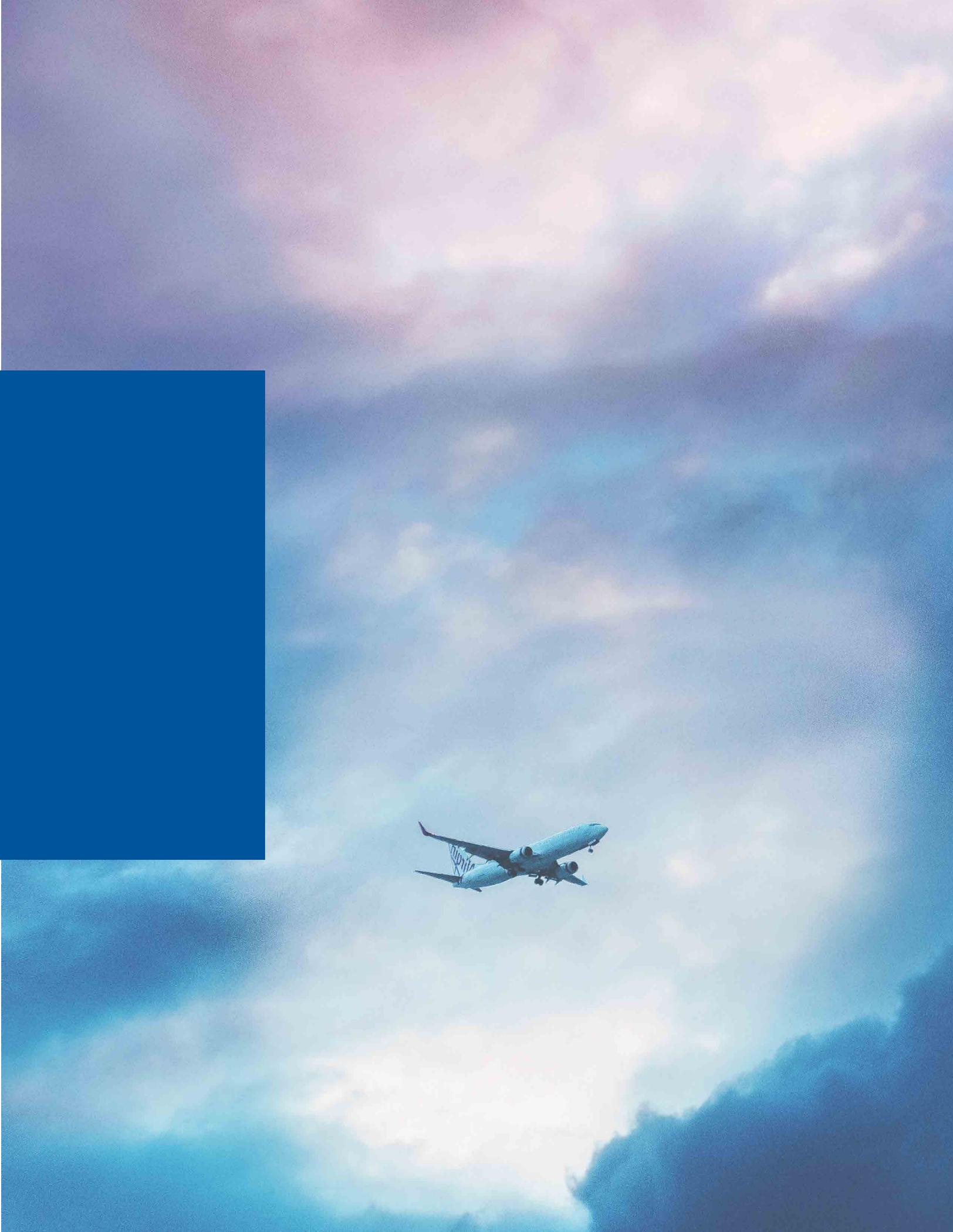
Certain services can create value for the industry when they are available to all participants in the distribution ecosystem. While it is possible for each entity to procure or create its own services, history shows that the industry is best served by creating common standards, building common services, and sharing the cost and effort across a wide user base. This philosophy lies at the foundation of ATPCO and SITA—and our joint initiative to create a neutral, community-driven marketplace.

NDC Exchange utilizes ATPCO's data distribution powerhouse, SITA's community messaging environment, and Routehappy by ATPCO's rich content to ensure high security and accuracy, transaction speed, and support for future capabilities. ATPCO and SITA are both certified IATA NDC Capable IT providers. IATA has awarded Level 3 NDC capable Offer & Order Management certification to NDC Exchange, and Routehappy is a certified supporting NDC entity.

By leveraging deep expertise, focusing on tomorrow's needs, and transforming processes with innovative technologies, ATPCO will continue to create value for the industry.

## A DEDICATION TO INNOVATION

ATPCO's mission is to fuel the future of air travel, and so it is dedicated to driving industry innovation. NDC Exchange and the seamless integration of rich content through Routehappy by ATPCO are but two examples of the drive to innovate industry processes. ATPCO's Bridge Labs is an innovation incubator for early-startups, emerging companies, technology innovators, and airline team players. ATPCO's Consulting Services team works with airlines to ensure commercial departments are streamlined, effective, modern, and ready for all the new industry initiatives. Whatever stage you're at, ATPCO has the expertise to help you move forward. For more information on any of ATPCO's services, visit [atpco.net](https://atpco.net).



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DON'T JUST EXPLORE — ARRIVE. TALK TO US AND FIND YOUR WAY.



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