Booking a Ticket with just Four Taps

Lawton Area Transit System (LATS) has launched a mobile ticketing app for its bus routes, which is powered by the URpass SaaS platform. The LATS GO PASS app offers passengers a contactless, attractive and simple alternative to cash purchases. This enables the transit agency to make local public transport appealing to new target groups.

LATS, the public transportation company of Lawton, Oklahoma, operates five bus routes for residents and visitors to the region. In the past, passengers could only buy tickets on the buses and in service centers using cash. However, the Covid-19 pandemic prompted those in charge to consider an alternative approach.

"During the pandemic, we realized that the public wanted other services from us – first and foremost contactless ticketing," explains Ryan Landers, General Manager of LATS. "That's why we decided to launch our own mobile ticketing app. It was important to us to find a solution that makes the process as easy as possible for our passengers and for us."

LATS opts for URpass
After evaluating various systems, LATS decided to implement its app using the URpass mobile ticketing platform from HanseCom. HanseCom is a leading provider of mobile ticketing apps and mobility platforms in Germany, Austria and Switzerland and a wholly owned subsidiary of INIT, an international provider of integrated IT solutions for public transportation.

The URpass SaaS solution was developed by HanseCom specifically for the North American market. It targets small and medium-sized transit agencies, empowering them to set up a digital sales channel quickly and without a large

upfront investment. In order to get started, all they need to do is adapt the design of the URpass white label app to their requirements, configure their tickets, upload their fares to the background system and familiarize themselves with how the system works.

LATS GO PASS app digitizes complete range of tickets
The outstanding user experience of the white-label app, the platform's attractive SaaS model, its intuitive user interface and, last but not least, HanseCom's impeccable track record of successfully implemented solutions in Germany won us over," says General Manager Landers. LATS' collaboration with HanseCom led to the creation of the LATS GO PASS app.

The app, which is available for iOS and Android smartphones, puts LATS' entire range of tickets at the users' disposal as a digital service. This includes one-way tickets, multi-ride tickets, monthly passes and the new day pass exclusively available on the digital platform. The new ticket, which was introduced by LATS together with the app, is only available via this digital sales channel to support the market launch. All mobile tickets are paid for digitally by credit card. During ticket inspections, tickets are validated by visual inspection of the virtual ticket on passengers' smartphones.

"It was the easiest technology roll-out I've ever seen in all my years at LATS."

Tony Hansley, Director of Operations at LATS

Simple introduction and straightforward roll-out

The app was implemented virtually without a hitch. "We experienced no major issues or obstacles. Whenever we hit a minor snag, we touched base with HanseCom and the problem was solved within a day," reports Tony Hansley, Director of Operations at LATS. "It was the easiest technology roll-out I've ever seen in all my years at LATS."

To ensure a smooth user experience, the app was first tested in a public trial run using real tickets and actual payments. LATS employees approached passengers and offered them the opportunity to download the app and use it to buy tickets. These first-time users then told other passengers about this option by word of mouth and encouraged them to test the app, resulting in a gradual rise in the number of pilot users. "After running these trials without encountering any issues, and after receiving consistently positive feedback, we officially took the app live and publicized its availability in a press release and via other publicity campaigns," says Hansley.

Numerous benefits for LATS and its customers

The LATS GO PASS app not only offers LATS' customers an attractive contactless ticketing option, but it also makes the ticket purchasing process extremely simple. Using the app, it only takes three to four easy steps to select and buy tickets. LATS profits too, as administration of the app is very straightforward. "We can add new tickets or send messages to our customers with ease," says Hansley. "Even advertising campaigns are very easy to implement. For example, we have set up the system so that new users of the app automatically get ten free rides."

An additional key benefit is that the app makes cash handling obsolete. Conventional tickets have to be paid for using the right amount, but a passenger who uses the app no longer needs to worry about having the right coins in their wallet. LATS, on the other hand, no longer needs to deal with cumbersome cash handling and reduced losses related to ticket sales. When buying tickets the conventional way, passengers put money in a fare box. Of course, there is always the risk that the amount paid is less than the actual fare.

New tickets are planned for the app

LATS also uses the app to attract new customer groups to public transport. For example, the transport company will provide students at the public Cameron University with a discounted ticket exclusively via the app. The Apache Casino in Lawton is planning to offer its employees a free monthly public transport pass as a special benefit in the future to become an even more attractive employer. LATS will implement this special Apache Casino pass using the new app.

In the medium term, LATS plans to extend the scope of their mobile ticketing solution. In addition to fixed bus routes, LATS also offers on-demand services, including a para-transit service for people with limited physical mobility and shuttles to the nearby Fort Sill military base. "After we released the LATS GO PASS app, many people asked us to extend our digital ticketing system to include our on-demand services," explains General Manager Landers. "That's why we will soon be launching an app where passengers can book these services. We want to combine the two digital sales channels at some point, so we can provide our customers with a single, integrated mobility app that covers our entire service portfolio."

LATS

The Lawton Area Transit System (LATS) is the public transportation system of the city of Lawton in the state of Oklahoma, USA. It provides residents and visitors with affordable and accessible transportation within the city and in surrounding areas. It operates five bus routes and offers para-transit services as well as shuttles to the nearby Fort Sill military base.