

DUFFEL CASE STUDY | AIRLINES

Taking off with Duffel: Cathay Pacific's “incredibly fast” integration



Cathay Pacific's Partnership with Duffel

Since the 1970s, airlines have distributed their flights to third-party travel sellers using the global distribution systems (GDSs). Today, more and more airlines are investing in “direct connections” to agencies to transform how their products are retailed with improved technology. Most travel sellers do not have the resources to connect to airlines’ reservation systems one by one, so they work with technology providers called “aggregators” who do the hard work for them.

This means that airlines need to work with aggregators to get their content into the hands of travel sellers.

Some airlines work with an IT provider to build an API based on IATA’s New Distribution Capability (NDC) standard, and then get aggregators to connect to that API. Others skip the IT provider and connect directly with aggregators like Duffel. Back in 2017, Cathay Pacific partnered with OpenJaw Technologies to build their NDC API.

Cathay Pacific is the home carrier of Hong Kong, a member of the oneworld alliance and a Skytrax 5-Star Airline. In this case study, we share the story of how Cathay launched NDC with Duffel in early 2020. You’ll learn about how they selected an aggregator partner, how Duffel connected and what happened next.



Home carrier of Hong Kong

Skytrax 5-Star Airline

Selecting the Right Aggregator

Picking the right aggregator - or more likely aggregators - to work with can be an overwhelming task. For Cathay Pacific, the list of priorities was clear.

“Our top priority was speed of integration. We were looking for a partner who could connect quickly without requiring large amounts of support from our team” said Jaime Fong, Commercial Partnership Specialist at Cathay Pacific. “But it wasn’t enough for the integration to only be fast for us. It also needed to be simple for our travel agencies to go live too, so we can scale our NDC programme.”

Other factors that Cathay considered included the aggregators’ presence in the important European market and the kinds of sellers they target.

“We ended up going with Duffel because they ticked all of our boxes and they were very responsive and proactive while we were researching our options” said Jaime.

```
1 curl -X POST --compressed "https://api.duffel
2 -H "Accept-Encoding: gzip" \
3 -H "Accept: application/json" \
4 -H "Content-Type: application/json" \
5 -H "Duffel-Version: beta" \
6 -H "Authorization: Bearer <YOUR ACCESS TOKE
7 -d '{
8 "data": {
9   "passengers": [
10     {
11       "type": "adult"
12     }
13   ],
14   "slices": [
15     {
16       "origin": "DFW",
17     },
18     {
19       "age": 14
20     }
21   ],
22   "slices": [
23     {
24       "origin": "LHR",
25       "destination": "JFK",
26       "departure_date": "2020-04-24"
27     }
28   ],
29   "cabin_class": "economy"
30 }
```



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JAIME FONG

Commercial Partnership Specialist, Cathay Pacific

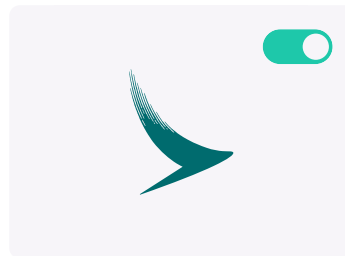
Getting Connected to Duffel

Slow, costly and time-intensive integration processes are a big fear for airlines when working with tech providers who often over-promise and under-deliver. Once Cathay Pacific picked Duffel, the integration process started within a couple of days with a kick-off call to introduce the Duffel team and set the scope and milestones.

Duffel took on all of the heavy-lifting of connecting to Cathay. Depending on the airline's setup and technology provider, it can take as little as two days to get connected. Together, Duffel and Cathay Pacific chose a launch agency for the integration: a French OTA called Ulysse.

Ulysse were already connected to Duffel's API, so they could turn on NDC content from Cathay in one click. Within 2 days, Ulysse sold their first ticket from Europe to Asia.

Duffel is working continuously working to unlock new opportunities and content in the airline distribution space.



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One example was in 2020, we enabled Ulysse to book the first ever Cathay Pacific NDC booking in France through Duffel's API. Duffel allowed an Asian airline like Cathay Pacific acquire a new European customer like Ulysse, and enabled travel sellers like Ulysse get access to new content constantly, allowing them to offer greater choice to their customers.

2 days

It took two days after integration for Ulysse to sell their **first ticket** from Europe to Asia.

What's Next?

An airline's NDC capabilities are not built in a day. With an unpredictable travel market, the airlines' NDC strategy needs to be adaptable. This includes reviewing differentiated content distributed to the sellers and prioritizing which features to build next.

"We really valued Duffel's feedback on our API whilst they were working on the initial integration. This helped us to track down bugs and shape our roadmap. Since then, we've continued to work closely with the team as we turn on more travel sellers and launch new features" said Jaime.

“

At Cathay Pacific, it is our brand vision to become a modern retailer, selling personalized air and travel related products to our customers. **We are working with Duffel to develop an enriched shopping experience** for our current and future travel sellers to deliver to the end customers."

JAIME FONG

Commercial Partnership Specialist, Cathay Pacific

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

Learn more about taking off with Duffel.

Duffel is the new software backbone of the travel industry, using modern APIs and tools like NDC to make travel effortless.

To learn more about Duffel, visit duffel.com.

Get in touch

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