



8 Key Questions to Ask Before Investing in a Taxi Dispatch System –

and How to Avoid the Costly Mistakes...

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In this guide, we'll show you how to choose the right taxi dispatch system to meet your needs, and exactly how to avoid the costly mistakes some firms are making.

Mistakes that are losing them time, money and customers.

How to Choose the Right Dispatch System for YOUR Business

There's little doubt that a dispatch system can be a real boost for your taxi business.

However, not all systems are the same – many come loaded with hidden-extra costs, slow-to-respond customer service and features that don't live up to the hype.

Here are the 8 questions you MUST ask a potential provider, BEFORE you buy...

1 Is your system genuinely 100% cloud-based?

Some systems that claim to be cloud-based actually require you to download and install software onto the PC you are connecting from. The reality is that such a system isn't genuinely 100% cloud-based, which means...

- **You may not be able to use the system at all in certain situations.** For example, computers that are locked-down and won't allow downloads such as those in public places like hotel lobbies and airport lounges, or even a friend's work laptop you just needed to borrow for a few minutes. You have therefore lost the benefit of a genuine, 100% cloud-based system that allows connection from any internet ready device without a download.
- **It means that you'll need to install updates across all the devices you use to connect to your system.** This is time consuming, might be difficult for some people and is completely unnecessary of course in a genuine, 100% cloud-based system.
- **It makes it harder for home workers** – before they can log-in and take bookings for the first time they will need to go through an installation process. Are all of your staff technologically savvy enough to do this? Many aren't.
- **The installation of this non-cloud based piece of software usually requires extra log on credentials** – not just the users name and password but details that are usually reserved for the business owner which compromises your security.

You've probably already correctly decided that if it's not 100% "in the cloud" it's probably not worth the investment – you can't use it everywhere you want, you have to deal with updates, staff may struggle to install it and it could be a security risk, all of which aren't an issue in a genuine, 100% cloud-based system.

There is only one specific question you need to ask...

What do I need to download to use your system?

NOTE: the answer to this should be nothing. Any download, however small, means the system is NOT 100%, genuinely cloud-based despite what they tell you.

The Cloud: the basics

At this point a quick overview of what this relatively new 'cloud' technology offers may be useful. If you're already familiar with the idea of the 'cloud' then you might want to skip ahead to the next section...

So, what exactly is the cloud?

Storing things or running computer programs in the cloud simply means that the work is being done on a server located somewhere other than at your location and is being accessed via the internet. Until recently, to run taxi dispatch software, you had to install it on your own server.

That was fine, to a point... but it had several drawbacks:

- The speed was limited by how good your server was
- Something as simple as a power cut could destroy all your business and customer data
- IT support usually had to be carried out on-site, often with call out charges and time delays
- Software updates had to be done manually, at an extra cost
- Security was an issue. If your server was compromised, so was everything on it.

Today, these issues are a thing of the past. Cloud technology means that the software you use is loaded onto a state-of-the-art server in an ultra-secure location, and you simply 'tap in' via the internet.

Advantages of this new way of doing things include:

- You don't need an expensive server to enjoy a fast-running, reliable and robust programme
- Your crucial data is backed up in a secure location protected from flood, fire, power surges and other threats
- IT support and software updates happen automatically, without getting in the way of your business
- You can access and operate your system from anywhere in the world with an internet connection.

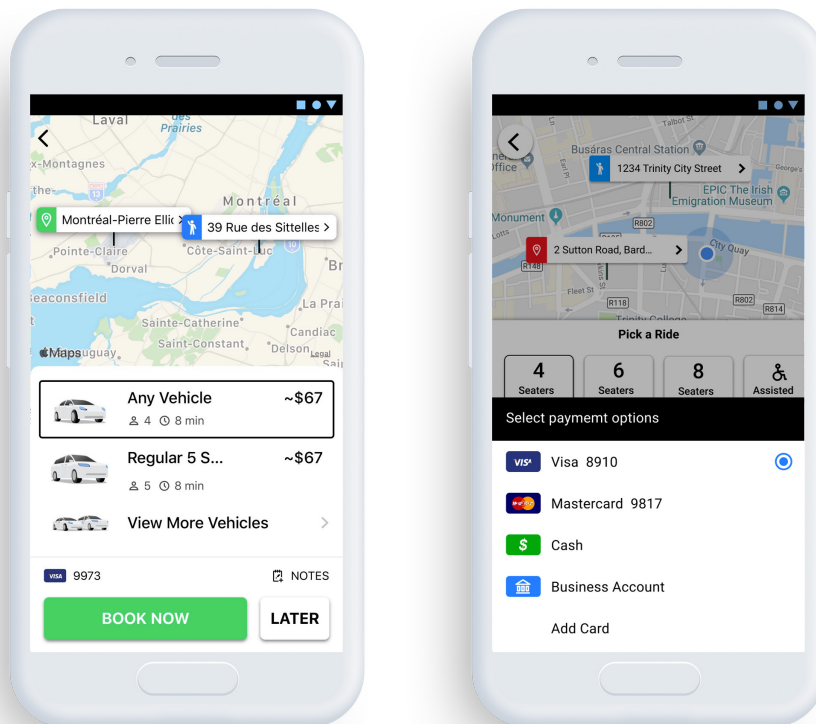
Cloud-based computing has now become the norm for everything from storing your favourite photographs and playing games on your phone to running entire businesses, and that's as true for small businesses and family owned firms as it is for big corporations.

2 Do I get a fully working Passenger App (Android & iPhone) with the system?

Modern Taxi businesses need an App that your customers can download to make, edit, cancel and track bookings with.

The crucial questions to ask are...

- Can you show me the Passenger App working on both an Android and iPhone device? (you'll be surprised that many providers can't actually do this i.e. they don't have a working Customer App)
- Can you give me details of an existing system user so I can download their Passenger App to try?



3 Can your Passenger App be branded to my business?

You want to retain your local identity and personal service, but offer “big business” features for your customers.

An App with another company’s name on it can cause confusion, so check that you can brand it with your own identity. Keeping things familiar will help your existing customers embrace your new services, and help new customers find you.

Here are some specific questions to ask...

- Can the Passenger App be fully branded for our firm, so it looks like our own App with our name and branding on it?
- Who does this and are there additional costs involved?
- How long will it take you to build a branded Passenger App for my business? (Get this confirmed in writing but it should be a few weeks at the most).



4 Do I fully own the Passenger App that comes with the system?

It is crucial that the Apps are registered to you/your business and not the dispatch system provider. If they aren't and you later change systems, you won't be the legal owner of the App to transfer to your new provider.

So, if in the future, you want to change providers the system provider could refuse to release your App registration with all your existing customers, forcing you to leave your customers registered with your old system supplier's App.

This means that rather than your customers getting an App 'update' when you change providers, you would need to start from scratch by getting your customers to download your new App from their App store. This would be hugely disruptive to your business and your customers, and would affect your bookings and profitability.

BEWARE: If the system provider says that they need to register your App. They don't!

Here are the questions to ask...

- Can I register my Passenger App in my name/my business name so I have full ownership of it?
- Can you guarantee that if at some point in the future I change system providers I WILL be able to provide a new Passenger App as a simple 'update' to my customers?

If the answer to this is no, you do not own your Apps.

Note: You can still give them your App store credentials to log-in and develop the App on your behalf, you are simply retaining ownership.

5 Do I get a dedicated “onboarding” team?

A great system provider will provide you with a team to take you through setting up your system from start to finish, answering all your questions and making sure you know everything you need to know to get up and running.

Here are some specific questions to ask...

- Who will be responsible for supporting us when we adopt your system?
- Will it be the same people we speak to every time?
- How are we able to contact them?
- Are they UK based?
- How quickly can training be available?
- Is the training tailored for our business?



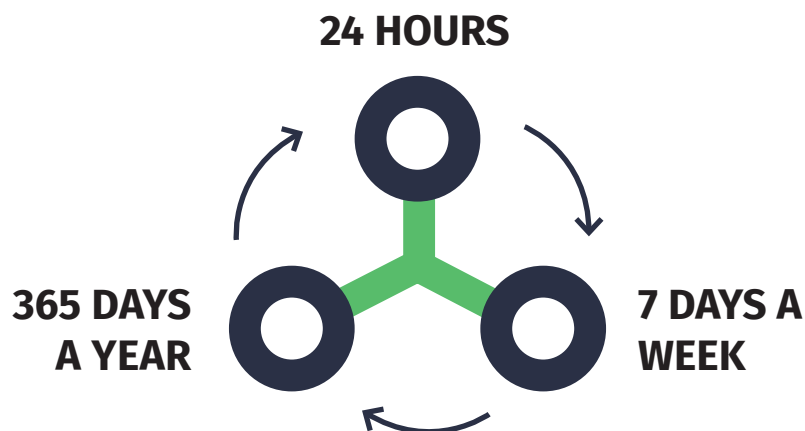
6 Do you offer 24-hour UK-based TELEPHONE support?

Great customer support isn't just about solving problems. It's about solving problems super quickly – every minute counts when you have an issue with your dispatch system.

Getting the most out of your new system is easier if there's someone (ideally a real human being!) that you can call with questions about features. And getting the right answers, fast, means having someone on hand whenever you need them – someone who knows the system inside out!

Here are some specific questions to ask...

- How many people work in your support centre?
- Is your support team manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week?
- Is your support centre in the UK?
- Can we phone for support at any time of the day or night?
- Will the call be answered by a real person?
- Can that person deal with all of our technical support requests – are they a system expert?



7 Can you demonstrate booking automation success of between 50-80%?

A huge percentage of your customers would prefer to make their own booking rather than wait in-line to be answered over the phone. (Note: you might not even know this yet!)

How do we know this?

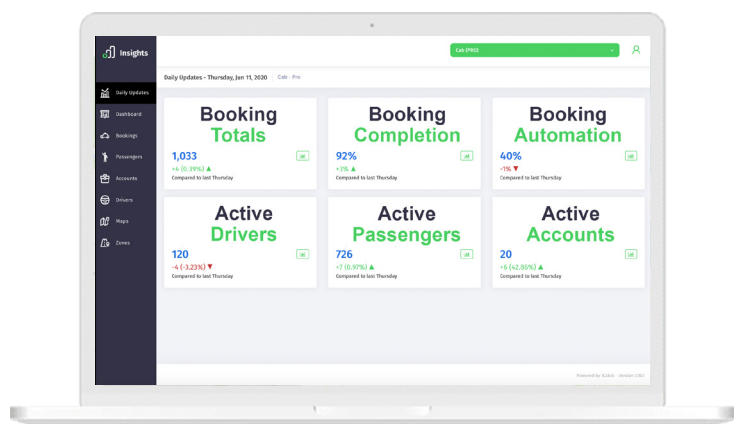
Well we can show you numerous taxi businesses, who, just like you were once in the market looking for a new system. They chose the right provider who had great App, Web booking and IVR programs that have subsequently resulted in 50-80% of their bookings being made directly by the customer. These systems are hugely popular with your customers and give you a huge saving in your staff costs.

Just having an App, Web booker and IVR system isn't the answer. There are good ones, bad ones and great ones.

Only great ones will give you 50-80% automation and your provider should be willing and able to show you lots of taxi businesses that have achieved this. If they won't, it's because they can't.

Here are some specific questions to ask...

- What % of customers' bookings are typically made by the App once we adopt your system?
- What % of customers can we expect to use IVR to book based on your typical customers?
- Can you prove these percentages?



8 Can you provide an ‘all-inclusive’ system with no ‘hidden extra’ costs?

Some providers run with very appealing headline prices that don’t accurately reflect the total cost of what you end up paying for the service. The headline is usually always unrealistic – for example in the small print it only includes Monday to Friday 9-to-5 support despite the fact that you run a 24/7 business 365 days a year and obviously need matching support.

Here are some specific questions to ask...

- Does the “per driver” price quoted include 24/7 support, 365 days a year?
- Are App & Web booking included? (as per point 2 above make sure you see working versions)
- Do you provide IVR (Interactive Voice Response)?
- Can you provide PDAs (smartphones)?
- Is fully-comprehensive PDA (smartphone) insurance included? What does this include – does it cover replacement, maintenance and postage?
- Can you provide mobile phone network data SIMs?
- Do you provide guaranteed finance so I can buy everything for a low-monthly cost?
- What are ALL the costs when I expand my business (add drivers)?
- Do you liaise with our existing telecoms provider?
- If you do it all, does this include ongoing issues – or just during setup and installation? Do you make additional charges for this?
- Are there any additional costs that we should be aware of?

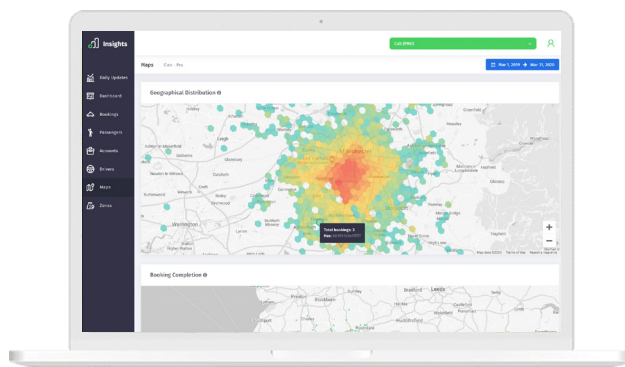


In Conclusion

Like everything else in life, the face of taxi dispatch systems is changing fast. At iCabbi, we're excited about these changes, and the benefits they can bring to your firm.

Making the most of this exciting opportunity means partnering with a system provider who can offer you the most feature-rich, robust and easy to use dispatch system.

We hope that this guide has helped to answer some of your questions, as well as armed you with the smart questions to ask a potential provider. If you have any questions then please contact our friendly team of expert advisors any time, by calling **01623 44 22 11** or emailing **enquiries@iCabbiUK.co.uk**. We're always happy to answer your questions.



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