



Know your customer

An Agile Solutions guide to
customer MDM in Travel and Aviation

Modernize **Manage** Monetize

How well do you know your customers?

Every booking – be it a passenger, a VIP lounge visitor or cargo fare – generates vast amounts of data – from names and addresses to travel preferences, special requirements, connections to other passengers and more.

Yet is that data coming together to show you a complete picture of those customers as people – or is it just a collection of information, providing pockets of insight but never the full picture?

For the travel and aviation industry, knowing your customer is critical in a challenging and competitive market. If you can have a single view of each customer, you can use data to create better experiences, boost your margins, improve cost management and gain business over your competitors – but how do you achieve it?

With Master Data Management (MDM), you can create a 360 view of your customers: discovering a ‘golden record’ that presents a single version of the truth and transforms the service you provide to your customers.

Yet MDM isn’t a technology that you can plug in, turn on, and watch the benefits roll in. Technology is one important part of the solution, but successful MDM is as much an organizational and cultural concern as it is an IT problem.

In this short guide, you’ll discover:



why you need a “Golden Record” of the truth to compete in today’s aviation industry



the obstacles you might encounter on your MDM journey



the core principles that every MDM initiative needs



your next steps to implement successful MDM

Golden record:

A single, 360° view of your customers



An Agile Solutions approach to data


A Golden Record: the end goal of MDM

A Golden Record is a single, reliable data record. It provides unified, accurate master data (in this instance, customer data) – wherever that data is accessed within your organization. In travel and aviation, it can be the difference between seeing your ‘customer’ and just another booking.

As an example, let’s take the airline passenger Alex Smith. Alex has just booked a flight with the fictional AirFare.

- ✔ Alex has booked with AirFare before.
- ✔ They fly every year at the end of July (but not always with AirFare).
- ✔ They usually wait for the sales to book their fare, and choose the lowest price.
- ✔ They’re usually joined by their partner and two children.
- ✔ They have special travel needs, needing extra legroom and airport assistance.
- ✔ They have complained after a previous flight, due to the above needs not being met.





AirFare has all of this data available on Alex and their regular travel companions. But that data is spread throughout the business – attached to individual bookings and interactions, not a single customer profile.

As a result:

- ❗ Marketing doesn't know that Alex's family are connected, but that Alex is the decision-maker/ lead passenger.
- ❗ Sales don't know that Alex has a pattern of booking behaviour.
- ❗ As Alex's previous complaint is attached to their booking, not their profile, Customer Services won't be alerted ahead of their flight.
- ❗ As a price-focused customer, Alex is a prime target for competitors – and AirFare doesn't have the data it needs to compete successfully on price.

MDM helps to bring Alex's data together in one, central view: as a passenger, not just a series of bookings. With the right MDM implementation, every department can access Alex's data to collaboratively create a personalised experience, increase loyalty and secure repeat bookings based on both experience and price. Yet this is just one, passenger-focussed example: MDM can also be used to centralise data around commercial and freight bookings, to encourage repeat business based on trust and cost-efficacy, and to get a clearer picture of the people using airport services, like car parking, VIP lounges or special assistance.

What can you do with a Golden Record? Customer MDM for travel and aviation.

The better you know your customer, the better you can engage with them as individuals, whether you're targeting them with tailored marketing or offering wraparound products and experiences with selected partners, such as airport transfers or cargo deliveries.



In the here and now, MDM can help you to:

- Establish a Golden Record for every customer.
- Increase sales by targeting the right people at the right time, serving tailored marketing based on preferences and patterns of behaviour.
- Boost retention and ratings with better, more personal experiences.
- Increase profitability by basing investments on accurate insight and analytics
- Improve ROI by using data to focus resources in the right places.
- React faster, responding with agility to market opportunities, disruptions and customer preferences.
- Create watertight compliance, with information readily available and correctly tagged.
- Support and protect your customers using the information available.
- Streamline operations, without sacrificing customer service or experience.

MDM can also provide the data foundations you need to explore further opportunities with data, with high-quality, available data acting as a springboard to:

- Implement advanced analytics and data science.
- Improve automation and self-service portals.
- Add value throughout the customer journey, including providing partner services.
- Introduce more robust cyber-security protocols.
- Develop more sustainable technology and practices.



MDM obstacles: what's keeping your golden record out of reach?

Having one, unified data record for every customer sounds simple enough in theory: surely you just implement an MDM platform and make sure everyone uses it? Unfortunately, it's not that easy. There are obstacles in every business that can prevent the formation of a Golden Record.

Ownership

"Data is an IT problem." If there is one phrase that can do the most damage to MDM, it's this. Data is information. Every department needs accurate customer information to function. Therefore, everyone needs to take ownership for the data they write, edit and use. Defining ownership is a critical part of MDM.

Silos

Silos occur when certain departments, or individuals, store data in places that can't be accessed by anyone else. These silos have been building in organizations for years, and the longer they remain unchecked, the more damage they can do. From rogue spreadsheets saved to laptops, to the booking-centric approach mentioned above, silos prevent the formation of a Golden Record, and present a serious risk to compliance and customer experiences. Remember: introducing an MDM platform won't eradicate silos: anyone can start a new spreadsheet, but you can discourage this by providing a source of clean, trusted, accessible data.

Conflicting agendas

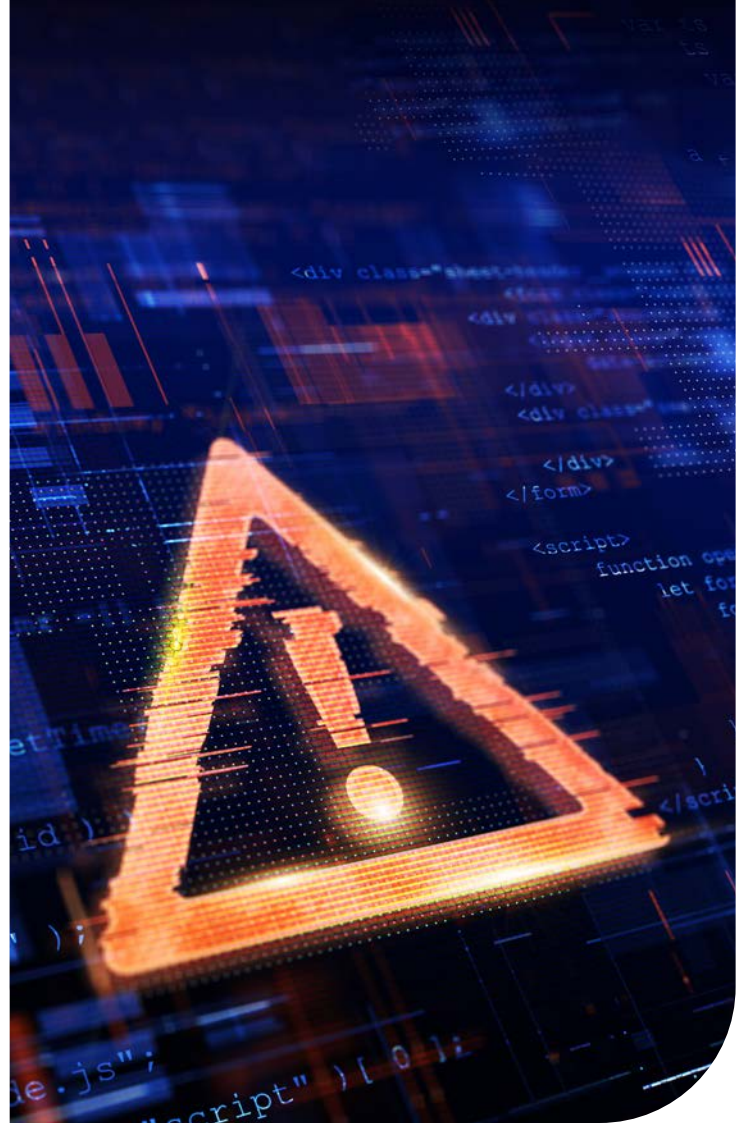
Sometimes, instead of working towards a shared data goal for the business, individuals or departments prioritize their own data agenda. Unless a shared organizational goal, and the rules they need to follow to achieve it, are introduced through MDM, this will continue to be a source of conflict within your business.

Data literacy

People can't appreciate the value of data if they don't understand it. Travel and aviation's relationship with digital has changed a lot in recent years, particularly following the pandemic: in almost every organization, employees will range from highly data literate to data illiterate. In that mix you will have people whose knowledge of data is restricted to a narrow field of experience: e.g., what they know they have learned in the job, and doesn't reflect the 'bigger picture' of the organization's data.

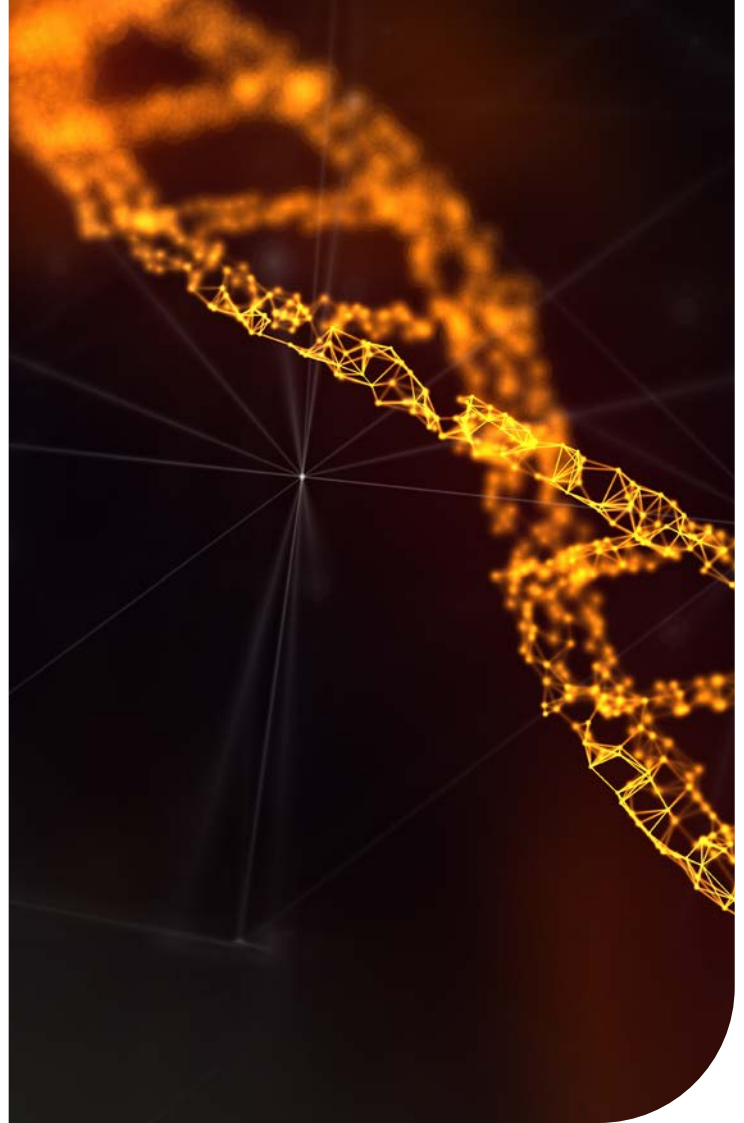
Three core principles that every MDM initiative needs

As we mentioned earlier, MDM is not a technology solution: it requires a cultural shift in how your organization relates to data. There are three core principles that every MDM initiative needs to succeed in the long-term:



Data Quality

Data duplications, missing fields, errors, inconsistencies... poor quality data raises the risk of serious errors in decision making, automation and customer facing actions. Again, your MDM platform won't automatically eradicate poor quality data: if any of the issues listed previously aren't addressed, your data quality will suffer. To achieve high quality data, you need to know that your organization can prioritize data in line with your commercial goals.



Data Governance

Data governance isn't just a rulebook on how to manage data. An effective data governance initiative influences how your organization interacts with data, putting a framework in place that governs how people use data, while also making sure everyone understands and appreciates the importance of that data.

There are two questions that will have a big impact on your data governance's success: "So what?" and "What's in it for me?" If you can answer these two questions, you will find that people are less likely to resist transformation.

Data Culture

Your data culture will, in the long term, define any data project's success, its value to the business, and the return you receive on your investment. If your organization is ready to embrace data and democratize how it's used throughout the business, you will have more success in achieving your Golden Record. If it isn't, you can start taking steps towards it at any phase of your MDM journey. In fact, for many businesses, MDM acts as the catalyst that changes the way they perceive data, by making it accessible and available to everyone.

5 Steps to achieve a golden record

At Agile Solutions, we utilize the Agile Information Management (AIM) method: **a structured approach that will help you achieve business agility through MDM.**





An Agile Solutions approach to customer MDM

In an increasingly digital world, the travel and aviation sector has an opportunity to use customer data to enhance experiences, increase sales, boost retention, save costs and run your organisation more efficiently – confident that the information you have is accurate, up to date and reliable.

Yet get customer data wrong and you risk alienating and frustrating customers, lagging behind the digital curve and failing to offer the

experiences, pricing and efficiency people are coming to expect from the sector. **The difference lies in how you approach your customer MDM and the quality and reliability of your customer data.**

At Agile Solutions, we've enabled our clients to address every aspect of customer Master Data Management quickly, effectively and with flexibility: delivering value at every stage of the journey.

Find out what's standing in the way of your Golden Record: **contact our team for practical advice on implementing MDM.**

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