



EVERYTHING IS JUST A TAP AWAY

SIMPLE, QUICK, AND SECURE, TAP'S PAYMENT SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By Liltera R. Williams



Nowadays, dealing with cash can be such an uncomfortable chore. It takes too much time to withdraw, separate, and count wrinkled-up, stuck-together bills from wherever they are reserved for spending. Paying with bank cards is gaining popularity as it provides a better and trusted payment experience. Today most people in Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE carry at least one bank card in their wallet, and the same behavior is being adopted rapidly in Saudi Arabia and the rest of the region. Card payments are also a growing preference over cash because online shopping is getting more and more popular. Being in a region where the growing youth population represents a large percentage of the market, new behaviors and trends are adopted very quickly. As technologies advance on PCs, tablets, and smartphones, businesses try to serve new trends and payment preferences. However, a struggle is faced in the process of obtaining card payment acceptance due to various factors.

In late 2012, Co-Founders Ali Abulhasan and Mohammed Abulhasan realized how difficult it is to set up debit and credit card payment acceptance on their website. Leveraging their understanding of e-commerce and payments, they decided to disrupt the regional online/mobile payment space. Working closely with banks, they started with the mission to simplify payment acceptance for businesses in Kuwait and have laid grounds for a secure payment infrastructure, launching their first version in May 2013 of what is known today as Tap. "Simple, quick, and secure, Tap simplifies payments for people in the Middle East," Ali stated. "Our approach towards businesses is consumer-centric as we try to understand the payment behavior of their payers and apply such understandings on to our product offering," Ali added. Today, more than 400 businesses signed up through 2014.

Adhering to the new infrastructure was necessary in order to provide

solutions that would enhance the payer's experience. The Tap team works every day to provide a seamless payment experience for people in the Middle East. Trying to keep things simple to setup, and offering a safe, robust service that evolves with the needs of every business. Enabling online payment acceptance in Kuwait takes an average of a few weeks or even months, however; Tap has managed to bring this period down to days and hours.

Businesses, developers, or even individuals can accept payments online; account activation is completely virtual. Tap's team also assist nontech savvy clients with its simple setup and empowering them to start selling online. Understanding their needs, Tap offers off-the-shelf products, such as the WebLink®, and have integrated their payment solution, WebConnect®, with global e-commerce platforms such as Shopify, Wordpress, OpenCart, Magento, PrestaShop, and many others. This allows an average person with no development background or experience to enable online payment acceptance instantly onto a website. Working with a more advanced client, who has development experience, Tap has opened up its WebConnect® service and provided the tools for developers to use API's (Application Protocol Interface) and incorporate payment acceptance into their development code as API's are available in multiple programming languages.

Other businesses such as freelancers, designers, and Instagram/Whatsapp based businesses looking for a billing solution to collect payments use Bill&Collect®, which allows businesses and individuals to professionally bill, notify, and collect payments online via email and SMS.

Pushing things forward, Tap has built an infrastructure that supports developers to build complimenting product lines; opening its payment solutions not only to e-commerce platforms, but also to accounting systems, shipping companies, call centers etc... As a result, when

a business goes to Tap to collect or accept online payments they end up learning about other essential services for their business. This is due to the team's continuous efforts in working and collaborating with other service providers.

Tap aims to connect everyone through business channels while keeping relationships between businesses and consumers healthy. The core of Tap's service is listening to clients and understanding their main objectives, since payment behaviors change and business's needs are constantly evolving. Understanding the behavior of payers allows Tap to offer innovate products. In mid-2015, Tap introduced its app, gotap®, a product offered for payers to complement its current offering to businesses and thus taking another step into simplifying payments for payers.

The app provides an enhanced payment experience for users. On top of providing a simple, quick, and secure service online, the app organizes payments and displays them based on priority, receives notifications on new bills and reminds consumers with their due dates. It also allows consumers to pay multiple businesses all at once and acts as a payment to-do list. Entering card numbers is no longer needed, as scanning credit cards is quicker than entering card information.

"We do not want to change the consumers' payment preference. We want to enhance the payment experience and provide a product that evolves as the payers' behavior evolves in the region. As of today, we believe gotap® serves this purpose," Ali concluded. He credits the early success to being persistent and solely dedicated to providing top-notch services, assuring users that everything is literally just a Tap away. ■

For more information on Tap, visit www.tap.com.kw

