

MaaS Providers. Who wants to be a millionaire?

in Transportes em Revista, 2016

Manuel Relvas

A-to-Be® Consultant for MaaS

People who use various public services in their everyday life remain the same. Hence there are similarities in the services' trends data transport, energy or people, particularly in the way they reach their customers. But this happens at necessarily different speeds – in general, the lighter the infrastructures, the faster the change, where information and communication technologies are a catalyst.

The application of these technologies has allowed to increase the simplicity and the flexibility in the consumption of these services, speeding up the operation of the installed operators and allowing the appearance of new forms of service provision and new business models. All these transformations respond to the needs of an increasingly demanding clientele, posing new challenges of competitiveness to all market players. It is not surprising, therefore, that the winds of change in urban mobility have begun with the most exposed segments of the market, such as the transport of vehicles with drivers.

People no longer go to the service, for example in a taxi station – they want it to go to them, through a request made in realtime, anywhere and always within a simple click. After all, exactly the same thing that happened in the migration from the telcos' service on the mobile world. But, as expected, and despite being similar in terms of the concept of service provision, telecommunications has anticipated 15 years in relation to mobility.

Following this parallelism, is the convergence of telecommunications the harbinger of an upcoming revolution in mobility? The success was booming – launched around 10 years ago, the integrated packages of communications services (fixed and mobile, voice and data, internet and multimedia) are now present in 8 out of 10 Portuguese families. And the reason is obvious – a comprehensive set of services for a fixed monthly amount, which allows joining the predictability of the service to the predictability of the price, already provided by the prepaid models.

But what will they be, these integrated mobility packages? Maybe something like an executive package for 299.99 euros per month, including unlimited public transport in your city, 50 km taxi, 250 km car-sharing, 100 liters of fuel, 1 parking place in park and 20 hours parking surface. Or a student package for 49.99 euros per month, including unlimited public transport between school and home, 20 trips to public transport in your city and 20 km by taxi. Or a family package with some combination of these formats.

This approach to business leads us to a new concept, which we can designate as META-OPERATION – an entity that brings together the services offered by different operators and "package" them into an integrated offer for their own customer base. This raises a new question – what entities will these be? Will they arise from existing service providers or mobility infrastructures? Will they come from the evolution of payment aggregators? Are they entities that generate large customer bases, eventually in areas that have nothing to do with mobility today?

In any case, they will be entities totally focused on the management of their clients, continuously seeking offers that will satisfy, in a transversal way, their mobility needs. Very proactive and dynamic in placing their products on the market, they will need significant resources to reach the critical mass essential to the sustainability of the business. And anyone who has extensive experience in highly competitive markets will leave with the enormous advantage of already knowing how to attract and retain customers. The size and nature of the meta-operators – as operators of operators – will lead to roaming agreements between them to make the mobility business truly global.

The market is there, with a volume higher than that of telecommunications, considering only the services directly associated with the mobility of people (public transport, taxi, tolls, fuel, parking) and that triples if we include the charges with own vehicle ownership.

Anyone interested?