



FRICTION FREE FLIGHT BOOKINGS

CLIENT: S7 AIRLINES
SECTOR: AIRLINE / TRAVEL & TOURISM
AGENCY: ELSE
LAUNCH: MARCH 2014



FOR PUBLICATION VERSION

FRICTION FREE FLIGHT BOOKINGS

Achieving a friction-free online travel booking experience is a pursuit for many airlines and rarely something that is achieved. Booking engines are often overly complex when they really don't need to be and quite often the demands of the business overshadow the needs of the customer - simplicity is key, as is context, to ensure we don't bombard people with options and choice.

Our brief was to create the interaction design and visual language for S7's new online booking system. It had to work across both web and mobile. It had to be simple and it had to reflect the unique brand position of S7 - to "Chase Happiness." S7 like to do things differently and this should be no exception.

But how do you balance the ambitions of the business with the needs of the customer whilst delivering a solution that differentiates? Airlines often favour incremental change over a complete overhaul - making small changes to optimise their booking funnel. Big change is brave. It's disruptive, but if done well, the results can be far reached.

Often referred to as the most challenging of interaction design challenges, the online booking engine is at the heart of an airlines business success - driving bookings and often being the first touch point a customer will have with the brand.

In close partnership with S7, we designed a booking experience that is as straightforward, and easy to use as possible. A guided booking experience that recognises your choices and doesn't bombard you with options and customisations you don't need. A light touch interaction design system can be orchestrated to create a fluid, simple and easy to use service.

THE RESULTS?

More customers are being pulled through the sales funnel providing an uplift in bookings.

76%

**INCREASE IN ONLINE REVENUE
IN THE YEAR AFTER LAUNCH**

- * e-Commerce conversion increase by 40%
- * Transactions increased by 61.5%
- * Average order value has increased by 9%

THAT'S HAPPINESS DELIVERED!

RUSSIA'S LARGEST DOMESTIC AIRLINE

OVERVIEW OF THE MARKET

Russia is the biggest internet market in Europe and the Russian domestic airline market is one of the fastest growing in the world. With most Russians travelling domestically and across 4 key airport hubs, it was as late as 2005 when online booking was introduced to the market by S7. With Russian's slow to put faith in the financial service industry, online purchasing has been slow to take hold.

POOR INTERACTION DESIGN & HIGH ABANDONMENT RATES

After reviewing the state of airline booking experiences in 2014, concluding that overall the user experience is quite poor, eConsultancy called out speed, security assurance, easy form filling, progress indication and persistent booking summary as essential themes to deliver on. Another survey by eConsultancy revealed that 81% of people abandon online travel bookings.

LACK OF TRUST / ECOMMERCE

GlobalWebIndex reported in 2013 that just under half of Russia's 61m internet users are buying online – with the finance industry (or lack of) as one of Russia's historic weaknesses. eConsultancy report

OVERWHELMING INFORMATION AND LACK OF FLEXIBILITY

S7's previous booking experience didn't allow for much control over the options being presented to the user or the ability to up-sell and cross-sell other products such as hotels and car hire.

CHALLENGES

CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS

S7 wanted to deliver Happiness as an inherent part of the experience, but to do this we had tough conversations over how to simplify things yet still present the user with ample customisation – working towards a progressive reveal, that less is more and that giving the user control is better than overwhelming them with options.

APPROACH

We worked at a forensic level, moving across the booking process section by section, module by module. It was challenging to discuss complex UI principles between London and Moscow using video conferencing and virtual whiteboards.

AUDIENCE

The Russian airline market is not mature for buying tickets online, especially not hotels, car hire and ancilliary upsell.

CHASING HAPPINESS... AND BOOKINGS

OUTLINE OF THE BRIEF

The S7 redesign project had three clear business objectives:

INCREASE SALES

We had to increase the sale share of our site at the whole Airline volume. To get it we needed to double the conversion rate and add new products.

NEW PLATFORM

New IBE was build on an extremely new platform. That's why we had a very strong requirements to the design. It was a lot of work with usability.

NEW BRAND LOOK AND FEEL

We should integrate a new communication platform 'Chase happiness'.

“

**I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT THE
RESULT WE GOT WORKS WELL
TO ACHIEVE ALL OF THESE
POINTS**

”

*Alexandra Gribkova
Director of product development,
S7 Airlines*

EXPERIENCE DESIGN

The experience design objective was to create a more usable platform selling S7 airline tickets while cross-selling and up-selling additional products such as hotels and hire cars.

The experience was to work for both consumers and call-centre staff who'd use the same platform to service phone customers.

The main purpose of the project was to inspire people to travel with S7 by making planning and servicing during the journey simple and joyful. S7 needed help to create a positive change to remedy all the issues they were facing with the limitations of the current design system. They needed a fresh, modern, harmonious and effective design system to become the main sales and service channel for S7 customers.

One aspect in which the brief developed in early conversations with S7, was to encourage them to create an experience that progressively reveals options over one that presents too much choice. This became the benchmark for the interaction design language and page design that was developed.

77.81%
INCREASE IN UNIQUE PURCHASES

THREE APPROACHES TO HAPPINESS

S7 as a brand is bright, fresh, colourful modern and innovative. With that in mind we have chosen to translate the core brand identity into an interaction system that is there to support clarity and understanding, but retain a bright, fresh and colourful S7 branded look and feel.

A well designed booking process should be a seamless experience, one where visual design is there to aid clarity and understanding, to help the user to make the right decisions and travel through the process with ease... therefore the design should be unobtrusive helpful and essential.

To get to the right brand expression we created a set of “personalities” (shown on the following pages) to actively understand and test what the experience could be like across multiple channels. From here, aspects were brought forward into the final design.

75.91%
INCREASE IN REVENUE

ELEGANT SIMPLICITY

A minimal design aesthetic that aims to achieve a fast and friction free movement through the booking process with minimal distraction from imagery or other overly detailed design features.

Through simple, airy and elegantly designed modules the experience feels straight forward and well considered.



**A NON DISRUPTIVE
FEEL THAT
DECLUTTERS
VISUALLY AND
ENGAGES
INTERACTIVELY**

THE LANGUAGE OF TRAVEL

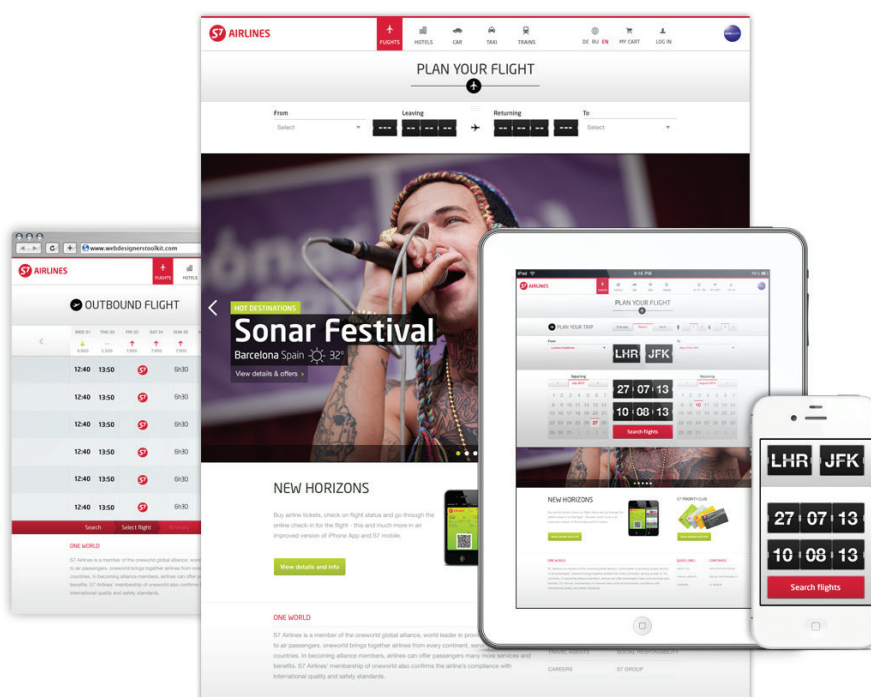
Continuing the minimal feel from the first route, but attempts to dial up the personality of the experience through the use of extra design elements inspired by the language of travel eg. Airport signage, printed tickets and luggage tags.

The addition of these design elements seeks to make the booking experience feel more memorable and more unique to the S7 brand.



**SIMPLE, BOLD AND
EASY TO SCAN
CREATING A
PREMIUM FEEL
THROUGH ENGAGING
INTERACTION DESIGN**

8.98%
AVERAGE ORDER VALUE



THE BEAUTY OF FLYING

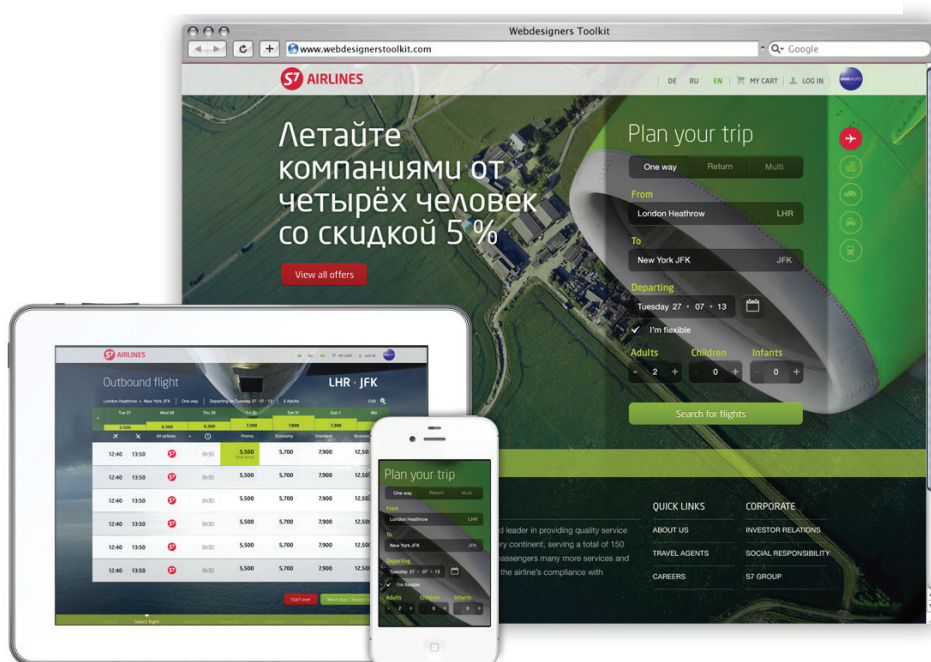
Creating a richer and more emotive brand experience with the use of background imagery through the booking process. Photography could be brand led or change according to the chosen destination.

The booking experience floats in an interaction layer over the imagery. The imagery serves to provide a premium feel to the whole experience.



**RICH AND PREMIUM
FEEL THAT GIVES
THE USER A SENSE
OF EXCITEMENT
AROUND TRAVEL**

77.81%
INCREASE IN UNIQUE PURCHASES



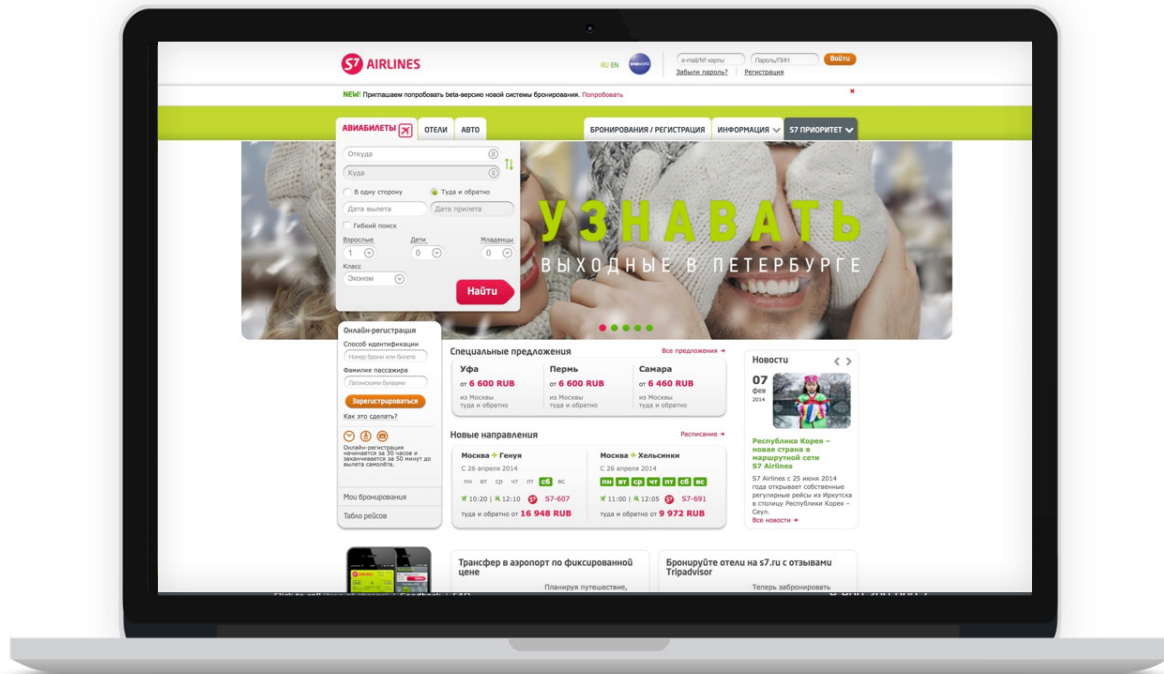


BEFORE... COMPLEX AND NOISY

The S7 site was complex, both in terms of the visual language and the IBE experience.

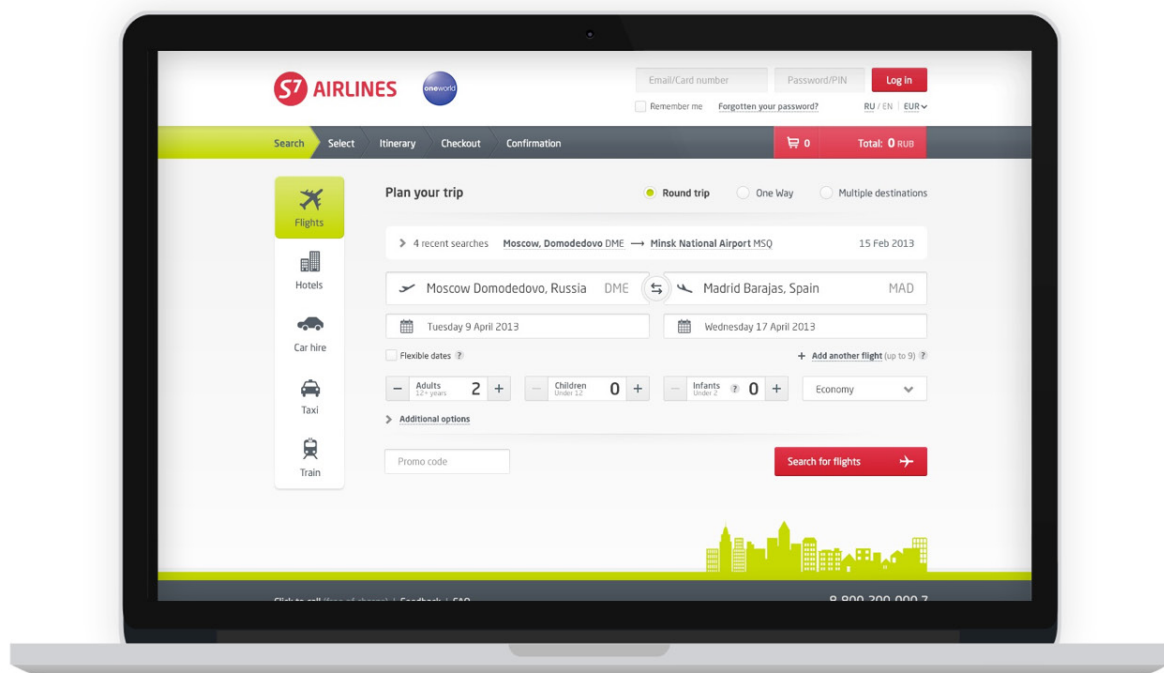
61.42%

INCREASE IN TRANSACTIONS



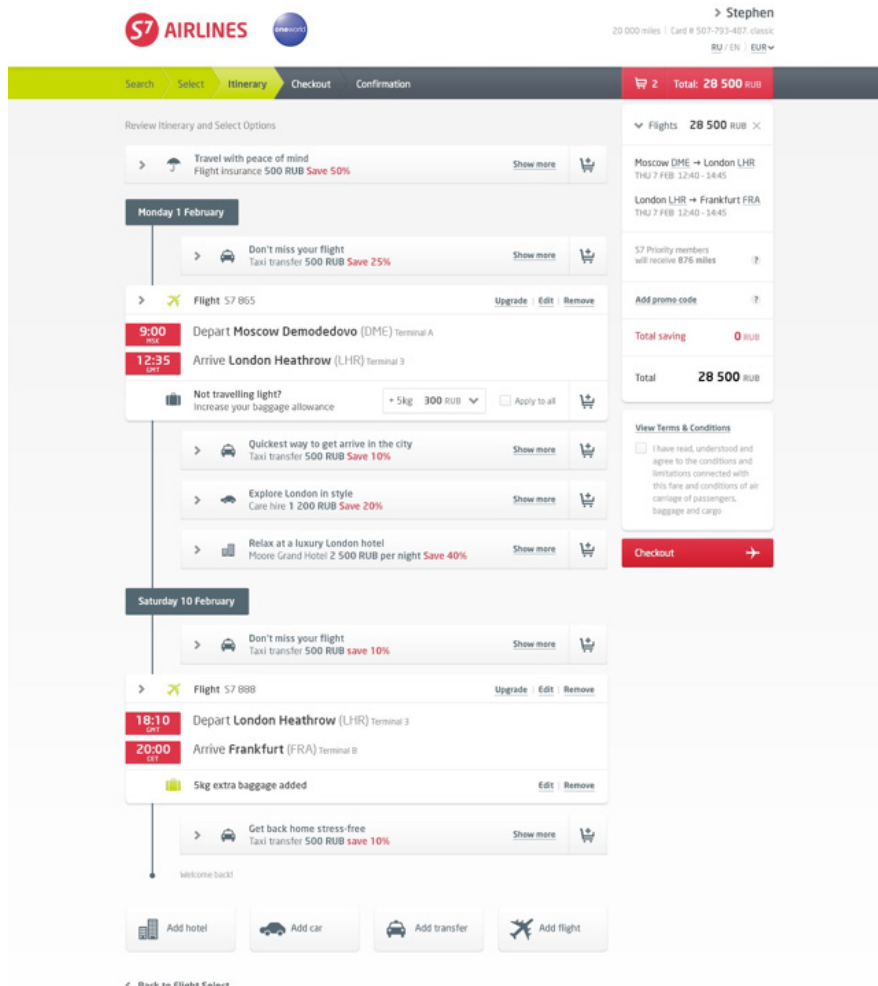
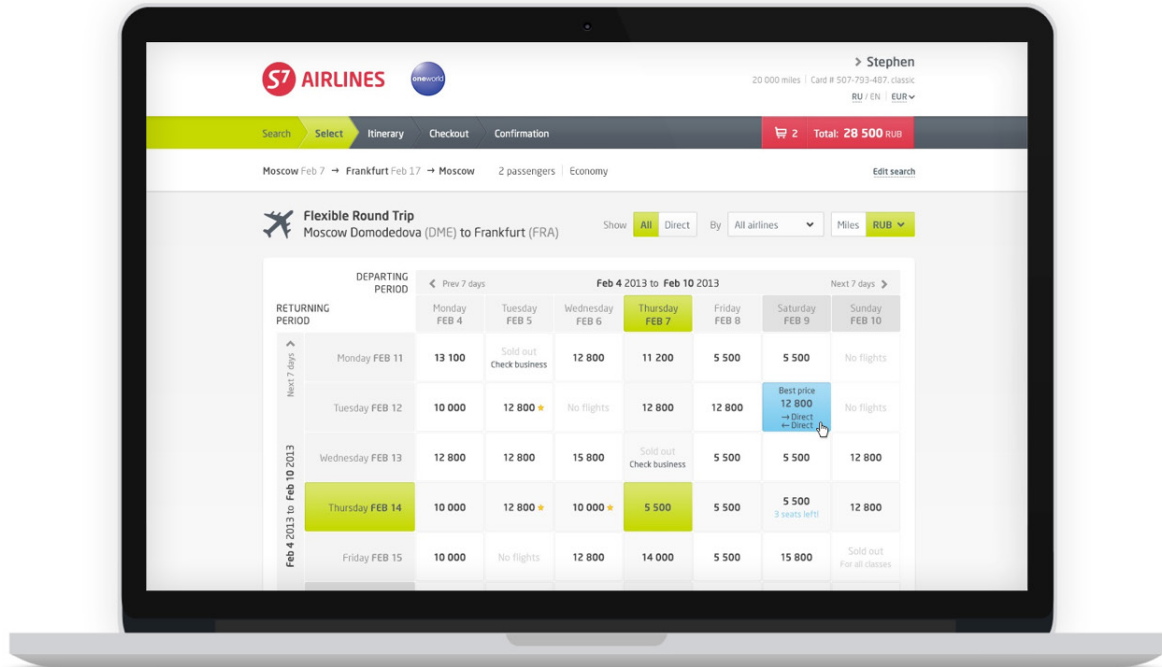
AFTER... FUNCTIONAL SIMPLICITY

A guided booking experience that recognises your choices and doesn't bombard you with options and customisations you don't need.



SENSITIVE OFFER PLACEMENT

39.84%
ECOMMERCE CONVERSION RATE



5/ SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The website was launched in March 2014 and in the first 6 months achieved a 100% uplift in conversions - doubling the amount of people booking through the IBE. The below figures demonstrate the increase comparing March 2013 - 2014 and March 2014 - 2015

39.84%

Ecommerce Conversion Rate (percentage of visits that resulted in an ecommerce transaction)

**INCREASE IN ECOMMERCE
CONVERSION RATE**

61.42%

Transactions (total number of completed transactions on the site)

INCREASE IN TRANSACTIONS

75.91%

Revenue (total revenue from the ecommerce transactions)

INCREASE IN REVENUE

8.98%

Average Order Value (average value of each order)

INCREASE IN AVERAGE ORDER VALUE

77.81%

Unique Purchases (total number of times a specified product (or set of products) was a part of a transaction)

INCREASE IN UNIQUE PURCHASES

Data source Google analytics: Comparing March 2014 – March 2015 and March 2013 – March 2014

“

**IT'S A SMALL BUT A
VERY GOOD TEAM OF
SPECIALISTS. I WAS GLAD
TO WORK WITH THEM.
THEY HAVE AN UNIQUE
CHARACTER TO MAKE THE
IMPOSSIBLE FEASIBLE IN
TIME AND BUDGET WE'D
LIKE TO CONTINUE OUR
WORK WITH THEM.”**

*Alexandra Gribkova
Director of product development,
S7 Airlines*

SOURCES

Russia: Digital Market Landscape Report
<https://econsultancy.com/reports/russia-digital-market-landscape-report/>

Why booking a flight with APAC's premium airlines is an arduous journey
<https://econsultancy.com/blog/65547-why-booking-a-flight-with-apac-s-premium-airlines-is-an-arduous-journey>

Why do people abandon online travel bookings?
<https://econsultancy.com/blog/65964-why-do-people-abandon-online-travel-bookings>

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

The IBE website was replatformed onto ITA Matrix as part of the redesign which unlocked new improved features.

ABOUT S7 AIRLINES

S7 is Russia's biggest airline and part of the Oneworld alliance. It operates flights to more than 80 destinations across 20 countries, including 45 destinations in Russia.

LAUNCH DATE & BUDGET

The initial IBE redesign project was launched March 2014. The budget not disclosed for public version.