

Do you provide a superb payment experience to drivers?

A checklist for CEOs & CIOs



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The fleet market has changed

Everyone loves changes, nobody wants to be changed. Payments are one of the most dynamic areas in the fuel retail business, encompassing how customers pay at fuel stations, how fleet companies control their fuel expenses, and how merchants motivate customers to pay faster and buy more. At some point, to meet the ever-changing customer expectations, you have to look at your current fuel payment system and ask yourself: 'Is it still fit-for-purpose? Do we need to change?'

Your system probably fits the needs of your business now and for a couple of years into the future. But will this still be the case in 2022? We encourage you to challenge yourself. Is your current system for managing fuel card payments ready for your 'next big thing'?



This checklist was designed by **Walter Van Huyck**, an expert in fleet card systems who has led the development & marketing of international fleet card systems for major fuel retailers, such as Lukoil and ConocoPhillips. Now **Walter** works as Fleet Solution Consultant at OpenWay, a software provider of fleet card issuing & acceptance solutions.

CEO checklist

1. Does your system support business growth?

This is the most important question. When you expand cross-border, your fuel card system should support multi-currency payments and be compliant with local accounting regulations. If you acquire or merge with another fuel company, the system should be able to handle multiple entities, with streamlined card payments operations across all business units. Furthermore, if you have a successful year and double your customer base, your system should be able to process increased volumes without issues. Modern systems provide scalability and do not limit your growth opportunities.

2. Are you flexible enough to provide the best experience for your customers?

As a fuel retailer, you want the best service experience at your petrol stations for corporate drivers & individual customers alike. They deserve the latest payment innovations you can offer. But if your card system or service provider is lagging behind, you lose control over how and when you roll out new features. For example, real-time payments have become a game changer for corporates. Your system should be able to check the limits, assess risks, calculate the best price, and apply discounts — all online & in real-time. Fleet managers expect to see the updated balance just moments after the top-up.

For individuals, mobile & wearable payments can be a good differentiator. If drivers prefer to pay without leaving their car, then petrol stations should be able to accept this type of payment — whether it is QR-code, NFC, or in-app based. Sometimes, such innovations bring even more value to the business. One of our customers now delivers a fuel card directly to the driver's mobile app. Users pay at stations by scanning a barcode. No plastic card is needed. They can check the balance & amount available on their account, limits on petrol types & car services in real-time. For the fuel company, it has brought significant savings on plastic card issuance & eased the pressure on customer support staff.

3. Is your business compliant?

If you operate in Europe, your system supports the IFSF standards as a matter of course. But recently there have been a few regulation changes that do not apply to the fuel business directly but mandate changes in business processes around customer data & the security of payments, e.g. GDPR, PSD2. Can your system adopt these new requirements easily?

4. How does card management fit in your business ecosystem?

B2B customers expect to be onboarded just in hours or days, not months. Also, they want to perform most fuel card operations via online portals & mobile apps. At the same time, fleet managers prefer to receive reports on fuel expenses in near real-time. This means that the whole business should work as a well-oiled machine, without interruptions & bottlenecks. This can be achieved if the core payment platform is truly online and integrates with other business-crucial components through standard, open APIs. This delivers business automation and enhances customer service.

5. Do you have enough control over business development & service quality?

Want to set up a new rule for price calculation for VIPs or launch a new card for tourists? How long will it take for the IT team to satisfy your request? Also, controlling service quality can be a pain point for companies that rely on third parties to run their card business. For some types of fleet companies guaranteeing 100% service stability is a must. As an IT director of a major fuel network that uses our platform puts it: 'It is not the end of the world, if a person can't pay at the supermarket because of system downtime. But ambulances can't be kept waiting at our stations. It may cost a life and it will definitely cause fines & reputational damage for us'.

CIO checklist

1. How quickly can you support requests from business?

Normally, a new product feature should be a matter of configuration, not a heavy customization exercise. And your team should be able to do this without vendor involvement. Sometimes new functionality can be a challenge if the current system was tailor-made for your company. You cannot always benefit from developments made for other users. So, a standardized off-the-shelf solution could be the answer.

2. How much money you spend on payment systems integration?

Maybe it is high time to optimize the architecture to remove redundancy & complexity. For example, some of our customers manage card issuing, acquiring, and transaction switching for several countries on a single platform. This centralization delivers maintenance vendor management savings. If you migrate data from legacy systems, the new system should be able to accommodate customer data, so that unification does not cause a loss of valuable information.

3. Do you have enough control over your system?

In-house vs. outsourced operations? There is no right answer here. An in-house system means agility & full control over your business, which comes together with significant investment in the team & infrastructure. On the other hand, outsourcing card operations means almost no levers of influence on the product roadmap & service stability. A good alternative can be to run your system in the cloud, thus cutting infrastructure costs while still retaining control over the product.

What's next?

Assessing your card payment systems is not an exercise to be undertaken daily or even monthly. But some factors, such as a business expansion strategy targeting new geographies or customer segments can trigger the change and open new doors.

11,000 fuel stations in Europe & Asia rely on *Way4*, an open digital payments platform, to offer drivers a smooth payment experience. The *Way4* solutions help fuel retailers become faster & more flexible in delivering card services.

What can you do on *Way4*?

- Issue & accept any type of card: fuel & bank cards, loyalty & co-branded cards
- Launch mobile payments & digital wallets
- Set up card products & transaction rules without system customization or vendor involvement
- Use flexible hierarchies with many-to-many relationships for card ownership, pricing & invoicing
- Provide real-time account updates for fleet managers & drivers through web portals
- Offer dynamic pricing
- Run a cross-border card business on a single platform
- Achieve 24/7/365 service availability
- Create loyalty programs based on level-3 data analytics

To consult our experts or learn how the fuel companies drive a better customer experience on *Way4*, the leading digital payments platform, visit openwaygroup.com/way4-fleet-cards-software