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KEEP COOL

keepcool
SOCIAL SPORTS CLUB

CASE STUDY: GYM MEMBERSHIP & ACCESS

VTAP

VTAP mobile wallet readers streamline gym access control

About Keepcool.

The Social Sports Club – offering health and wellbeing in daily life



Keepcool have a community of more than 400,000 members and a network of over 270 gyms across France, Belgium and beyond, most of which are franchise operations. From their small start in Avignon in 2002, they have successfully expanded to become one of the largest fitness brands in France.

Keepcool's growth is powered by their technology-focused model and their cloud-based membership management platform. Developed in-house, it enables cost-effective delivery of best in-class customer experiences for both franchisees and gym users, driving renewals, referrals and revenue.

Keepcool prides itself on providing their members with a relaxed environment for keeping fit, at their own pace and wherever suits them best. Membership provides automatic and immediate access to the entire gym network, thanks to the real-time integration of each site's door and turnstile access controls with the central management systems.

How to provide hassle-free access for gym members?



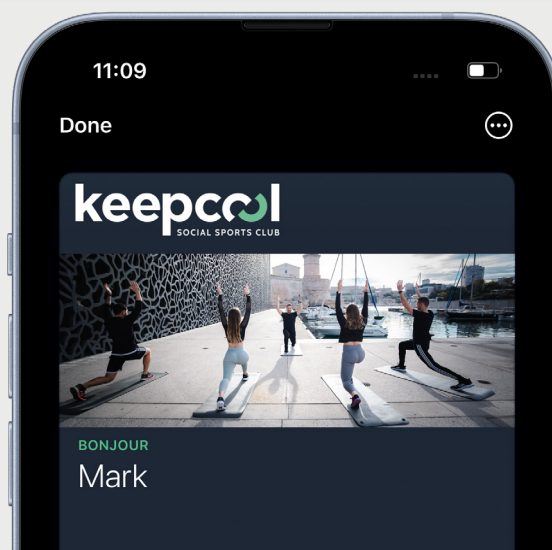
With convenience and flexibility at the core of their offering, Keepcool were keen to offer the option of using smart phones and watches to access the gym network, improving on their existing RFID-based membership card solution.

With mobile phones always close-to-hand, using them to open entrance doors and turnstiles would be quicker and easier than remembering and searching for a physical ID card. Phones are less likely to be misplaced or forgotten, and everyone wants to reduce their use of plastic for the good of the environment.

Keepcool found that, although many RFID reader manufacturers were offering mobile access solutions, these didn't deliver the frictionless customer experience they envisioned. Most rely on Bluetooth technology, require a separate app, and are costly to operate. Solutions using QR-codes were also ruled out because of the ease with which these codes can be copied and shared with others.

Keepcool were looking for an innovation that would truly simplify gym access for their members, as well as being secure against fraud and cost-effective for mass deployment across their franchisee network.

They discovered that, in the same way that Apple Wallet and Google Wallet can store bank cards for payment, these native wallet apps can also hold digital loyalty cards, tickets and membership passes that can be read by certified readers. For Keepcool, NFC-enabled membership passes were the ideal technology to support a smooth 'Tap-and-Go' experience at the door, as well as at the front desk and elsewhere within the gym.



The solution: VTAP100 mobile wallet NFC readers.

Backwards compatibility and flexible connectivity



Having decided to implement NFC digital membership cards, Keepcool needed to replace hundreds of old RFID readers at the doors, turnstiles and front desks of their gyms.

The VTAP100 from Dot Origin was the ideal NFC reader for this task. VTAP readers do not require any additional apps or SDKs and are fully certified to work with both Apple Wallet and Google Wallet on NFC phones and watches. The readers automatically pull out and read the correct membership card from the wallet and send the member ID to any connected system. They also read popular RFID technologies, such as MIFARE, supporting mixed environments and migrations from plastic to digital cards.

Keepcool's existing access control system required readers with the industry standard Wiegand interface for both turnstiles and entrance doors. And at the front desk, USB readers were needed to enable fast customer lookups on the membership platform, accessed via both Windows and Mac desktops. The VTAP100 uniquely offers all these capabilities.



Fouad Hassani, Digital Director and CIO of Keepcool says:



Fouad Hassani
Chief Digital Officer & CIO

“VTAP100 readers have been the perfect upgrade to our membership management system, delivering frictionless mobile access and check-in, with Dot Origin providing careful guidance and expert support throughout.”

During Keepcool’s testing and pilot phases, the VTAP100 with Wiegand interface was proven to integrate seamlessly with their door access hardware and software platform. It was also configured to read the existing RFID membership cards, enabling a smooth transition from physical to digital IDs.

Similarly, the VTAP100 USB provided a simple swap-out replacement for the front desk readers, supported by Dot Origin’s VTAP software agent which enables cloud applications to interact directly with local USB reader hardware on Windows, Mac and Linux.

Feedback from members and franchisees was overwhelmingly positive, encouraging Keepcool to proceed with the full-scale deployment, develop a new app, and to be the first fitness brand in the EU to offer its members the convenience of needing only their smart phone (or Apple watch) to use their gym network.

“The rate of conversion from physical to digital membership cards have far surpassed our expectations. Within 6 months, over 60% of our members have now installed our new app, and over 80% are using the mobile wallet solution” says Hassani. “We are now rolling out the technology to our other brands, Neones and Metabolik, and looking at other ways to use VTAP readers within our gyms, including class check-in” he concludes.

Lucile Devictor, Keepcool's Marketing Director says:



Lucile Devictor
Marketing Director

"Keepcool is really proud to be the first fitness brand in France to enable its members to go to the gym just needing their phone, with Apple Wallet or Google Wallet. It's really convenient for them and has been widely welcomed by our members and franchisees, keeping us in the spotlight for innovation and customer service."



Tap tech.

The VTAP100 mobile wallet reader is available with USB, Wiegand, RS-232, RS-485 and Wi-Fi options, and is smart enough to know how to extract the membership ID from Keepcool's NFC pass and manipulate the format to suit the different attached systems. The LED behaviour could also be configured to exactly match the previous readers to avoid user confusion.

Keepcool used the upgrade opportunity to drive adoption of their new mobile app. In a major innovation aiding the transition to NFC, the app can read the ID of a physical membership card using the phone's NFC interface, and then generates a matching digital ID and pushes it into the mobile wallet via an 'Add to wallet' button. In just a few seconds, the customer can discard their old RFID card and start using their digital equivalent!

At the front desk, Keepcool use Dot Origin's VTAP agent software to provide a smooth customer lookup process. Even without this agent, VTAP USB readers can emulate barcode scanners and other legacy readers via keyboard emulation, but this approach relies on the operator clicking the cursor in an entry box before tapping a card or phone. With the free additional tool, this requirement is removed – it runs as a local web service on the desktop machine, interfacing with the reader and providing a neat way for code running in a browser to obtain tap data, irrespective of where the cursor is positioned on the page.

Intrigued?

Get in touch to find out more.