



mpe magazine

+ mpe 2025 highlights + roundtables + innovation hub + mpe ambassadors +
+ dopamine menu + mpe 2025 awards winners + key takeaways +
+ interviews + mpe 2025 session summaries + industry reports +

The official magazine of
© Merchant Payments Ecosystem

Issue 110 | May 2025

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mpe 2025: Bigger & better than ever

Dear mpe magazine readers,

We're thrilled to welcome you to the latest edition of the newly renamed **mpe magazine** (formerly POSitivity magazine). This special issue is dedicated to the standout moments, insights, and behind-the-scenes magic from **mpe 2025**.

If our annual mpe conference is the mirror of the merchant payments ecosystem in Europe, then this year, our industry reflects one key word: **transformation**.

Berlin was buzzing this March, with over **1,500 attendees, 400+ merchants, and 160+ speakers** who made mpe 2025 the loudest voice in merchant payments.

In this post-conference issue, we've gathered the most compelling thought leadership, merchant payment stories, expert commentary, and video moments—for you to revisit, share, and act on. Here's a taste of what's inside:

- ♦ **Dave Birch | global ambassador, Consult Hyperion** commented on game-changing AI "Like any other sector, the magnitude of the impact of AI is matched only by the uncertainty as to the long-term transformation it will bring."
- ♦ **Panagiotis Kriaris | Director, head of corporate & business development, Unzer** points out "The next generation of payments is already taking shape—it's multi-rail, real-time, and increasingly A2A."
- ♦ **Gary Munro | CTO/ technical director, Consult Hyperion**, unpacks why many wallet solutions miss the mark — and what's needed to win merchant trust
- ♦ **Geoff Barraclough | founder @ Business of Payments**, points out the 3 industry elephants we can't ignore: regulation paralysis, slow tech adoption, and merchant disconnection
- ♦ **OMV** and other merchants voice what they really expect from payments partners: clarity, continuity, and collaborative innovation
- ♦ **mpe awards 2025** winners share their recipes for success — echoing this year's awards theme – transparency.
- ♦ **Voice of mpe** studio sessions spotlight real talk on embedded finance, payment performance, AI strategy, and open dialogue on compliance

- ♦ **look inside the mpe Innovation hub** and community-led networking experiences
- ♦ **flashback to the legendary mpe run**, true voice of BIG merchants talking about their payment challenges and
- ♦ **exclusive perspectives from speakers, ambassadors & moderators** discussing key topics in 2025

If you missed it, this issue is your shortcut to the best of mpe 2025. And if you were there — let's relive it together.

As always, mpe is more than a conference — **It's a community platform connecting people in payments.**

Let's dive into the takeaways that matter.

Happy reading,

your mpe team &



Natalia Ivanis
Chief Marketing Officer &
Managing Partner

like our magazine?

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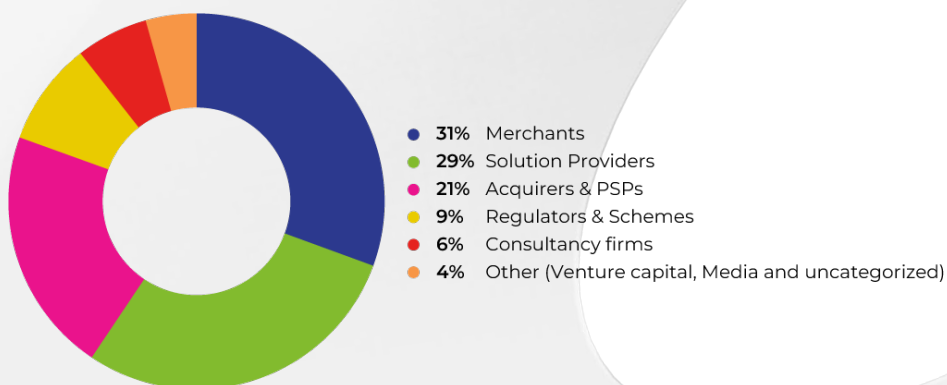
Follow us on social media
for more updates & news about
mpe conference & community



Inside mpe 2025 conference

Bigger, more insightful, and brimming with fresh networking opportunities, this year's conference took the energy to new heights. We can't thank you enough for your active participation, engaging discussions, and the unforgettable connections made. From top-notch discussions with industry leaders to feedback like *"The best payments event on the planet"* and *"Networking at the highest level,"* it's clear that mpe 2025 was a smashing success. Thanks for being a part of it – you're the heartbeat of this event, and together, we've set the bar high for the future of payments.

Industry breakdown



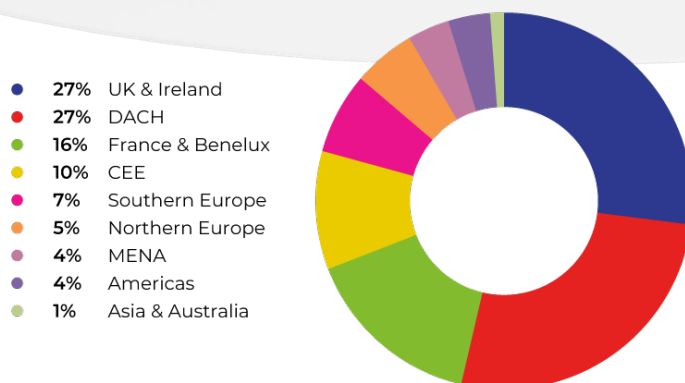
mpe 2025: a record-breaking year!

With a record-breaking 1,450 participants from 53 countries, including 430 merchants, this year's edition was our most global yet. The numbers tell the story: 13,500 chat messages, 7,000 scheduled meetings, and 12,000 matchmakings via the app.

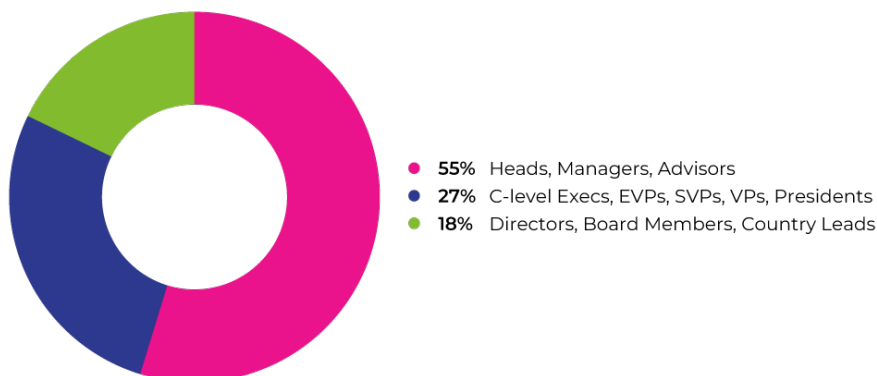
mpe 2025 didn't just set the pace for the industry—it was the industry.

Thank you for being part of this phenomenal moment in payments!

Geographical breakdown



Seniority breakdown



Curious to see behind-the-scenes moments?

What was said in Berlin... doesn't stay in Berlin


Want a glimpse behind the curtain of mpe 2025? From high-energy keynotes to candid backstage moments, we've captured it all.

Capture the magic: mpe 2025 in photos & behind-the-scenes videos

The energy. The breakthroughs. The connections. Relive **the moments that moved the industry**—on stage and off.

Explore exclusive **behind-the-scenes videos** and stunning **photo highlights** from the event that brought Europe's payment leaders together.

Take a visual journey through the real magic of mpe 2025 — the people, the power, and the pulse of the industry.

 Click on the image



Never experienced mpe? Step into the shoes of a delegate.

Join [Alice Corden](#) and [Ed Darling](#) for a behind-the-scenes look at the buzz of #mpe2025—from fresh trends to game-changing moments.

Feel the energy. Catch the vibe. Get ready for what's next.

 Click on the image

Start-up stars took centre stage in the Innovation hub at mpe 2025!

The Innovation hub final at **mpe 2025** was buzzing with energy, ambition, and disruptive ideas. The stage was set, the stakes were high, and the boldest startups were ready to reshape the future of payments.

Standout competitors like [TMU Management Limited](#), [Securely Group](#), and [Trudenty](#) showcased breakthrough innovations that pushed the boundaries of embedded finance, fraud prevention, and seamless payment experiences. The level of talent? Unmatched. The atmosphere? Electric. The competition? Fierce.

Guided by an expert jury featuring [Joanne Dewar](#), [David Parker](#), and [Pavel Kaminsky](#), the top three finalists were handpicked for their potential to transform the industry. But this was no ordinary pitch session—the **#mpecosystem audience voted live**, choosing **Trudenty** as their crowd favourite.

Then, with jury scores and audience votes combined, one name rose to the top...

🏆 [Securely Group](#) was crowned winner of the best start-up innovation award at the **mpe awards ceremony**, recognised for their bold vision and tangible impact.

Here's to bold innovation, embedded brilliance, and the power of positive change.

Here's to Securely Group.

Who's next to revolutionise the industry? Get ready for Innovation hub 2026.



👉 Click on the images to watch the video

mpe 2025 sets record for BIG merchant presence in Europe

mpe 2025 didn't just bring the industry together—it made history.

This year's edition saw the highest number of large merchants ever gathered at a European payments event.

From retail giants to global marketplaces, the biggest names in commerce showed up in force—ready to connect, collaborate, and drive change. [Wayfair](#), [Ikea](#), [Zalando](#), [H&M](#), [Carrefour](#), [Mango](#), and many more brought their challenges, insights, and strategies to the table.

Whether exchanging ideas in merchant-only roundtables, relaxing in VIP lounges, or shaping strategy in expert-led sessions, merchants at mpe 2025 weren't passive participants—they were the heartbeat of the event.

[Matteo Gamba](#) of Wayfair captured the spirit perfectly: “Even competitors become collaborators in this open, innovative space.”

- Want to be where the biggest merchants in Europe gather to shape the future of payments?

mpe 2026 is your place.

Be seen. Be heard. Be part of the movement that's redefining the ecosystem—led by merchants, built for merchants.



Click on the images to watch the video

Deals & connections: the real value of mpe

At **mpe**, it's not half talking, half walking—it's **100% business**.

Every year, fintech trailblazers, eCommerce visionaries, and payments leaders return to Berlin for one reason: this is where business gets done. Whether it's [Ivo Venetziev](#) of [Contiant](#) forging new connections, [Marc Winitz](#) of [Rapyd](#) sharing strategic insights, or [Artyom Gurevich](#) of [Riskified](#) diving into deal-making—mpe is where ambition meets access. It's more than a conference; it's the beating heart of the payment's ecosystem.

👉 Click on the images to watch the video



👉 Click on the images to watch the video

60s with Dwayne: big questions. bold answers

[Dwayne Gefferie](#) stood up with the leaders shaping the future of payments—and asked the bold questions we all want answered.

In this high-impact video series, Dwayne shares the mic with:

- ◆ [David Birch](#), global ambassador, [Consult Hyperion](#)
- ◆ [Abhishek](#), global head of B2B acceptance, [Visa](#)
- ◆ [Brice van de Walle de Ghelcke](#), EVP core product Europe, [Mastercard](#)

Together, they dive into the hottest trends and toughest challenges defining 2025 and beyond—from embedded finance to real-time innovation.

💡 **Short. Smart. Unmissable. Stay ahead of the curve.**

Roundtables. Small tables. Big ideas.

At mpe 2025, the roundtables stole the spotlight—transforming conversations into catalysts. With 35 tightly curated sessions, each one-hour table brought together a mix of merchants, fintech experts, and innovators for high-intensity dialogue in intimate groups of 10. No stages, no scripts—just real talk, sharp insights, and the kind of collaboration that sparks action. This wasn't networking. It was next-working.

👉 Click on the images to watch the video



👉 Click on the images to watch the video

+
+
watch now and stay
tuned for more episodes
follow us



Payments provocateurs video-episodes are out!

🎤 Episode 1: **Big tech vs. traditional players**

[J.P. Morgan's Callum Ludgate](#) joins [Laura McCracken](#) to debate who's shaping the future of payments.

"It's not either/or—it's both."

🎤 Episode 2: **Global payments, AI & cross-border friction**

[Ugnė Buračienė](#), CEO of [payabl](#), unpacks real merchant pain points and what's next in global commerce.

💡 No fluff. Just sharp thinking from payments' top minds.

🎤 Episode 3: **Is fraud prevention killing the customer experience?**

[Matteo Gamba](#), head of global payments & fraud at [Wayfair](#), joins [Laura McCracken](#) for a sharp, no-fluff conversation.

🌟 A candid, merchant-driven conversation on what works, what doesn't, and what the future of payments should look like.

Strategic talks with Mélisande Mual – where vision meets velocity

In one of the most anticipated sessions at mpe 2025, [Mélisande Mual](#), managing director at [The Paypers](#), sat down with two powerhouses shaping the global payments landscape:

- ◆ [Brice van de Walle de Ghelcke](#), EVP core product Europe, [Mastercard](#)
- ◆ [Mathieu Altwegg](#) | SVP head of product & solutions Europe, [Visa](#)

This high-impact discussion tackled the future of payments from the top — exploring how global giants are navigating regulatory shifts,



Click on the images to watch the video

scaling innovation, and driving ecosystem change across Europe.

If you want to know where the industry's headed, this is where the roadmap begins.



Voice of mpe

The #voiceofmpe was on air and louder than ever at mpe 2025!

From candid conversations to big industry questions, our on-site video podcasts brought together bold thinkers, rising innovators, and payment veterans—all sharing unfiltered insights and future-facing ideas.

Missed the buzz in Berlin? Now's your chance to catch the action.

Tune in for exclusive episodes that challenge, inspire, and spark real change in the world of payments.

Join the conversation. **Be the voice.**

Click on the images to watch the video

mpe 2025: three days, one epic experience

What happens when you gather the boldest minds in payments, pack the agenda with fresh formats, and fuel it all with unmatched energy? **You get mpe 2025.**

From the first handshake to the final standing ovations, Berlin lit up with brilliant ideas, real connections, and that unmistakable #mpe2025 buzz. We talked shop, shared insights, sparked deals—and yes, the dopamine was real.

Miss it already?

Relive the moments. Feel the pulse. Watch the official **mpe 2025 aftermovie**.

It's not just a recap. It's a reminder of where the future of payments is made.



 Click on the image to watch the video

Watch all mpe TV videos on our official YouTube channel - **subscribe to mpe TV!**



mpe2025 dopamine menu

Did you know dopamine had a starring role at mpe 2025?

Let's be honest—conferences can be a rollercoaster of adrenaline and exhaustion. But at mpe 2025, we flipped the script. From our dopamine-powered menu to those little moments of unexpected joy, we turned recharging into an experience.

Whether it was a mood-boosting bite, a quick breather, or that one conversation that made your day—our mission was clear: keep the vibes high and the social battery full. Because energy isn't just a buzzword. It's the pulse of mpe.

Most loved on the mpe's dopamine menu?

The book launch & signing at mpe 2025!

One experience stole the show on the dopamine menu — [Neira Jones](#)' electric book launch of *Beyond Payments: From Centralised to Decentralised and Everything In Between*.

The Dahlem room buzzed with anticipation as Neira took the stage, delivering sharp insights and bold ideas that had the crowd hooked. As copies flew off the shelves and the signing line stretched long, the moment captured everything mpe stands for: innovation, inspiration, and unforgettable energy.

If you felt the vibe, you know — this was more than a launch. It was a movement.





mpe 5K run is making waves — the only run of its kind at a European payments conference!

Brought to you by **SHIFT 4** +

This tradition is fast becoming a fan favourite.

Berlin streets came alive as the sun rose on day 2 of mpe 2025—with the annual 5K run led by [Bram Vreugdenhil](#) of [PaymentGenes](#) setting the tone for a high-energy day ahead.

Powered by community spirit (and a few running shoes), participants dashed through the city in true mpe style. Huge thanks to [Shift4](#) for making this energising tradition possible.

Until next year... ready, set, go!

From inspiration to implementation: inclusion in fintech

mpe 2025 proudly stood behind the mission of [Project Nemo](#) and the [European Women Payments Network \(EWPN\)](#), spotlighting inclusion and empowerment in the payments space.

A standout moment came during the EWPN breakfast, where [Ed Darling](#) brought both heart and expertise—sharing powerful stage presence tips while championing representation.

With Project Nemo aiming to drive real change around disability inclusion in FinTech, this was more than a session; it was a statement. And there's more to come—stay tuned for a special podcast episode recorded live at mpe!





A breath of calm before the final push

After two whirlwind days of bold ideas, bright minds, and boundary-pushing conversations, mpe 2025 hit pause—with purpose. In the calm before the final sprint, delegates gathered for a quick but powerful reset: a 15-minute yoga session led by [Barbora Leitmanová](#), certified yoga teacher and mpe's own marketing force. No mats, no fuss—just breath, movement, and a moment to ground ourselves before the next big leap.

New industry report launched by mpe 2025!

Unveiled at mpe 2025, the *State of the merchant payments ecosystem 2024/2025 report* by [Payments Cards & Mobile](#) showcases the leaders and visionaries shaping the future of merchant payments.

With global cross-border retail payments projected to reach **\$7.9 trillion by 2030**, and the total value of cross-border transactions expected to exceed \$250 trillion by 2027, the payments landscape is undergoing rapid and profound transformation.

The report captures insights from over **50 leading payment companies**, spotlighting **AI-driven FX, real-time payments, and advanced fraud prevention** tools that are redefining transaction efficiency. If you want to stay ahead, download it now and learn about:

- ✓ Top 7 trends defining the future of merchant payments
- ✓ How merchants can maximise turnover through better-acquiring strategies
- ✓ Cross-border payments, the big opportunity for payments companies
- ✓ What's next for fraud prevention, AI, and payments orchestration

Are you ready? [Get the full report now and catch up on what you missed!](#)

To see the full list of case studies contributed by companies to this report, download it here: [Download case studies!](#)

Shaping the future: mpe 2025 ambassadors took the lead

This year's mpe 2025 ambassadors brought their bold vision and deep expertise to the heart of the conference. Representing a powerful cross-section of the global payments industry, these thought leaders didn't just participate—they sparked game-changing conversations, challenged the status quo, and helped map the road ahead for merchant payments. Their voices amplified innovation across every session, setting a high bar for what's next.

- ◆ [Dwayne Gefferie](#) – director of [Gefferie](#)
- ◆ [Sandra Mianda](#) – founder & CEO of [Paypr.work](#) ['peɪpəwɜ:k]
- ◆ [Andre Moeller](#) – payments manager at [Volkswagen Group Charging](#)
- ◆ [Geoffrey Barraclough](#) – founder of [Business of Payments](#)
- ◆ [Francesco Burelli](#) – partner at [Arkwright Consulting](#)
- ◆ [Neira Jones](#) – mpe 2025 awards chair, independent advisor & international speaker
- ◆ [Mangala Martinus](#) – managing director at [Payments Consulting Network](#)
- ◆ [Faheem Bakshi](#) – VP of payments at [Kinguin](#)
- ◆ [Andréa Toucinho](#) – director of studies, prospective, and training at [PARTELYA CONSULTING](#)
- ◆ [Neill Butcher](#) – group chief strategy officer, [The Conexus Group](#)
- ◆ [Hagay Elyakim](#) – founder and managing director of [BlockchainLab Ltd.](#)
- ◆ [Charlotte Al Usta](#) – senior manager at [Flagship Advisory Partners](#)
- ◆ [Candice Pressinger](#) – director of customer data security, [U.S. Bank /Elavon, Inc.](#)
- ◆ [Panagiotis Kriaris](#) – director & head of corporate development at [Unzer](#)
- ◆ [Dr. Ruth Wandhöfer](#) – non-executive director & advisor
- ◆ [Angela Yore](#) (Fin/Tech PR) – founder and managing director of [SkyParlour](#)
- ◆ [Laura McCracken](#) – board director-finTech, payments & platforms



mpe awards 2025

What an unforgettable evening we had at the 18th **merchant payments ecosystem awards** in Berlin!

With this year's theme — “Growth through accountability and transparency” — we celebrated the trailblazers reshaping the payments landscape.

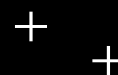
From groundbreaking innovations to planet-positive ESG initiatives, the awards recognised excellence across 14 impactful categories.



A huge congratulations to our 14 exceptional winners who stood out across a range of categories:

[See the mpe awards winners brochure](#)

[See the videos interviews with awards winners](#)



Special thanks go to the awards jury members:

- ♦ Neira Jones, (mpe awards chair) independent advisor, international speaker, author
- ♦ Stanley Skoglund, co-founder & director (mpe awards co-chair), Minerva
- ♦ Gary Munro, CTO, Consult Hyperion
- ♦ Alex Rolfe, managing director, Payments Cards and Mobile Magazine
- ♦ David Parker, CEO, Polymath Consulting
- ♦ Mélisande Mual, MD, The Paypers
- ♦ Volker Schlönvoigt, director, Edgar, Dunn & Company
- ♦ Andréa Toucinho, director of studies, prospective and training, PARTELYA CONSULTING
- ♦ Mark McMurtrie, director, Payments Consultancy Ltd
- ♦ Claire Maslen, independent advisor
- ♦ Janusz Diemko, payments consultant, angel investor and mentor
- ♦ Teresa Connors, MD, Payments Matters
- ♦ Jannis Riesz, founding partner, Flipmode.io
- ♦ Michael Chambers, chairman, Answer Pay
- ♦ Tony Moroney, founder and managing director, Saburai Consulting
- ♦ Ghela Boskovich, regional director/head of Europe, Financial & Data Technology Association
- ♦ Laura McCracken, Independent non-executive director
- ♦ Simon Burrows, partner, FS Technology, Payments & Value Creation, EY
- ♦ Pavel Kaminsky, founder & CEO, 7Security
- ♦ Keren Aviasaf Migdal, co-founder & CEO, PaymentOp
- ♦ Rupert Jaeschke, managing director, Blocksyn
- ♦ Koba Kurdadze, founder & CEO, UniPAY





awards 2025

A special thanks to our generous sponsors — [BR-DGE](#), [Ecommpay](#), [Mangopay](#), [SurePay](#), [Paysafe](#), and [Wallester](#) — for making this celebration of excellence possible.

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Shaping the Future of European Merchant Payments: Market Pay's Unified Payment Platform Wins Big at MPE 2025



By [Petri Ahti](#), Sales Executive, [Market Pay](#)

This year at MPE 2025, Market Pay is honoured to have been named the winner in the Merchant Payment Acceptance of the Year category. This prestigious recognition celebrates outstanding achievement in delivering value, sustainability, and innovation in payment acceptance. At Market Pay, we believe this award is more than a trophy—it's a milestone in our mission to shape the European payment landscape, and an affirmation of the work we've done together with our customers and partners across Central Europe, the Nordics, and beyond.

At the heart of this recognition is our **Unified Payment Platform**—a singular, scalable, and truly modern solution for payment acceptance. But what does that really mean?

A Platform Designed for the Merchant of Tomorrow

In an increasingly complex and fragmented payment ecosystem, we set out to build something different: a platform that unites all aspects of payment acceptance into one seamless solution. From in-store terminals to eCommerce checkouts, mobile apps to unattended environments, the Market Pay Unified Payment Platform offers merchants a consistent, reliable, and highly customizable experience.

Everything—from payment applications to eCommerce APIs, from PSP gateway to support systems—has been developed in-house by Market Pay. This gives us full control over the platform's evolution, allowing us to rapidly adapt to new market demands, regulatory changes, and customer expectations. It's also what allows us to offer unparalleled flexibility and cohesion across all environments.

Key components of the platform include:

- ♦ **Payment acceptance and value added applications for payment terminals and eCommerce**
- ♦ **Market Pay Gateway:** With over 100 acquirer and APM connections across Europe, this hub ensures seamless transaction processing, backup acquiring, and high availability—even during primary system outages.
- ♦ **Market Pay Hub:** A centralized merchant interface that combines reporting, terminal management, onboarding, and more into one intuitive tool.
- ♦ **SoftPOS for Android & iOS:** Turning any mobile device into a payment terminal, this innovation supports pop-up retail, mobility use cases, and cost-efficient

scaling.

- ♦ **Market Pay Assist:** A 24/7 support and monitoring system that ensures merchants never feel left behind.

More Than a Product: A Strategic Partner in Growth

Winning in this award category isn't just about technology—it's about relationships. This recognition is given to companies that have cultivated meaningful, sustainable partnerships with their merchant customers. At Market Pay, we take this responsibility seriously. Our approach is rooted in collaboration, adaptability, and long-term value creation.

Whether it's global retail giants or regional shops, we work hand-in-hand with merchants and partners to co-create payment solutions that meet their evolving needs. From enabling to integrate online and in-store payments across its international operations, to supporting merchants with loyalty-linked payment cards across all commerce environments, we've consistently delivered results that go beyond the transaction processing.

Innovation that Works—At Scale

Innovation is only as valuable as the impact it creates. Our Unified Payment Platform has proven itself in some of Europe's most demanding retail environments. With a growing number of merchants and partners in multiple European markets, we've demonstrated not only commercial viability but also real-world flexibility and operational resilience.

Our support for both international and local debit schemes—Cartes Bancaires, PagoBancomat, BankAxept, Dankort, and Bancontact—ensures that merchants across 11

European countries can offer their customers payment methods that feel familiar, secure, and seamless.

Another key to our success is interoperability. By adhering to nexo standards, we ensure cross-border deployments are fast and frictionless—a major advantage for multinational retailers aiming to scale without complexity.

Why This Award Matters

To Market Pay, this award is more than just recognition. It's a powerful reinforcement to building a better, more integrated payment future for merchants. It strengthens our belief that innovation, when paired with trust and customer focus, can truly reshape the way payments work.

It also reflects our unique role in the European payments ecosystem. With a strong footprint in France, Italy, Spain, the Nordics, the Baltics, Benelux, and Poland, we are proud to be shaping the payment acceptance infrastructure across some of the most dynamic markets on the continent.

Winning the Merchant Payment Acceptance of the Year award marks a proud moment in our journey, but it's far from the finish line. We see this as a springboard—an opportunity to grow deeper partnerships, reach new markets, and continue building platforms that make payments smarter, simpler, and more powerful for everyone involved.



Straight from the stage: what moved the mpe 2025 audience?

Moderators take the mic one last time—to spotlight the boldest ideas, fiercest debates, and can't-miss insights that defined this year's conversations.

Behind every impactful conversation at mpe 2025 stood a guiding voice—a moderator weaving insights, steering the dialogue, and shaping the stage for meaningful outcomes.

In this chapter, we zoom in on the key takeaways and reflections from each moderated session, captured directly by the experts who led them. From deep dives into payments innovation to candid debates on compliance, fraud, and AI, these recaps offer a fast-track to the trends and ideas that defined this year's event.

Whether you joined us in Berlin or are catching up from afar, these summaries are your shortcut to the future of merchant payments. Let's relive the momentum, one session at a time.

» **save the dates!**



berlin
march 17-19, 2026

Geoffrey Barraclough, Founder @ Business of Payments



Session: Redefining merchant payments

Thanks to the panellists for a very engaging discussion on the componentisation of payment infrastructure. As Ugar Cinar from Payrails said in his presentation “modularity is a necessity.” For enterprise merchants facing an ever more complex payments landscape, it's unlikely that a one-size fits all product from a single vendor will deliver what's needed today.

Which modules are likely to be most attractive? Token vaults and subscription management were spoken of as likely candidates for modularity.

Merchants or ISVs that start running certain payment processes or capabilities in-house will need to hire some people that likely operate with a different mindset. Fiennes Davy from Kingfisher said that, as a merchant that used to work for an acquirer, he was most concerned about the compliance challenges. Siri Hylten Cavallius from Yabie, an ISV, explained how payment people and software people had a different outlook, particularly when it came to product and customer experience.

Session: Value-added services for modern commerce

The vast majority of commerce is still carried out in store and payment terminals will be with us for many years to come. The session looked at how modern terminals, running on Android, offer small businesses a range of value added services that can drive footfall, increase basket size and promote loyalty.

Alan Moss from Newland made the keynote presentation, explaining how Nexi had added a number of payment-adjacent products to its terminals in Italy. On the panel, Peter Lansfjord from the Gifted Company, whose customers include Zalando, outlined why every merchant should offer gift cards as a natural extension of their brand. Cian Griffin from Fexco spoke about dynamic currency conversion (DCC) which can increase margins of any merchant with international customers.

Discussion turned to the challenges of persuading small business owners to buy subscription products, not matter how easy they can be provisioned, and whether the payment terminal was still the best point of integration for new services. The growth of comprehensive cloud-based ECR systems threatens the centrality of the payment terminal to any shop or restaurant's technology landscape.

Dave Birch, Global ambassador @ Consult Hyperion

mpe 2025 opening discussion & keynotes

It was no surprise that the panel spent half of their time discussing the wide variety of



different aspects of artificial intelligence and related technologies in the payment sector. Like any other sector the magnitude of the impact of AI is matched only by the uncertainty as to the long term transformation it will bring.

The panel covered some of the usual use cases for AI, such as fraud prevention and customer service, but also touched on some of the more radical impacts: for example, the arrival of non-human customers and the need for AI to AI payments in the not too distant future. The panel also touched on a number of other themes for the conference ranging from digital wallets to stablecoins and the regulatory envelope.

Some of the excellent feedback on this session specifically mentioned the unscripted and free flowing nature of the conversation and it was a genuine pleasure to moderate panellists who wanted to take part in an informed and interesting discussion rather than a PR exercise.

Session: Wallets, apps & payments

This was, as I expected, a very well attended session. It's not controversial to say that digital wallets are central to the next stage of evolution in the world of retail payments so it was fascinating to listen to different perspectives (merchants, technology providers, schemes and of course consultants!).

The kick off presentations from Arda Cagaptay (from a merchant perspective) and Arnaud

Crouzet (from a pan-European perspective) set the scene perfectly showing just how many real examples there are to learn from as well as new opportunities to come. I was particularly interested in the discussion about digital identity and the key role of identity in future wallet strategies.

The key lessons from that excellent panel was that wallet strategy is about far more than payments. In fact, in many ways, the payments part is the least interesting part! Hearing about AliPay's 10 million applications and 1.6 billion customers was an inspiration to all of us.

Session: Conference outcomes

The final panel of the event is always fun because it's an opportunity for the panellists and the audience to say what they really thought about the event, the issues and the conversations that took place during another brilliant week of content and connection.

Along with my co-host, Ruth Wandhofer, and panellists Bart Szykowski, Petar Dakovic and Amantran Gupta covered a wide range of topics ranging from geopolitics and global realities to the thorny issue of robots accessing bank accounts.

A particular point that came up early in the discussion was an interesting reflection on the regulatory perspectives. there was much less discussion on regulation at the event this year and as Ruth explained it's because so much is still up in the air. I've no doubt that when we reconvene next year there will be a lot more talk about PSD3, ELMI, PI, PSR, COP, EBA and SCINST at POS.

We finished the panel by stepping back from staring into the future and instead highlighting some of the pain points in today's payments environment. It seemed to me that the panel thought many of these came down to the lack of data sharing and the need to use existing

data more effectively (perhaps through AI) to deliver better customer experiences.

Ana Reiley, Head of Europe Acceptance Solutions @ Visa



Session: Mastering friendly fraud & chargeback

The session highlighted the dispute trends globally and in Europe, and the need for everyone in the payment ecosystem to collaborate and leverage technology to help manage fraud and avoid chargebacks.

Visa disclosed two ground breaking AI powered capabilities that help merchants, issuers and acquirers to better manage and process disputes. From providing probability of successfully winning a dispute, at every stage of the process with Visa Dispute Intelligence, to the ability to read images and pre populate VROL (Visa Resolve Online) forms with Visa Document Analyser,

The combination of Compelling Evidence 3.0 rules and the AI powered Visa dispute solutions are making the dispute process more effective and cost efficient, and helping everyone avoid chargebacks while improving the customer experience.

André Moeller, Payments manager @ Volkswagen Group Charging



Session: Mastering friendly fraud & chargeback

For me as the moderator, this session was significantly better than the session on day 1 on payment strategies. The participants were excellent, and we interacted extremely well. This also worked out well thanks to our excellent prep call. Everyone was well prepared, and lively discussions arose repeatedly during the panel. We also received some really good questions via Slido, which I was able to incorporate very well. All in all, a successful panel in which every participant had a good share of the conversation.

Kriti Trehan, Founder @ Data & Co - Law & Policy Advisors

Session: Connect-the-Dots: a business-centric approach to emerging public policy issues



Towards the end of Day 2, we got together in a workshop format to chat about public policy and regulatory changes as they impact the payments ecosystem. We began by stretching our policy muscle with a game of Mad Libs, where participants stepped into the shoes of the regulator, thought about a regulation they would create, and the reasoning behind doing so.

We talked about the importance of understanding regulatory intent as step 1 of delving into the world of public policy. We also covered some current policy trends in privacy, competition and antitrust, AI, and payments, and then learned from real world case studies in these areas. We each took on the role of strategic policy advisors during our interactive exercise, as representatives of an AI-powered fraud detection service provider in payments, and debated how evolving AI regulations and risk-based frameworks would impact us.

We wrapped up the workshop with key takeaways - around embracing diverse stakeholder engagement and advocacy, accepting policy changes as enablers of competitive advantage, and leveraging regulatory evolution to build customer trust.

Gary Munro, CTO / Technical Director @ Consult Hyperion



Session: The evolution of a “shop”

In a well attended session, the key notes by Petri Ahtie of MarketPay and Marie Herbiet of Mastercard set the scene by exploring the trends and the way technology is enabling merchants to meet the demanding needs of today's consumer.

It was particularly interesting to know that softpos is now firmly established as an essential part of the payments mix. The panel re-emphasised this when they spoke about merchants focusing on the customer journey and how merchants ensured they have a true omni-channel strategy, allowing consumers to engage across multiple platforms, and the ability to provide a personalised experience.

Ievgeny Zaigraiev of Privat Bank of the Ukraine spoke of the need for a diverse payments infrastructure in a war zone. It's interesting to note that rather than reverting to cash, the Ukrainians innovated and expanded their payment mix to grow the payments infrastructure.

Softpos is now firmly part of that payment mix but the use cases are growing talking about

using softpos for wallet provisioning, step up authentication and ecommerce payments. The evolving omni-channel payments landscape also includes the alternative payment methods. So the evolution of the shop is about more than cards, it about providing the right payment options at the right time.

Rik Coeckelbergs, CEO @ The Banking Scene



Session: Balancing local convenience and global reach

Key takeaways from the discussion:

- ✓ Local convenience vs. global reach – Consumers expect seamless payments, but local preferences and regulations demand a more nuanced approach.
- ✓ Rise of domestic schemes – Countries like Turkey, India, Brazil but also Europe are investing in local rails to maintain sovereignty while integrating with global networks.
- ✓ Merchant of record model – A strategic way to expand internationally without navigating regulatory and tax complexities in every market.
- ✓ Interoperability challenges – Digital wallets are booming, yet most remain closed-loop.

Solutions like Alipay+ and Visa+ are trying to bridge the gap.

✓ Geopolitical risks & resilience – The push for more regional independence in payments is accelerating, making a multi-rail strategy essential.

It's clear that payments are becoming more regionalized, yet the demand for global scalability remains stronger than ever. The question is: how can merchants and payment providers strike the right balance?

Miranda McLean, Chief Marketing Officer @ Ecommpay



Session: Marketing masterclass for investors & merchants

It was a real pleasure joining the Marketing Masterclass for Investors & Merchants panel at MPE alongside such respected industry experts. A big thank you to my fellow panelists – Angela Yore, Robert Kraal, and Helen Owen – for their insightful contributions and our brilliant moderator, Sandra Mianda, for guiding such a thought-provoking discussion.

We discussed how businesses can adapt their

marketing strategies in a rapidly changing landscape, with a focus on having a clear vision from the outset. We emphasised the importance of authenticity, a strong founder's story, and adaptable messaging as key elements in building trust and creating a compelling narrative.

I couldn't agree more with my fellow panellists that, as businesses scale, the marketing approach must evolve. I emphasised the importance of brand building over acquisition and building trust and credibility in the critical early days and doing that through partnerships with brands that complement yours and share the same values.

A major takeaway was the importance of continuous brand evolution. As companies grow, it is crucial to adapt value propositions to different customer segments while staying relevant through conferences, social media, and strategic content.

Angela emphasised the need for authenticity, not only at the business level but in how leaders are perceived. We also explored marketing's role in attracting investment, with Robert highlighting that while personal connections are key, a strong marketing presence becomes vital as a brand matures. Helen spoke to the challenge of differentiation in today's crowded market and the need to translate brand value into tangible customer benefits.

Thank you for an inspiring conversation. I look forward to seeing how businesses use these insights to refine their marketing strategies.

Neira Jones, mpe 2025 awards chair, independent advisor & international speaker, author



Session: Day 2 opening keynotes & discussion

The second day of the MPE 2025 conference kicked off with a compelling plenary session focused on innovation in payments. The first keynote, titled “UX: The Big Convergence”, was delivered by Mathieu Altwegg, Senior Vice President for Product & Solutions Europe at Visa. Altwegg painted a vivid picture of a future where payments are not just seamless but also intelligent, personal, and dynamic. He explored how the convergence of identity, embedded intelligence, and hyper-personalisation will shape the commerce experiences of tomorrow, offering practical insights for businesses to prepare for this future.

Following Altwegg’s keynote, Melinda Roylett, Managing Director of Merchant Services at Lloyds Banking Group, presented “Redefining Payments in Hospitality: Enhancing Customer Experience Through Innovative Solutions”. Roylett highlighted the importance of offering consistent, seamless, and frictionless customer

experiences across all channels. She discussed how integrating efficient payment solutions can enhance customer loyalty and overall experience, making omnichannel payment acceptance a necessity for merchants of all sizes.

The following panel discussion, “The Big Talk: Balancing Innovation and Trust”, brought together a diverse group of experts to explore the innovations reshaping the payments industry. Panellists included Georgios Kolovos from NVIDIA Enterprise, Melinda Roylett from Lloyds Banking Group, Joerg Seuffert from Netflix, and Darren Laws from Visa. The discussion delved into themes such as using AI and tokenisation to combat fraud, balancing innovation with trust, and the future of payments with emerging technologies like agentic AI and quantum computing.

The panel’s engaging dialogue covered a wide range of topics, from the challenges faced by global subscription services like Netflix to the role of AI in enhancing payment experiences while maintaining customer trust. The speakers also looked ahead to 2030, discussing how demographic shifts and technological advancements will redefine payments. The session provided valuable insights into the evolving landscape of payments, offering attendees a glimpse into the future of commerce and the strategies needed to succeed in this rapidly changing environment.

Simon Stokes, Chief Commercial Officer – PayTech & FinTech @ The Conexus Group



Session: Funding, mergers & acquisitions

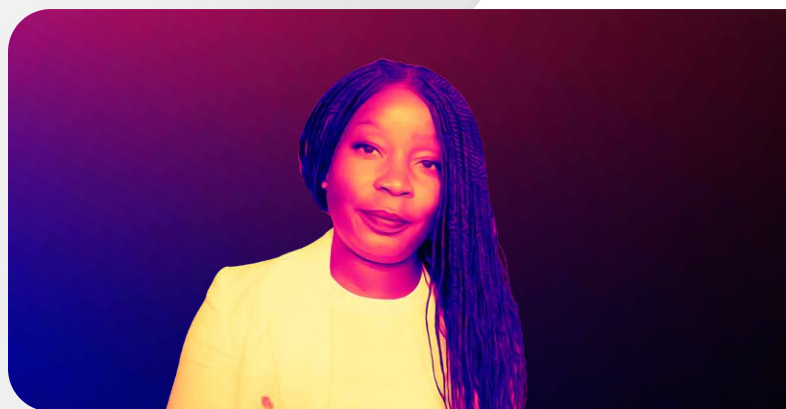
This year MPE included a dedicated panel discussing 'Funding, Capital, and M&A' topics. I was joined on the panel by Tom Schapira from Imagine Capital, Aadit Gandhi from Apis Partners, Kevin Sullivan from Shift4, and Anupham Majumdar from Flagship Advisors. A strong line-up, with excellent perspectives!

The payments industry is at a turning point, rising costs, tightening regulations, and fierce competition are forcing companies to rethink their strategies. We are seeing many more companies consider M&A as a growth enabler - today M&A isn't just an option, it's a survival tool.

Despite a challenging past few years for both Funding and M&A, we have seen a return to investor confidence driven by exciting new technologies that address changing consumer expectations and new payment flows. What does this mean for the future of payments, despite continuing economic uncertainties, companies are still embracing strategic M&A

to compete, grow, and lead the next wave of innovation.

Sandra Mianda, founder & CEO @ Paypr.work



Session: Marketing masterclass for investors & merchants

The Fintech landscape is more competitive than ever. Standing out, building trust, and securing funding require more than just a great product. In a space where innovation is expected, funding is becoming scarce, and messaging often blends into sameness, how do Fintechs cut through the noise and connect meaningfully with their prospective market?

That was the challenge explored during the Fintech Marketing & VCs Attraction panel, moderated by Sandra Mianda and featuring expert insights from Angela Yore, Helen Owen, Miranda McLean, and Robert Kraal.

Here are the key takeaways from the discussions:

- ◇ Trust beats noise. In early stages, it's not product features that convert—it's credibility. That comes from clear

positioning, consistent visibility, and solving real problems.

- ◇ Foundations first. Before flashy campaigns, define your purpose, audience, and position. Without it, even the most creative execution falls flat.
- ◇ Metrics mean little without meaning. Obsessing over impressions and quick conversions? If your message lacks depth, those numbers won't stick.
- ◇ Narrative is everything. Differentiation today isn't just about what you do—it's how well you can tell the story behind *why* you do it.
- ◇ Failure is part of the strategy. Startups that embrace iteration and learn fast often outpace those that obsess over perfection.
- ◇ People buy from people. Whether it's investors or merchants, relationships—and the trust that underpins them—are the real conversion engine.

With more Fintechs entering the field and merchants faced with increasingly similar vendor narratives, brands must get brutally clear on what they stand for—and show up with consistency, differentiation, and focus.

Francesco Burelli, **Partner @ Arkwright** **Consulting**

Session: Open banking myth busting

This session was aimed to investigate what Open Banking (AISP / PISP) solutions are successful, the latest Open Banking & API innovations and business models and the



potential of AI and the latest regulatory initiatives on Open Banking adoption.

The session opened with a presentation from Katharina Luschnik (MasterCard) and Panagiotis Kiaris (Unzer), using a compelling metaphor to compare the evolution of financial services to the shift from a single-brand supermarket to a diverse, multi-brand retail experience. This transition illustrates how open banking fosters choice and competition. The speakers emphasized the movement from a monolithic banking model to an open ecosystem, with open banking as a key enabler of digital transformation in payments and financial data sharing.

They identified four key drivers of open banking adoption: (1) the shift to mobile-first, digital behavior among consumers; (2) regulation, such as PSD2 and the upcoming PSD3 and PSR, which push banks toward interoperability; (3) the rise of account-to-account payments as an efficient alternative to cards; and (4) innovation, enabling new use cases across payment and data layers. Survey data showed that businesses and consumers are already using open banking features—knowingly or not—and a large majority see it as integral to future financial services, especially in payments.

During the second presentation, Lisa Scott (TrueLayer) challenged the hype around open banking by presenting five commonly cited reasons why it may not succeed—before ultimately countering them. While

adoption hasn't been universal and it hasn't replaced cards, Lisa argued that merchant-led promotion (not consumer demand) is crucial, much like contactless payments once were. Adoption rates are climbing rapidly in markets like the UK, and success stories from Ryanair, JustEat, and Lastminute.com show that average order values and repeat usage are strong when pay-by-bank is offered properly.

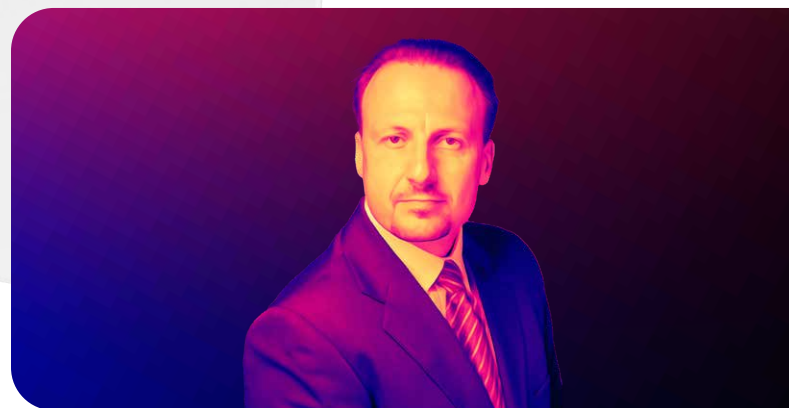
The following panel discussion with Lisa Scott (Truelayer), Katharina Luschnik (Mastercard), Panagiotis Kriaris (Unzer) and Santiago Cabeza (Nexo Standards) and moderated by Francesco Burelli (Arkwright), acknowledged open banking isn't a one-size-fits-all solution but rather a flexible tool suited to specific payment contexts. It may not replace cards entirely, but it offers resilience, redundancy, and options—especially in markets with fragile card infrastructure or high mobile adoption. Key challenges include a lack of consumer education, concerns over chargebacks and protection, and fragmented standards across Europe. However, the panel pointed to global success stories—such as PIX in Brazil and UPI in India—as examples of what's possible when regulation, technology, and stakeholders align.

Looking ahead, open banking's true strength may lie beyond payments—especially in combining data insights with transaction flows to support use cases like credit scoring, personal finance management, and dynamic recurring payments. Panelists emphasized the importance of regulatory support, API standardization, and collaborative merchant and bank engagement. With initiatives like PSD3 and Instant Payments legislation in the pipeline, many panelists were optimistic about more tangible progress by 2025, particularly in the UK and leading EU markets.

In closing, the panelists offered predictions on when open banking might reach “mainstream” status. Lisa Scott boldly forecast widespread

UK adoption within 12 months, citing current user growth and the network effect. Others were more cautious, highlighting market fragmentation in Europe. However, all agreed that open banking is already embedding itself across both payment and data use cases—and that institutions failing to adapt risk losing relevance in a fast-evolving financial ecosystem.

Panagiotis Kriaris, Director - head of corporate & business development @ Unzer



Session: Balancing local convenience and global reach

The New Era of Localised Global Payments

The global payments landscape is undergoing a radical transformation, fuelled by the emergence of a next-generation, multi-rail infrastructure that blends traditional systems with new capabilities like digital wallets and real-time payments. But as this evolution unfolds, it's becoming clear that payments are not just going global - they're, at the same time, becoming deeply local.

Consumer preferences vary significantly

even between neighbouring or economically comparable countries. For instance, in France, card payments dominate both e-commerce and point-of-sale (POS), reflecting strong legacy infrastructure and user habits. In contrast, Germany sees a much higher use of bank transfers and cash.

A similar contrast emerges in Asia: China leads the world in digital wallet adoption, with Alipay and WeChat Pay accounting for over 80% of digital payments, driven by super app ecosystems and QR-based transactions. Meanwhile, Japan, despite its advanced economy, remains heavily cash-reliant, with lower digital wallet penetration and a slower transition to real-time payment systems.

These variations highlight a key challenge: how to balance global reach with local trends.

Digital wallets, for instance, are surging ahead worldwide - projected to reach 5.2 billion users by 2026, capturing 50% of global e-commerce spend and 30% of in-person transactions (source: Worldpay global payments report). Yet despite their rapid rise, most digital wallets operate in closed-loop environments, limiting cross-platform and cross-border utility.

To address this fragmentation, global players are stepping in with interoperability solutions:

- » Alipay wants to enable, via Alipay+, its vast Alipay user base (1.4 bn users) to pay abroad the same way they pay in China.
- » Visa, via Visa+, wants to become the connecting infrastructure layer in the world of digital wallets and P2P apps, starting from the US.

As digital payments continue their multi-rail evolution, being able to balance global reach with local relevance - and build the interoperability bridges to connect them - will be a key success factor.

Session: Open banking myth busting

Open Banking as a Game Changer: The Unzer-Mastercard Case Study

Open Banking may sound like a banking variation, but it's far more than that. While it begins with banks, its impact stretches across fintech, payments, and e-commerce—reshaping the entire payments value chain.

The real transformation, however, isn't happening in isolation. It's being driven by strategic partnerships—like the one between Unzer, a leading payment and software solutions provider, and Mastercard. Together, they offer a powerful glimpse into the future of payments.

There are two key reasons why Open Banking is so relevant for players like Unzer and Mastercard:

- » First, it enables direct payment initiation from bank accounts—boosting both security and user experience by bypassing intermediaries.
- » Second, as consumers shift toward online and mobile-first shopping, the ability to access funds securely from their accounts isn't just a benefit - it's essential.

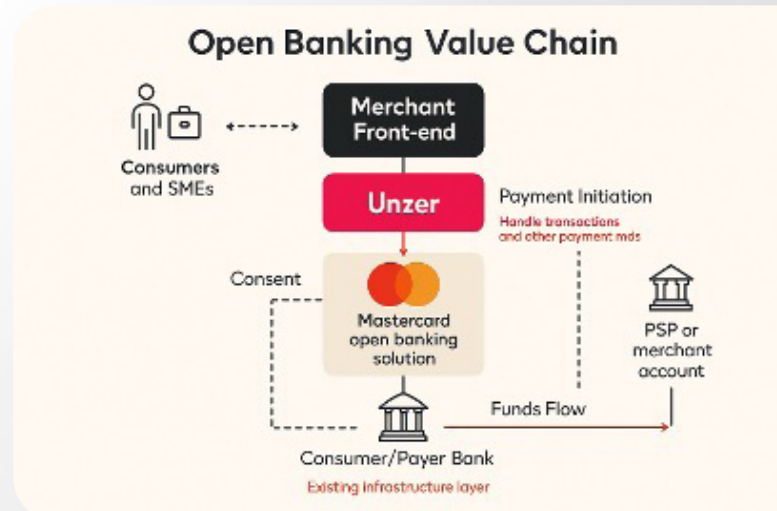
Combined, these capabilities represent a game-changing opportunity, though they impact each partner differently.

Here's how the new Open Banking value chain plays out:

- » Unzer connects with Mastercard, tapping into not just account connectivity but also a suite of value-added services like data intelligence and risk management tools.

- » Merchants, increasingly under pressure to offer secure, efficient, and cost-effective payment options, benefit from Unzer's integration of these tools.
- » At the top of the chain is the consumer. In Germany, Unzer's offering—Unzer Direktüberweisung, powered by Mastercard—lets consumers pay directly from their bank accounts. But that simple transaction reflects a complex ecosystem working seamlessly behind the scenes.

The next generation of payments is already taking shape. It's multi-rail, real-time, and increasingly account-to-account (A2A). Open Banking is at the heart of this shift, and partnerships like Unzer and Mastercard are setting the pace for what's next.



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Modularity is gaining momentum in payments, helping merchants turn complexity into control

By [Ugur Cinar](#), Senior Business Development Executive at Payrails.

As Ugur Cinar, Senior Business Development Executive at Payrails, shared at MPE 2025, managing payments today goes beyond processing transactions – it's a strategic lever for business growth when payment systems adapt to business needs. Leading enterprises are moving away from monolithic setups and embracing modular payment architectures that offer flexibility, transparency, and performance.

This shift to modularity allows merchants to build tailored stacks, from tokenization and routing to reconciliation and fraud workflows, designed to meet specific market needs and support global scale.

The result? Clear business impact. With a




modular stack, merchants can optimize success rates, reduce processing costs, accelerate time to market, and adapt instantly to regulatory or operational changes. This model also reduces internal burden by combining control with external expertise, from smart automation to compliance guidance. A truly agnostic, partner-first approach keeps merchants in the driver's seat, choosing what works best for their business without vendor lock-in or commercial bias.

Want to see what a modular payment setup could look like for your business? Visit payrails.com to learn more.

The Future of Payments: From Legacy Systems to Modular Flexibility


Ugur Cinar, Payrails, Global Business Development Lead



mpe berlin
march 18-20, 2025

keynote speech
day 1, track 1, session 3

Modular payments - assembling interchangeable components for enterprise solutions



Payrails @ MPE 2025

Payment Strategy is Company Strategy

By [Matthias Rothweiler](#) & [Maximilian Fuchs](#),
CMSPI



As retailer strategies prioritize personalized shopping experiences, data-driven cost efficiencies, and incremental customer acquisition, an outdated or misaligned payment strategy can hinder—or even derail—these efforts. A well-designed payment strategy is crucial for maintaining competitiveness, driving growth, and reducing costs in today's dynamic retail landscape.

In this workshop, CMSPI experts moderated an engaging, data-focused discussion on key trends shaping retailer payment strategies in 2025. In the session we addressed the following topics:

Recent and upcoming card fee changes:

In some markets, since the passage and implementation of the Interchange Fee Regulation in 2015, scheme fees have grown to represent nearly 30% of the total merchant service charge. ¹Scheme fees are increasingly

complex, as they can differ based on different features of the transaction, such as card type, network, channel, region, and settlement currency.

Local payment developments: In 2024, performance of domestic networks and APMs across Europe varied widely. In a review of recent data, we see the launch of some new payment solutions driving significant growth, and others maintaining or even losing volume.

- » Blik, Poland's popular local payment method, experienced meteoric growth in 2024, posting 43% year-on-year growth in spending, with contactless transactions growing the fastest, at 58% YoY².
- » Spending on Germany's Girocard network reached an all-time high in 2024, as consumers use the scheme for more contactless and smaller value transactions. Despite growth in these segments, overall spending on Girocard rose just 1% YoY³.
- » Dankort, the domestic network in Denmark, saw spending fall by over 25% from 2017-2024, with international schemes representing most of the spending by 2024⁴.

Opportunities and challenges presented by alternative and local payment methods: In this portion, merchant discussion focused on the potential value that APMs could deliver, such as increased conversion, lower costs, and higher authorization rates. Some merchants who had turned on certain APMs indicated that while some of these benefits had been realized, they expressed challenges related to areas that generally work well for card payments, such as

¹ <https://coadec.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Axe-the-Card-Tax-Report-FOR-RELEASE.pdf>

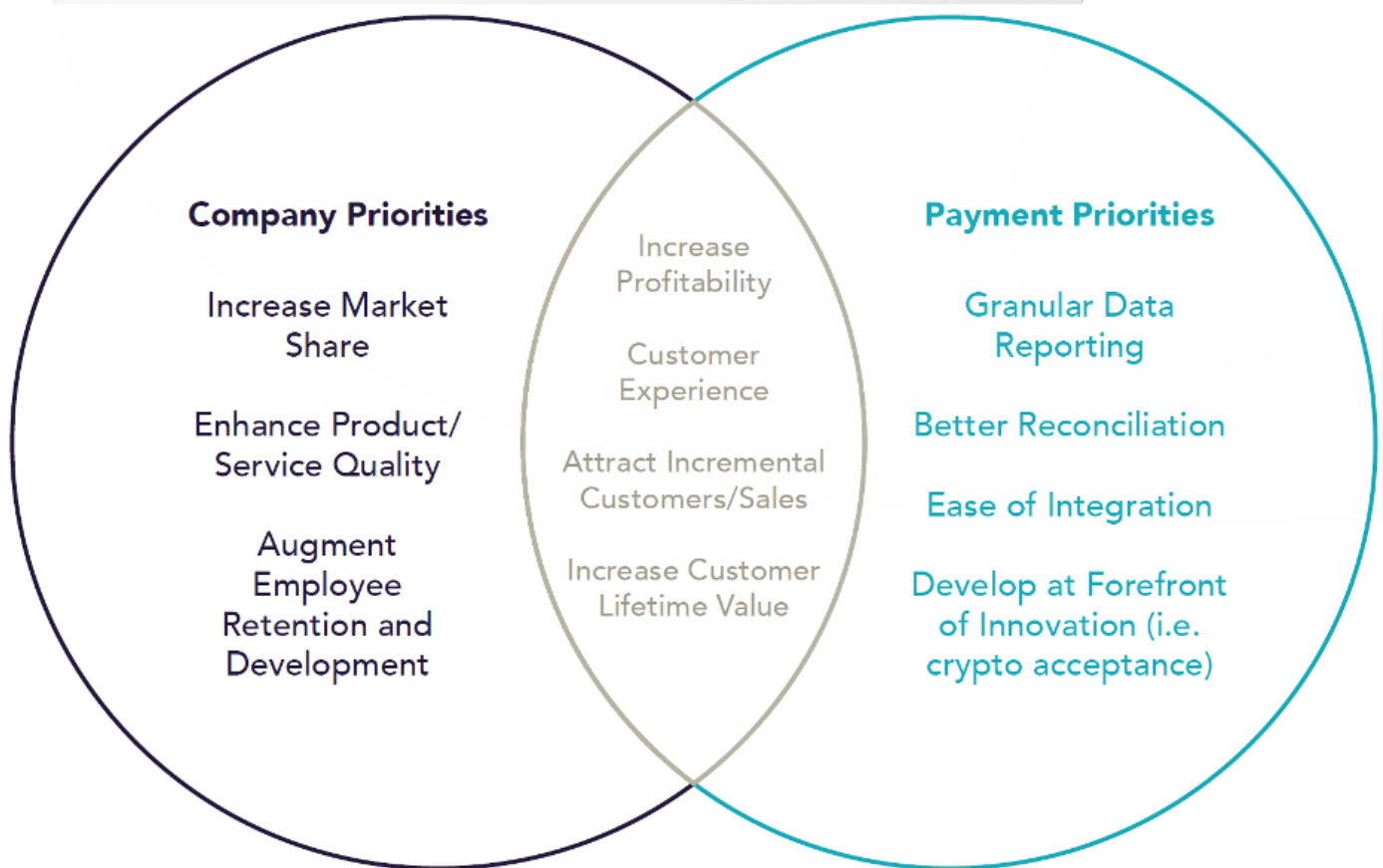
² <https://www.blik.com/en/over-2-4-bn-blik-transactions-in-2024-and-7-bn-in-10-years>

³ https://www.handelsblatt.com/finanzen/banken-versicherungen/banken/bargeldloses-zahlen-zahlungen-mit-girokarte-auf-rekordhoch/100108167.html?mc_cid=4e4bd87613&mc_eid=5ba6383b80

⁴ <https://businessofpayments.com/author/thebusinessofpayments/>

customer experience and use case limitations, as well as limited uptake.

Attendees walked away with actionable insights into ways they can link their payments priorities with company priorities and vice versa. If you're a multinational retailer looking to learn more about optimizing your payment strategy, please reach out to CMSPi!



The Rise of Digital Wallets

By [Arnaud Crouzet](#), Consult Hyperion



Digital wallets have taken center stage in the payments arena, offering far more than just a digital repository for credit and debit cards. At **MPE 2025** (March 19), Consult Hyperion—a brand of Fime dedicated to strategy and technical consultancy—explored how wallets are evolving into comprehensive platforms for payments, identity, loyalty, and a wide range of additional services. The presentation shed light on how issuers, acquirers, fintechs, merchants, and other ecosystem players are positioning themselves to harness this shift.

Below are the key takeaways, backed by insights from the MPE 2025 session, **Fime's** deep experience in secure payments and digital identity, and **Consult Hyperion's** international consulting engagements.

Beyond Card Storage: The Birth of “Super Wallets”

Originally, digital wallets were designed to replicate the physical wallet online by storing payment credentials. Today, they have become “super wallets,” managing everything from payment cards and loyalty points to driving licenses, health credentials, and mass transit

tickets.

By consolidating diverse functionalities within a single app:

- ♦ **Reduced Friction at Checkout:** Wallets use biometrics and tokenization to eliminate cumbersome authentication steps. This smooth process can significantly improve conversion rates.
- ♦ **Enhanced Security:** With strong encryption and user verification, sensitive information (like identity documents or payment data) is better protected against fraud.
- ♦ **Value-Added Services:** Beyond payments, super wallets incorporate ID verification, tickets, receipts, and even secure access to building entry systems.

Source: MPE 2025 Presentation by Consult Hyperion, a Fime brand.

Fierce Competition and Market Fragmentation

While big tech players (such as Apple and Alipay) continue to expand and refine their wallet offerings, banks and regional fintechs are also entering the race.

Each stakeholder has a distinct approach:

- ♦ **Big Tech Ecosystems:** Companies like Apple, Google, and those in Asia (Alipay, WeChat Pay) offer integrated experiences across multiple services.
- ♦ **Banking Apps & White-Label Wallets:** Some issuers prefer to build wallets right into their banking apps, while others leverage white-label solutions to accelerate time to market.
- ♦ **Local & Regional Solutions:** Nordic wallets (e.g., Vipps) and emerging European players (like Wero, EPI-wero) concentrate on localized payment behaviors, often finding deep traction in domestic markets.

Though users may have multiple wallets, a truly interoperable ecosystem would enhance convenience and acceptance. Whether this leads to more fragmentation or eventual consolidation is still an open question—regulations like PSD3 and projects like the European Digital Identity (EUDI) Wallet will have a major say in shaping this outcome.

European Regulations Driving Innovation

Europe remains at the forefront of payment innovations, in large part thanks to the region's proactive regulatory environment:

- ♦ **PSD3:** Building on PSD2, the new Payment Services Directive is expected to encourage broader open banking and seamless third-party integrations, potentially driving further innovation in digital wallet offerings.
- ♦ **EUDI Wallet (EU Digital Identity Wallet):** This EU-backed initiative aims to unify various forms of digital identity across member states—reducing silos for merchants and making life easier for customers who won't have to juggle multiple identity apps.
- ♦ **Strong Customer Authentication (SCA):** A cornerstone of PSD2, SCA introduced security requirements that significantly impacted online checkout flows. Digital wallets incorporating biometric authentication and tokenization are emerging as an ideal solution to meet (and exceed) SCA standards.

By baking identity verification directly into the checkout process, a wallet can reduce friction while still maintaining compliance. Source: Consult Hyperion research on identity-centric payments.

Apple's NFC Opening and Other Technical Shifts

Historically, Apple retained tight control over

its NFC functionality. Recently, it has opened up certain aspects of NFC payments in the EU, and introduced additional NFC+Secure Element (SE) capabilities in selected markets outside EU.

This change—though incremental—signals:

- ♦ **Growing Market Pressure:** Regulators and industry competition are influencing big tech's interoperability stance.
- ♦ **Opportunities for New Use Cases:** With developer access to NFC hardware, banks and fintechs can craft more integrated wallet experiences, including contactless transit, secure building access, and new loyalty mechanisms.
- ♦ **Push Toward Standardization:** Cross-platform communication protocols may grow more uniform, eventually benefitting end-users who want the same seamless experience on any device.

Banks' Positioning: Wallet Within or Outside the Banking App?

For issuing banks, the key strategic question is whether to build their own wallets or integrate with existing platforms:

- ♦ **Native Banking Wallet:** Integrating wallet functions within the main banking app allows for a single customer journey and the possibility to cross-sell financial services, while also controlling brand experience and data.
- ♦ **External Wallet Integration:** Teaming up with third-party wallets (e.g., Apple Pay, Google Pay, or local solutions) can mean faster adoption and lower development costs, but with less control over the user experience.
- ♦ **Open Banking & EPI-wero:** Partnerships (or direct involvement) in pan-European solutions may help banks meet regulatory demands and offer more diverse services,

from payment initiation to digital identity. Many banks adopt a hybrid approach, supporting both an internal wallet and external wallet integrations to cater to diverse customer preferences.

Source: Fime's analysis of major European banking strategies.

Central Role of Identity

A recurring theme at MPE 2025 was that **identity is central to all transactions**. Without trustworthy identity, payment flows are susceptible to fraud and friction. By merging identity and payments:

- ♦ **Frictionless SCA:** Digital identity flows integrated with payment rails can transform cumbersome 3D Secure steps into a simple biometric check.
- ♦ **Better Customer Data:** Merchants can leverage verified identity information (with user consent) to personalize offers and streamline returns or warranty claims.
- ♦ **Advanced Services:** ID-based credentials in wallets enable new segments—car rentals without counters, age verification at theaters, or borderless digital travel documents.

Source: MPE 2025 Keynote, Consult Hyperion.

Implications for Merchants

For merchants, embracing digital wallets is quickly becoming a necessity rather than an option:

1. **Higher Conversion Rates:** Quick and secure checkouts reduce cart abandonment.
2. **Reduced Fraud:** Secure elements, tokenization, and biometric verification lower the risk of unauthorized transactions.
3. **Future-Proofing:** As wallets integrate identity, ticketing, and even central bank

digital currencies (CBDCs), merchants that adapt early position themselves to serve evolving consumer demands.

4. **Global Reach:** Working with multinational wallet solutions can help merchants expand internationally without friction, leveraging local payment preferences.

Those that drag their feet risk losing market share to competitors who offer a seamless and secure payment experience.

A Call to Act

Digital wallets are here to stay, and their capabilities will only expand. From identity verification to loyalty and beyond, they are quickly becoming all-in-one platforms that streamline each step of the customer journey. In Europe, **PSD3** and the **EUDI Wallet** are further accelerating innovation, while opening new doors for pan-European interoperability.

For banks, fintechs, and merchants of all sizes, the decision is no longer whether to adopt digital wallets, but how to do so most effectively.

As **Fime** and **Consult Hyperion** consistently observe in their payment, mobility, and digital identity projects, the winners will be those who integrate robust, user-friendly solutions that simplify payments and protect customers.

The future of commerce is digital, seamless, and identity-driven—and digital wallets stand squarely at that intersection.

*Sources:

- *MPE 2025 Keynote Presentation, Consult Hyperion (a Fime brand).*
- *Fime's Analysis of European Payment Trends & Regulatory Developments.**

Payments as a strategic capability

By [Ward Hagenaar](#) & [Bas van Donselaar](#), PaymentGenes Consultancy & [Okke Mönking](#), Silverflow



Merchant giants are quietly seizing the reins of the payments industry, upending a once global PSP-dominated players' domain. From Mercedes pay's global platform to Transport for London's rapid transit taps, firms are leveraging technology to slash costs and wield data, reshaping financial flows. Merchants and Tech firms are increasingly taking control of the payments industry, shifting power away from traditional banks. Driven by cost reduction and data leverage, this realignment carries significant economic implications, reshaping financial flows and challenging the market position of established providers.

During this year's MPE edition in Berlin, **Bas van Donselaar** and **Ward Hagenaar**, Co-heads of **PaymentGenes Consultancy**, together with **Okke Mönking**, Vice President of Business Development at **Silverflow**, facilitated a workshop that explored how merchants can take control of their payment capabilities and

develop them further into a strategic advantage. This discussion focused on leveraging direct card-scheme integrations, orchestration and other tailored set-ups to optimize transaction flows, cut costs and outpace legacy systems - echoing the strategies of industry pioneers.

Whether you joined us at the session or missed out, here are the key highlights - dive in to catch up or relive the insights.

Across industries, merchants are increasingly taking ownership of their payment systems, strategically rethinking how payments can drive efficiency and competitive advantage. Three standout examples highlight this shift:

1. **Mercedes pay:** By managing its own integration layer and controlling all PSP connections through Mercedes pay, the German automaker maintains full oversight of its payment infrastructure, offering greater flexibility and security.
2. **Spotify:** With a focus on orchestration, Spotify seeks to optimize its conversion rates, reduce vendor dependencies and streamline costs, ultimately refining its operations and enhancing the UX.
3. **Transport for London (TFL):** By embracing direct integrations with card acquiring processors, bypassing intermediaries to achieve faster transaction processing and lower acceptance costs - which is critical in high-volume and high-frequency environments.

These strategies underscore a broader trend: **merchants are increasingly turning payment systems into strategic assets, enabling better cost management, improved transaction performance and greater control over the customer journey.** These benefits, however, do not come easily.

Upgrading payments into a strategic

capability requires a **compelling long term vision, executable roadmap and conscious investments** in building payments capabilities in terms of **partnerships, technology** and, most importantly, people. There is no single playbook to develop payments into a strategic capability: each merchant needs to critically review its business strategy and capabilities and embark on an individual journey to realize their full **payments potential**.



This isn't mere innovation: it's a power play, driven by data and efficiency, with the potential to reshape trillions in global transactions.

Banks, regulators and rivals beware: the future belongs to those who control the pipes.



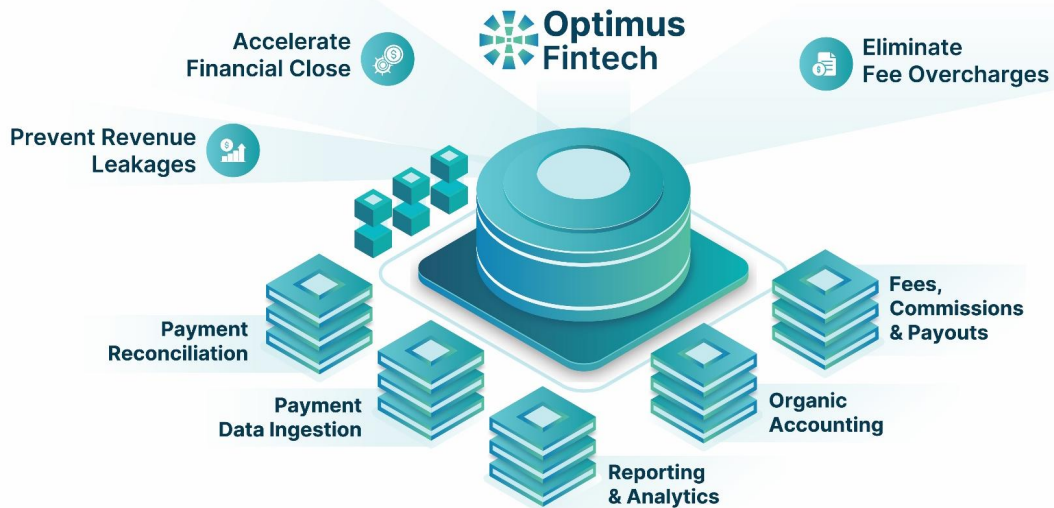
The ramifications ripple widely. First, **data mastery is king**. Bolt, spanning 50+ countries, **taps raw card scheme data to lift authorization rates** cutting declines via shrewder acquirer data flows - easing cross-border reconciliation and curbing costly rerouting.

Second, **efficiency gains follow**: TfL's lean connections and Mercedes pay's unified platform simplifies the user experience – **reducing** the number of **integrations**, while Spotify's subscription engine **boosts retention**.

Third, **bank roles pivot**. Card acceptance, settlement and financing remain their forte - issuing bespoke Merchant IDs - yet merchants like Bolt exploit tech for real-time insights, tailoring multi-PSP strategies to local quirks.

As merchants gain more and more control over payments, the established players are confronted with a clear choice: adapt or fade.

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At Optimus Fintech, we aim to transform finance operations from a cost center into a profit generator. By leveraging artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation, we help finance leaders gain end-to-end visibility, eliminate inefficiencies, and drive data-driven decision-making.

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- ✓ **Revenue Assurance** – Detecting revenue leakage, optimizing settlement timelines, and improving profitability.
- ✓ **Real-time Financial Insights** – Delivering predictive analytics for proactive decision-making and financial forecasting.
- ✓ **Financial Close Management** – Accelerating period-end financial close processes with unmatched accuracy and efficiency.

mpe conference highlights



By [Dr. Ruth Wandhöfer](#)

This year's MPE conference was full of insights, surprises and extremely important industry sharing of insights across a plethora of topic areas.

A critical topic of the day was Artificial Intelligence, or AI.

Whilst AI bots, replacing in-person customer interactions, have been a headache for a while, we see the arrival of agentic AI, where fully automated agents - in the not so distant future - will be shopping and navigating the web on our behalf. And we are only a small step away from the AI bot making a payment. Apart from the convenience of moving into a machine to machine automated communication and execution world, the big question for merchants will be: "Is my AI bot engaging with the 'real' customer's AI bot, or an evil digital twin, a hacked bot that is going to defraud our business?"

The reality is that the arrival of AI in this space comes with a significant increase in the attack surface. New technology, simply put, triggers new risks. And the way to deal with this is to use AI on the other side, to monitor transactions, behaviour patterns and in the cyber security

space predict, identify and stop the evil AI bot, whilst enabling the efficient deployment of the good ones.

At the same time, what's the point of 'personalisation' if you face off against a customer's AI bot? A fraudulent bot with stolen credentials will buy whatever.

In the same context the role of digital wallets and by extension digital identity is becoming crucial for the merchant world. Digital wallets see ever increasing amounts of data and data equals revenue. But how can you monetise this data and ensure that people's demands for privacy are factored in? And does anyone ever really own their identity? Whilst the European digital identity wallet is coming - but it is still unclear when - customers might not really want to own their identity and rather have regulated financial institutions protect them and their data. Fraud and identity theft are critical risks where multi-modal biometrics will help to secure customer data and funds.

The PSD3 and Payment Services Regulation are also almost approved and will add another layer of transparency and consumer protection to the payment ecosystem.

But what we should ignore is the fact that Quantum Computing is also on the horizon, with varying estimates, but the need to work on Quantum resilience sooner rather than later. In the meantime, tokenisation across the entire card value chain is being worked on to



be ready by 2030. However, will that be enough if Quantum Computing becomes a scalable reality by this time?

Another key session covered cyber security and fraud. With the exponential growth of incidents, ranging from app scams, card not present fraud, phishing, smishing and vishing to ransomware attacks and trojans sitting unidentified in your systems for hundreds of days, the digital world has become a place of digital warfare – and the attackers are winning – so far.

In 2024 cybercrime has surpassed \$9.5 trillion¹ and financial institutions, businesses and critical infrastructures face an unprecedented level of state-sponsored and criminal cyberattacks.



This exponentially increasing cyber threat landscape has serious consequences.

Cyberattacks can lead to significant financial losses, whether that is through phishing, smishing, ransomware attacks, DDoS attacks, trojans or other malware. The result is reputational damage, as breaches erode customer trust and attract negative publicity. These attacks also trigger operational disruptions and expose sensitive customer information, with serious regulatory scrutiny and fines that follow. As a reminder, the European General Data Protection Regulation

(GDPR) has fines up to 4% of annual global turnover, whereas the EU Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA) in Europe can trigger fines of 2% of total worldwide turnover.

Legal consequences, such as lawsuits, can further harm those institutions that have been attacked, along with rising security costs to prevent future attacks. Additionally, cyberattacks affect stock prices, investor confidence, and customers moving away.

And the reasons for this can be found in aging infrastructure, fragmented security systems, and reactive defense strategies leave organisations vulnerable. Traditional security measures focus inward, aiming to protect the technology estate with security patches, encryption, tokenisation and other forms of belts and suspenders. Everyone is bracing for impact. The reality is that adversaries are using advanced reconnaissance, “land and expand” tactics and AI-driven attack methodologies to bypass conventional defences undetected. At the same time many businesses lack the minimum cyber essentials.

To not only survive but rather strive, a radical shift is needed.

Whilst today’s Cyber Threat Intelligence (CTI) solutions that aim to strengthen an organization’s cybersecurity posture by making security efforts more informed, this intelligence is only useful if someone can interpret and act on it. We often see too much data without good filtering, that overwhelms teams with irrelevant or duplicate information.

Instead we need to evolve to a new form of proactive, Direct Threat Intelligence (DTI) - tailored intelligence that visualises the actual real-time existential threats before they strike, enabling organisations to predict, prevent and monetise their cyber defence.

¹ M. Binder, “Cyberattacks will cost 9.5 trillion dollars in 2024”, Axiacore, <https://axiacore.com/blog/cyberattacks-will-cost-95-trillion-dollars-in-2024-928/#:~:text=Cybersecurity%20Ventures%20predicted%20cybercrime%20will,falling%20victim%20to%20-these%20attacks> [last accessed 28/3/2025]

This new approach of DTI is being spearheaded by cybersecurity innovator Blackwired, a company with a long pedigree and expertise in intelligence and counterintelligence collection in the cyber security domain.

Their technology delivers a very sophisticated system, where AI and machine learning analyse attack patterns and provide real-time threat monitoring. Creating specific DTI for an organisation, this is curated and automatically integrated it into its security stack, acting as an automated defense layer against incoming threats.



Another innovation of Blackwired is a new methodology – aligned with the way that cyber attackers operate – which replicates the attackers' behaviour pattern, moving from 'Aim' to 'Ready' and then to 'Fire', in short ARFi. This ARFi methodology enables to identify attack scenarios, so that we can understand a threat actor's approach to launching a cyberattack.

Blackwired also defines new types for risk measures such as Proximity, Observed Activity, and Risk Velocity being added to the menu. These risks can be monitored, allowing for a much more granular and detailed cyber risk assessment of an organisation.

Compared to existing Attack Surface Management (ASM), which represents the continuous process of identifying, monitoring, and securing all external-facing digital assets to reduce potential entry for attackers, the shift to

the actionable, tailored DTI and the deployment of the ARFi methodology deliver enhanced Attack Surface Management (sASM), enabling organisations to generate new revenue, boost customer acquisition and cut costs.

In a world of machine-to-machine cyberattacks, merchants as much as financial institutions must embrace intelligence-led cybersecurity to outmanoeuvre adversaries.

In a hyperconnected world, growing supply chain and third-party provider risks are becoming systemic issues where every business needs to rethink its resiliency, data privacy and security policies to adhere and comply with Regulations.

The combination of AI and Quantum Computing will result in levels of attacks that are unimaginable. Organisations that invest in DTI today are not only protecting their assets, they are securing their revenue going forward.

The future will belong to those institutions that move from reactive incident response to this innovative form of cyber threat prevention, creating opportunity for revenue growth across the board.



mpe 25: Elephants at the Intercontinental

By [Geoffrey Barraclough](#), *The Business of Payments*

The MPE 25 conference and exhibition held last week at the Berlin Intercontinental showed the European payment industry in good form. Delegate numbers were buoyant, sponsorship strong and there was plenty of innovation on display. MPE is my favourite conference. The organisers understand their audience and consistently deliver high quality, relevant content. MPE is a friendly event where people are happy to chat to strangers or take a meeting from a cold contact. The networking is unparalleled and vendors I spoke to were very happy with the volume of new sales leads.

Yet beneath the surface, the geo-political situation hung over this year's event like a malevolent cloud on the horizon. Rapidly deteriorating relations with the US and the evolving threat from Russia were live issues discussed intensely on the margins of the conference but largely ignored from the main stage. With a sense of irony, the keynote session was titled *"The Elephant in the Room"* but centred on artificial intelligence rather than how Europe should react if Trump tells Visa and Mastercard to turn off Poland.

The big two American schemes form the backbone of European merchant payments. 13 out of 20 eurozone markets rely on international cards at POS. Visa and Mastercard are pretty much the only way of making cross-border consumer transactions and the UK has the added risk of Mastercard [powering its domestic inter-bank system too](#).

The unthinkable has become thinkable and Europe knows it needs to move fast to secure strategic autonomy in payments. Putin

understood the risk of outsourcing payments to foreign institution. He was only able to invade Ukraine in 2022 because Russia had invested in its own domestic payment scheme following sanctions applied after the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Today's politics are terribly unfortunate for Visa and Mastercard, neither of whom have any responsibility for their government's unhelpful rhetoric. And I feel for their European execs who will be working hard to reassure our political leaders that they can continue to rely on American card schemes for critical national infrastructure.

In this context, the development of a European payment scheme becomes of strategic importance. Much is riding on the success of



wero, a payment scheme based on SEPA Instant Payments. Wero will start by consolidating successful domestic products operating today in Belgium, Netherlands and France.

The MPE conference mood is very supportive

to wero in principle but many people I spoke to had concerns about the implementation. Specific issues raised were worries that the transition from [Payconiq](#) (Belgium) is happening too quickly and that the replacement of iDEAL (Netherlands) by wero may improve functionality but will also drive-up costs to merchants. At a time when Mas tercard is making it easier to use your Dutch debit card online, this could result in iDEAL losing share.

UK banks are not part of wero. Instead, Britain needs to accelerate the build of a national payment scheme based on open banking and ensure that this is inter-operable with wero or whatever other solution the EU puts together.

Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDC) also promise resilient and independent means of consumer payments. Unlike the US, both the ECB and Bank of England are pursuing digital currencies and seem serious about getting a product to market. Erik Tak from the ECB told a breakout session that the bank wanted broad adoption of digital euro but was not looking for a huge market share. Resilience is the main objective. Acceptance will be mandatory which means that acquirers need to be able to onboard any merchant, not just those taking e-money today. Tak thought that Austria and Ireland could be early adopters because they don't have alternative schemes.

This leads us to a second elephant stalking the corridors of the Berlin Intercontinental - stable coins. Investors and fintech commentators are talking of little else but stable coins yet the technology was barely addressed at MPE. Merchants don't seem much interested and it's not clear whether there is much value for European businesses that want to sell products to European consumers. Unlike some other parts of the world, we already have instant settlement with A2A, we don't have a challenge paying gig workers and the vast majority of citizens have access to the banking system.

If you want something cheaper and faster than cards, wero and open banking payments are imminent. In any case, it's not clear that stablecoins will deliver lower cost transactions if you need to pay a fee to turn euros into stable dollars and another to move them back to euros again.

I suspect that the crypto industry agrees. Unlike previous years, there was very little crypto presence at MPE 25. While there's clearly a role for stable coins in cross-border money movement, this is likely more in the plumbing than on a merchant checkout page. For example, Thunes mentioned using stablecoins to meet internal operational challenges such as moving money at the weekend.

The third elephant at MPE was European competitiveness or lack of it. Strategic autonomy is easier if you're rich but the continent's poor record of productivity growth weighs heavily on consumer sales. After all, the payment industry is only as successful as its customers. If they grow, we grow.

I picked up a growing sense of frustration that European merchants are not as ambitious as the Americans. One acquirer told me that he'd built a Stripe-like product and sold it to all the major digital start-ups in his country. Unlike Stripe, which was able to invest in global expansion on the back of the explosive growth of its customers, this acquirer's customers were too timid to expand outside their home market. Result: these domestic digital platforms are now losing share to US technology giants such as Amazon and Shopify. These businesses benefit from massive economies of scale and show little interest processing via Europe's domestic acquirers.

Open banking is not an elephant. Everyone has been talking about it, often voicing their frustration with the poor quality of customer

experience, notably in Germany, and the slow pace of regulatory change, notably in the UK.

Lisa Scott from Truelayer, one of the market leaders in open banking payments, gave a good presentation. While conceding, that life was “not all a bed of roses at the moment”, the vendor confidently expects “mass adoption in the next 12 months.” The UK market is “about to hit the tipping point” with new merchants including Ryan Air (multi European markets), Just Eat, Lastminute.com (who are doing “millions of transactions” and are seeing 20% higher ATV with OB) and Papa Johns. According to Truelayer, 80% of eCom brands either offer OB or have it on the roadmap.

My view is that although open banking payments my well become mainstream at some point, there’s very little money to be made in providing technology that initiates transactions. While many in the industry are pinning their hopes on variable recurring payments (VRP) nobody ever got rich providing direct debits.

On the positive, the UK regulator is working on plans for “bank on file” which would allow open banking payments to be an option for one-click checkouts. And I’m told that PSD3 should fix the ongoing issues with poor UX in Europe.

Turning to payment infrastructure, merchants are finding the domain ever more complicated. This is due to the proliferation of alternative payment schemes, growth in cross-border commerce and increasingly widespread adoption of tokenisation. Merchants need a complex set of capabilities to ensure they are getting the best possible combination of low fraud, high acceptance rates and best commercial terms.

There is a live debate on whether it’s best to build these capabilities in-house, buy packaged software or use an out-sourced orchestration

platform. I moderated a good discussion on this subject with Ugur Cinar from Payrails, a software business founded by the former Delivery Hero payment team.

There are certainly a great many orchestration vendors offering increased control for merchants but there is no consensus on whether orchestration is a viable business model. There is a lively debate on how much merchants will pay for the freedom to dynamically route transactions with one delegate saying “If you’re not in the money flow, you can’t make money.”

James Lloyd from Juspay said that dynamic routing was much less complicated than many vendors were suggesting. Juspay has open sourced its orchestration capability and [made the code available on Github](#). Let me know what you think.

The conclusion is unsurprising. There is no right answer; different merchants need different solutions. And many merchants are too busy managing their business to worry about payment details. They are happy sending all their transactions to one vendor (eg Adyen) that bundles acquiring, processing, fraud screening, FX, pay-outs, token management, subscription management and so on through a single API.

Many speakers referenced AI but there were few tangible examples of its use beyond fraud screening, and AI has been used for this purpose for some years. Experts spoke of using large language models (LLM) to power chatbots that can deal faster and more effectively with customer service queries. Opinions differs on whether the bots yet do a better job than humans, as opposed to helping humans to a better job. One well informed delegate said that Klarna’s much hyped chatbot is “not working well yet.”

There is consensus that that LLMs are not yet

ready for regulated institutions as they still too make too many rookie mistakes. One speaker said that their experience showed 5-10% of queries are returning errors.

Dave Birch believes we are only 6-12 months away from pure AI to AI transactions and asked whether bots will really mess around with PANs or just send each other stablecoins. I want to work with a bot that directs transaction to my Amex for the rewards and insists on S75 and chargeback rights. Some panellists asked about how you would market products to a bot. The robots won't care about brand and should be hard(er) to fool by fraudsters.

With so much discussion focused on digital, it's important to remember that 70-80% of transactions are still made at POS. Payment terminals are not dead. I moderated a discussion on bringing value added services to small businesses through the new ranges of Android terminals. Alan Moss from Newland led the debate with a presentation featuring a [new proposition from Nexi in Italy](#) which brings several easily accessible services to merchants, including gift cards and loyalty.

While it's great news that provisioning new products has become easier, I suspect it will be a challenge to get SMEs to pay for them. Peter Landsfjord from [Gifted](#), a Swedish vendor that works with Zalando and others, clearly explained why all merchants should offer giftcards. This is not controversial, but persuading SMEs to subscribe to a service will be harder.

Finally, the start-up competition is always a highlight of the show. Here are the three finalists:

The winner was [Securely Group](#) from Australia who have a patented solution for using people's

social graph linked to bankIDs to authenticate users. This could be helpful where KYC is needed (eg marketplaces) or where trust levels between buyers/sellers are low (e.g. selling a second-hand car).

[TMU Management](#) offers insurance policies for credit risk of delayed delivery merchants. There are big numbers here. For example, Elavon Europe's last accounts showed \$3bm of airline tickets sold but not delivered. An insurance product would allow a much wider range of acquirers to onboard high-risk merchants. Obviously, the usual moral hazard questions apply.

[Trudenty](#) offers protection against first party fraud by building a consumer trust index, shared between acquirers and issuers, which can be built into fraud scoring. It's in pilot with Auchan and Worldline.

That's a wrap for MPE 25. See you again in Berlin next year!

For the latest news and comment on European merchant payments, [sign up for my monthly newsletter](#).

Talking Payments: Key insights from Merchant Payment Ecosystem 2025.

By [Gary Munro](#), Vice President, Payments at Consult Hyperion, Consulting by Fime

Gary Munro, Vice President, Payments Consulting at Consult Hyperion, Consulting by Fime, summarizes the key discussions and insights from Merchant Payment Ecosystem (MPE) 2025 - Europe's largest payment acceptance conference.

With over 1,400 attendees, including merchants and payment experts, this year's MPE Berlin provided the industry with the opportunity to collaborate and participate in numerous insightful discussions.

I was honored to represent Consult Hyperion at one of the key industry conferences of the year alongside my colleagues, including David Birch and Arnaud Crouzet, as well as our partners at Fime, Tim Allen, Patricia Winter and Sihame Baïche.

This industry is changing rapidly and I'm delighted to share some interesting insights and my key takeaways from the event.

Get ready for AI in payments.

Arguably the headline topic of the event was artificial intelligence. It has the potential to completely transform the way we transact and bring unparalleled efficiency to the payments ecosystem, but in equal measure it could bring about radical changes to the threat landscape that cannot be ignored.

David Birch, Consult Hyperion Global Ambassador and Co-Chair of MPE, kickstarted

the conference with a fascinating panel that explored AI and non-human customers. He discussed the implications that radical AI use cases could have on retail payments, a theme that continued throughout the conference.

It is therefore no surprise that payments resilience in the face of AI was central to many of our discussions. Following the introduction of the Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA) earlier this year, financial entities now must be prepared for cyber-attacks, especially in this turbulent geopolitical climate.



Merchants control the payment experience.

A stark reminder of this geopolitical climate was given to us by Levgen Zaigraiev from Ukraine's PrivatBank. I moderated the day one session "The Evolution of a Shop", in which he gave us insight into how digital payments are helping keep his nation's economy moving during the war. Central to this, he attested, was SoftPOS. It provided easy and affordable access to the digital economy and has been a valuable lifeline for both merchants and their customers.

The importance of merchant sovereignty was echoed by keynotes from Petri Ahti from Market Pay and Marie Herbiet from Mastercard, who both spoke on the value of omnichannel payments.

Merchants remained the focus on day two of

the event where I co-chaired a merchant-only workshop alongside the CEO of payabl., Kristaps Zips. The workshop, “Decoding Consumer Behavior – What Drives Conversion and What Kills Them?”, considered if there can be too much choice in how to pay. In what was a well-rounded discussion, many of the merchants fed back that a full roster of payment solutions can potentially come across as overwhelming to customers.

The key is to give enough options to ensure there is at least one that the customer is comfortable with, without providing too many and risk making the checkout experience overly complex. Payment options must be optimized for the sector the merchant is in, and the average customer profile that visits the retail site, be it online or in store.

Digital wallets are the future.

Many of the representatives in our workshop also stressed that accepting digital wallets is now a necessity for them. Consumers are increasingly demanding digital first solutions, and merchants recognize the seamless checkout experience they can provide. To many that we spoke with, a digital first solution that reduces cart abandonments while also mitigating fraud is a no brainer. Delivering on this promise is now the challenge.

Arnaud Crouzet had the opportunity to share Consult Hyperion’s expertise on this topic in his presentation “European Digital Wallets: Innovation, Interoperability & Strategic Insights for Merchants”. He spoke on the enhanced checkout experience they provide, then went on to explore the added value integrations digital wallet services could provide. At the heart of this is the upcoming EUDI regulation that enables a universal pan-continental digital ID wallet.

Integrating payments and identity solutions

within the same digital wallet is unsurprisingly a key priority for many of the global titans in these ecosystems. A lively panel discussion followed Arnaud’s presentation in which experts debated if such solutions were the remit of the so called “Big Tech” companies such as Apple and Google, or if there was a place for a more collaborative approach.

The power of collaboration with Fime & Consult Hyperion.

One of my personal highlights from the conference was the dinner hosted by Consult Hyperion. A select group of MPE speakers were invited to join us for a special event where we were able to discuss the emerging challenges and opportunities within the payments landscape.

Tim Allen welcomed our guests with his insights into the ecosystem. I then delved into how Fime’s acquisition of Consult Hyperion enhanced our ability to support our clients around the globe in navigating the rapidly evolving landscape of our industry according to their unique local needs. Readers can learn more in this video. David Birch ended the lovely evening with a fascinating talk that explored the past, present and future of payments.

Keeping our finger on the pulse.

Conferences like MPE Berlin are important for the ecosystem as they encourage innovation through insightful discussions and networking. I always enjoy representing Consult Hyperion at these events, meeting our customers and sharing our experiences across payments and digital identity.

We are already excited about MPE 2026!

mpe 2025 – Key Takeaways from a Merchant

By [Adrian Hawliczek](#), Senior Expert Acquiring @ OMV

Attending mpe (merchant payments ecosystem) conference in Berlin for the second time reinforced my initial impression: This is THE must-attend event for merchants interested in payments, eager to stay ahead of the latest trends and innovations. If you missed it (or even if you were there), here are my personal and subjective (!) key takeaways - summarized in six findings - based on three days filled with insightful discussions, top-tier presentations, and engaging roundtables with industry experts.

Finding #1: Data and AI as Key Drivers of Success

AI was, unsurprisingly, a dominant topic at #mpe2025. However, with the increasing adoption of AI models and their sometimes questionable outputs (e.g., Google's AI-infamous suggestion to use glue to attach cheese to pizza), it has become evident that beyond the model itself, the quality of data is crucial. Following the Gartner Hype Cycle's 'Slope of Enlightenment,' discussions centered on data-centric AI. Fraudsters deliberately inserting backdoor-ridden code into AI training data highlights the urgent need for more awareness regarding AI data sources - beyond just data protection concerns.

| Beyond the AI model itself, the quality of data is crucial.

Cost reduction in payments was another hot topic. While AI-driven fraud prevention is well-known, Visa showcased impressive figures

on prevented fraud and resulting savings for merchants and banks. Data also plays a crucial role in optimizing payment processes. Payment orchestrators and gateways leverage AI-driven data analysis to dynamically determine the optimal routing of transactions based on authorization rates, processing times, and cost per transaction - eliminating the need for manually maintained rule tables.

Even after optimizing payment processes, costs such as **card scheme fees** remain a significant concern. Companies like CMPSI and Torus presented data-driven solutions to help merchants and acquirers ensure accurate fee applications. A shout-out to [Kirill Lisitsyn](#) for an insightful presentation and discussion on this topic!

Finding #2: AI Agents Are Going Mainstream

The rapid advancements in LLMs and NLP are transforming payment initiation. Instead of manually entering PANs and IBANs, consumers might soon simply instruct Alexa to transfer funds, book a hotel, or pay an invoice. A live demo by [Simon Redfern](#) from the Open Banking Project showcased 'Opey,' an AI-powered API assistant, illustrating the future of Personal Financial Management (PFM). The assistant's polite insistence on being asked 'kindly' before transferring money to a fictional wedding savings account was a highlight!

| Will we need a 'Know Your Agent' (KYA) framework, akin to KYC?

However, the rise of AI agents raises critical questions: How can a PSP (or its AI agent) ensure a payment order's validity if it's not authorized by a human? Will we need a 'Know Your Agent' (KYA) framework, akin to KYC? Identification remains a key issue, with growing adoption of **Digital Identity** initiatives - such as Europe's Digital Identity Wallet - positioning itself as an

ideal tool for regulatory compliance, including SCA (3DS) in e-/m-commerce.

Finding #3: Europe's Search for Card Rail Alternatives

Merchants are keen on reducing payment-related costs, making initiatives like Wero, based on instant A2A payments, highly anticipated. Given the recent geopolitical tensions between the US and Europe and the latter's reliance on US payment infrastructure, European regulators are fueling these initiatives to reclaim payment sovereignty - backed by legal frameworks like the Instant Payments Regulation (IPR).

| To drive adoption, alternative payment methods must outperform existing ones in terms of cost, speed, security, and convenience.

Interestingly, the Digital Euro remained largely absent from #mpe2025 discussions, as its benefits remain unclear. Existing SEPA infrastructure already offers sovereignty, and the focus should be on integrating what's available. ISX Financial, for example, presented an **Open Banking** Value-Added Services model that enhances merchant support with payment notifications, reconciliation, and (partial) refunds.

To drive adoption, alternative payment methods must outperform existing ones in terms of cost, speed, security, and convenience. **A2A payments** have strong potential, evidenced by Visa and Mastercard's significant investments in related Open Finance products.

Finding #4: Payments as a Value Driver, Not a Cost Factor

Failed payments don't just cause customer frustration; they result in lost sales, diminished trust, and reputational damage. As [Davnit Singh](#) put it at #mpe2025:

| "A payment failure isn't just a technical issue; it's a business crisis."

Providing customers with a frictionless yet secure checkout experience - leveraging **Click to Pay**, **passkeys**, and preferred payment methods - can be a decisive competitive advantage. Many consumers abandon purchases due to slow checkouts or unsupported payment methods.

| Payment data bridges internal data silos, linking customer touchpoints across multiple channels.

Payment data also bridges internal data silos, linking customer touchpoints across multiple channels. Ikea and Elavon demonstrated how Elavon's Payments Core 365 enables this. The importance of **merchant wallets** in maintaining strong customer relationships and accessing payment data was emphasized throughout the event, with references to popular super-apps like WeChat Pay and Alipay+. With the rise of network tokenization and flexible card usage (e.g., Visa Flexible Credential, Mastercard One Credential), merchants must manage diverse payment entry points while minimizing sensitive data exposure (GDPR, PCI DSS). Using Payment Account Reference (PAR) for example could help link tokenized and PAN-based transactions securely.

Finding #5: The Rise of 'Phygital' Payments

Although I dislike the term 'phygital,' it aptly describes current payment trends. Unlike many industries that have gone fully digital, payments still rely on dedicated hardware like POS devices. While the music industry for example abandoned CDs in favor of mobile apps, digital payment cards still replicate the traditional chip + PIN model.

| Payments still rely on dedicated hardware like POS devices.

However, **SoftPOS** technology is changing the game. Apple's recent NFC unlock has accelerated adoption, signaling the decline of traditional POS terminals. Mastercard showcased 'Tap to More,' extending SoftPOS capabilities to card activation, transaction verification, P2P transfers, and wearable top-ups - ushering in a new era of payment convenience.

Finding #6: Innovation Thrives Even in the Hardest Times

The most emotional and inspiring moment of

#mpe2025 was [Serhii Makarenko](#)'s presentation on PrivatBank, Ukraine's leading merchant acquirer. Despite conflict-related destruction - 19% of branches lost and 1.5 million customers displaced - PrivatBank restored 81% of POS terminals within a year, ensuring resilience under extreme conditions.

Their innovative solutions, such as Purchase with CashBack (PwCB), SoftPOS backups during blackouts, and QR code invoices, kept essential payments running. **If they can innovate under such adversity, what's stopping the rest of us?**

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Coverage from our partners & participants

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Insights from mpe 2025 – key highlights and trends

mpe's key media partner, The Paypers, recently launched the Buy Now, Pay Later Report 2025 – Providers, Trends, and Key Aspects for Merchants and PSPs and is available to download for FREE 📄 <https://bit.ly/44mqXFP> .

🔊 The report deep-dives into one of the hottest topics in the payments industry today, BNPL, and tackles key-aspects of the industry, including #trends, #fraud, and #regulations.

Learn more about the latest developments and the adoption of Buy Now, Pay Later, with valuable insights from our esteemed contributors on:

- ✅ The future of BNPL in the payments ecosystem;
- ✅ BNPL market dynamics and key trends;
- ✅ Industry-specific insights and challenges in BNPL;
- ✅ Responsible lending and the main types of fraud in the BNPL market.

📊 What's more? Keep an eye on the global providers in this space with an in-house exhaustive infographic, categorised based on their region of operation (Europe, the Americas, MEA, and APAC) and on their business model (B2B, B2C, and B2B2C).

The report is designed to bring great value whether you're a merchant looking to expand into new markets and unlock new revenue, a solution provider looking for new partners, or a #payments enthusiast who wants to learn more about the adoption of this alternative payment method.

Grab your FREE copy of the report here 📄 <https://bit.ly/44mqXFP> .



Q&A with Marius Galdikas at ConnectPay: The rise of embedded finance – what it means for businesses & consumers 🖱️




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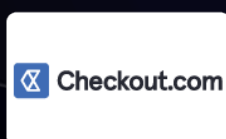


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