

Tech Tip Tuesday—January 10, 2023

Reminder: Boot Camp is at the end of this month

If you haven't already registered for the upcoming boot camp (in less than 3 weeks), please do so soon!

At the time of this Tech Tip, we still have some spots available, but they are going fast, and 2/3 of the spots are already taken.

You can register for the Boot Camp here:

<https://www.liverycoach.com/Jan2023/registration.pdf>

A note about SMS and cost

As we all know, in October 2021 ZipWhip announced that they were shutting down their integration in late 2022 (which was extended at the last minute to late 2023). At that time, we researched alternatives and selected TextLine as a replacement, based on cost and international reach.

While we all were very happy with ZipWhip's monthly flat-rate cost when it was introduced back in 2014, since that time there have been many changes in the SMS industry, not the least of which is many mobile carriers now charging per text to deliver messages. It's no surprise that ZipWhip chose not to continue their product.

For our smallest SMS users (those who send 2500 messages/mo or less), the cost of Textline is very similar to what ZipWhip was. For heavy SMS users, the cost will be more—in some cases, much more. Keep in mind that Livery Coach doesn't set the price nor control the price.

When we searched for ZipWhip Alternatives, some had costs of \$0.050 to \$0.100 or more per message in addition to a monthly fee (which sometimes included some messages). Textline's price of \$0.0154 was the lowest per message price we found. Nevertheless, if you are sending tens of thousands of messages a month, your bill will be in the hundreds of dollars a month, more than ZipWhip's flat \$99/mo. But keep that in perspective—even if you send 10 messages/trip (confirmation, chauffeur info, status, survey, etc.) you are still adding less than \$0.16 in cost to that trip).

If you want to try to reduce your SMS bill, we suggest that you review your message templates for SMS and maybe trim them down to ensure that most of them will fit in the 160 character SMS limit. While Livery Coach sends the entire message to Textline as a single message, if it's too long, then Textline will split it, which will count as 2 (or more) messages. We have also discovered that at least one text combination (`\n`) will cause the message to be split, so we are adding code to eliminate those splits.

Finally, keep in mind that most mobile numbers have an email equivalent (for example, you can send an email-to-text to an AT&T phone at [number]@txt.att.net) so that's another way to get around the cost.

Hope that helps.

International Arrivals

Many chauffeured transportation companies like to charge a bit more when picking up a passenger arriving on an international flight, since the wait time typically can be a lot longer (since you are waiting

for the passenger to clear customs and immigration, and this wait is often unpredictable, so you can't just get there late.)

Livery Coach offers a way to automatically add this charge, so you can't forget, but it requires proper setup.

First of all, you need to identify all the "foreign" airports that, when you are picking up a passenger who arrived *from* that airport needs to clear customs and immigration at your pickup airport.

This is done by navigating to Setup->Maintain->Airports and checking the box next to "Flights from here go through customs when arriving."

General		Terminal List	
Airport Name:	Airport Code:	International Airport Code:	Usage (%):
Narita International Airport	NRT		0
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Verifiable			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flights from here go through customs when arriving.		Meeting Procedure: <input type="text"/>	
Location Address:			
Narita International Airport (NRT)			
City:	State/Province:	Country:	
Tokyo	JA	Japan	
Time Zone:	LTG Time		
(GMT +09:00) Japan Time	0 Mins		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Display in Website Airport List			

The system will then look at Arriving From airport code in the Flight/Train Info screen to determine if the flight is arriving from a "foreign" airport.

Flight / Train Information

Currently Modifying Pick Up Information. This Flight/Train Is Arriving. Total # Of Stops = 2

Airport/Train Station:	Airline/Train:	Flight/Train #:	Terminal:	Arriving From:	Departure Time:	Airline/Train Phone:
JFK	JL	8006	1	NRT	01/14 10:05	(800) 525-3663

<= Operated By Clear Code Share

The final step is making sure that you have an appropriate charge/fee, and it's set up to automatically apply when the flight is arriving from an International location.

Once you have the charge set up Setup->Maintain->Charges/Fees, make sure that charge is selected, and then click Assign.

Select "International Pickup" in the left column, and "All" on the right, and then click Add. You will see "International Pickup: (Auto)" in the Assigned window.

Assign Charges and Fees

Type: International Arrival Charge Name

Filter Categories: Airport, Area, Billing Account, Category, Company, Contact, Country, Date/Time Range, Day Of The Week, Driver, Farm-In, Farm-Out, Group Name, Holiday, How Trip Booked, International Pickup, Location, Meeting Procedure

Unit: 1.00

Auto Populate Reservation Charges

Assigned And

Search: International Pickup: (Auto) Charges and Fees - Assigned

Charges and Fees - Assigned	Unit	Quantity
International Pickup: (Auto)	1.00	0

Buttons: Add, Update, And, Remove

If you want to have any exceptions to this rule, they can be added as appropriate.

Now when you create a new reservation and your passenger has to clear customs, your International Arrival Charge will automatically be added to the reservation.