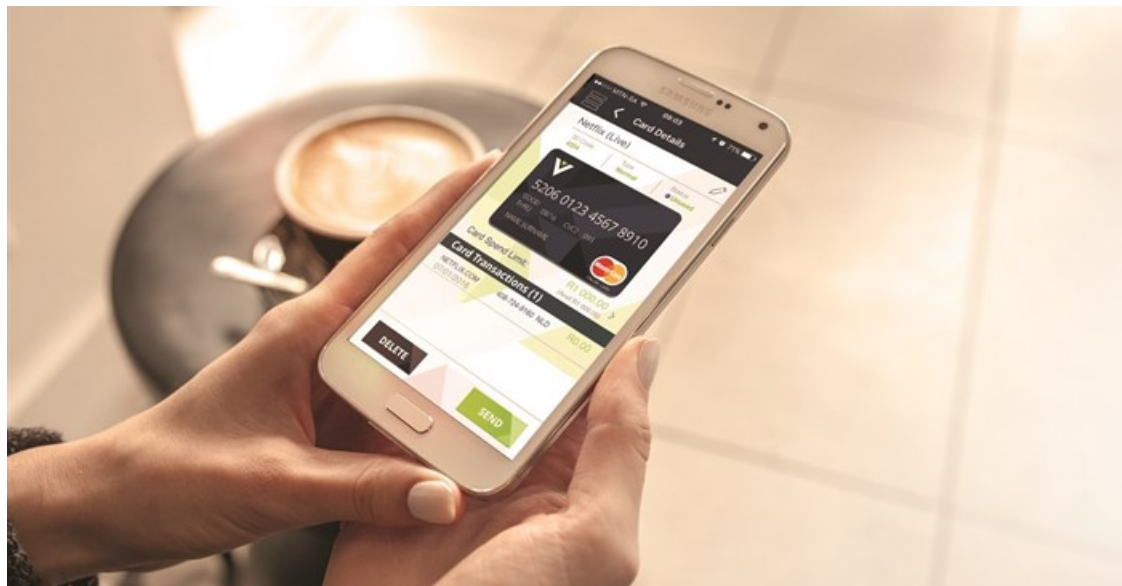


A virtual solution for financial inclusion

By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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The mobile payment space is an exciting one right now; and with on-demand services like UBER and Netflix gaining constant popularity the demand for online payment services is set to soar. The overriding concern however is security.



Enter [VCpay](#) - a mobile application seeking to provide a secure online payment solution for consumers. Using MVC (Mobile Virtual Card) technology, VCpay enables mobile devices to generate virtual cards offline and without access to a mobile phone network. However, observing that the growth in financial inclusion was not and is not moving at the same speed VCpay claimed a new position outside of just security, by providing an accessible and safe option for those looking to pay online, without a credit card or even a bank account.

We caught up with José Soares, their global head of marketing with a deep-rooted involvement in the VCpay app's development, to talk fintech app design and strategy.

■ Fintech development is booming. How important is a service like VCpay in a country like South Africa?

José Soares: Not important, but rather essential when you consider the following:

With the tremendous growth in mobile telephony and more importantly smartphone penetration steadily increasing

(currently at around 31%), most people have access to the internet, to e-commerce, and m-commerce. The growth of services like this means that these individuals need a safe, smart way to pay, and VCpay is just that. It connects anybody with a simple solution to make (card not present) online payments. And in an emerging market like South Africa's where financial inclusion is still a challenge, VCpay presents a solution for those who don't even have a bank account.

However, the boom in electronic payments comes with a flip side too - security! The more we need or want to pay online, the more times we will compromise our credit or debit cards by putting the card information and our bank balance at risk.

VCpay provides an 'in-control' solution to credit card payments - you manage the amount, the risk and the usage. One solution that lets you create cards for services like UBER, Netflix, ShowMax, PSN, Xbox, and, and, and.

■ ***What is your favourite VCpay app feature?***

Soares: For me, it is the ability to create cards, label them and use them to for all my subscription services. It gives me a sense of control and relief, because I don't have to share my credit card details to every Tom, Dick and Harry. I make a specific card for a specific need, with a specific amount. And when I'm done or no longer want or need the service I can terminate the card with a click of a button.



The VCpay team

■ ***What is your design and development strategy?***

Soares: We have an agile approach to both our design and development. We constantly communicate and unravel the patterns of usage within the platform and its customers. This gives us insight in to how people want to use the app and what they need to use in the app. We are not looking to provide people with just a tool, we want to provide them with a service that enhances and embraces the payment process, as a part of what they need to get done in their daily tasks.

This sees us go through rapid design and development cycles, to test and deploy new features and enhancements. We believe in the power and importance of our users, so listening to them and exploring the impact of the changes we make on our audience is quintessential to success.

■ ***In your opinion, what are the fundamentals of great app design?***

Soares: Simplicity! Take me straight to the primary function or need that attracted me to download the app in the first place. Walk me through the process and let me have the least amount of action to perform the core app/service function. How do you achieve this? By listening to those who use the service, and delivering on changes that enhance the elements that work, discarding those that complicate and aggravate.

■ ■ What has feedback been like thus far?

Soares: The feedback has been nothing short of awesome. When aligned to services like UBER or the app stores, we see a sharp rise in adoption and usage, and the service quickly becomes a daily tool. From a business perspective, the interest and operations are equally as extensive. Our service is an enabler and an aggregator for merchants looking for a way to get their customers to spend in an easy and quick manner, without having to adopt or integrate new payment tools.

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