Twint, the Swiss mobile payment solution, has received a massive boost through the introduction of Worldline as a major shareholder. The widening of the shareholder base outside Switzerland may give the company what it needs to establish itself in competition with global tech giants such as Apple.

The deal, which settled the sale of SIX’s payment solutions business to Worldline, will also make the French company a major shareholder of Twint. A decision that has been greeted with renewed optimism at the mobile payment solution provider.

Worldline will own a fifth of Twint and become the third large shareholder together with SIX and Postfinance. The French will get their stake via a capital increase, according to information obtained by finews.com. Twint will be owned by SIX (26.5 percent), Postfinance (26.5 percent), a group of major Swiss banks (26.5 percent), plus Worldline (20 percent).

Remarkable Development Online

Taking such a major stake in Twint may come as a surprise, because the payment app so far has been a purely Swiss solution. While credit cards, Apple as well as Samsung Pay are accepted globally, Twint isn’t.

And still, the app has developed remarkably over the past 12 months. More than 800,000 users have signed up to the service. But while they aren’t yet buying their groceries with Twint on a scale the company had hoped for, it has developed into a major force in online shopping, thanks to the QR code.

Statement of Intent

There are mainly two reasons why Worldline has made such a strong statement in taking a fifth of the Swiss solution provider. Firstly, Twint is seen as an alternative to the global non-finance giants such as Apple, Samsung and Google muscling into the field of payment services. Secondly, Twint is unique in the sense that rival banking groups – including the big banks UBS and Credit Suisse – have joined forces to establish a common service solution.

The pooling of resources by banks has made a lasting impression on the Worldline management: «Much as Twint, we firmly believe in the potential of mobile payment solutions, in particular, if they are supported by local banks,» said Worldline CEO Gilles Grapinet last week.

Perfect Partner for Expansion
Thus, it is more than just speculation to assume that Worldline has plans of its own with Twint. Those plans though would have to be pan-European and would need to involve further banks. And to achieve such a widening of audience, Worldline is the perfect partner.

Worldline’s biggest shareholder is Atos, a banking software giant with a strong emphasis on the digital transformation. If Atos were to integrate Twint into its digital offering would enhance the potential for the Swiss solution manifold.

Of course, so far, these are ideas only. Twint and Worldline haven’t yet said what the new major shareholder will mean for the company.