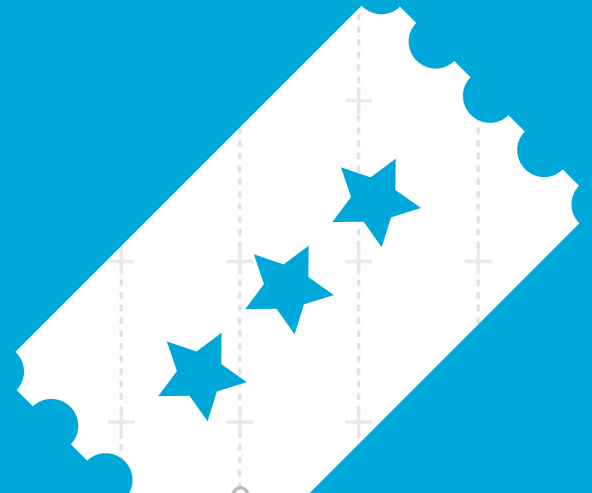# HOW TO

INCREASE YOUR ONLINE TICKET SALES

WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

As a business that sells tickets, keeping your sales up and finding new revenue opportunities is a huge challenge. But what if we told you that maximizing your existing sales and revenue channels could be just as impactful? In fact, there is so much you can do to streamline your existing business processes around increasing sales.

When it comes to selling more tickets, the secret is to focus on your customers; in simple terms, how can you make it as easy as possible for your customers to purchase a ticket? How can you give them a positive user experience that will make them feel good about making a purchase, and encourage them to return in the future?

In this white paper we cover the top ways you can optimize your customers' experience and increase your conversion rates. We focus both on your customers' journey throughout your website and touchpoints and on how your internal processes can contribute to their positive experience by being more efficient and easier to manage.
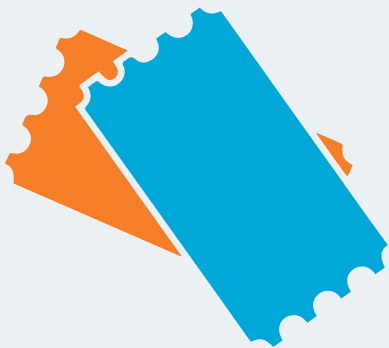
IMPROVING YOUR CUSTOMERS' WEBSITE JOURNEY

When thinking about your customers' journey through your site, always focus on making it as easy as possible for them to make a ticket purchase. Optimizing their journey ranges from ensuring your site is responsive to providing them with an intuitive user flow.

In this section we take you through every step of the way, covering each element of the user journey.

1. Increasing your site's speed and performance

Nearly 57% of visitors will abandon a page if it takes longer than three seconds to load. If this is the first experience your users have of your site, you are off to a bad start. Ultimately, a slow site could be costing you considerable missed out ticket sales and revenue.

Online ticketing sites are particularly prone to slower performance due to the many integrations involved in the process of selling tickets, so it is especially crucial that you ensure your website speed is optimal. Look into your hosting options and upgrade if necessary. Ideally your site pages should load in under a second.
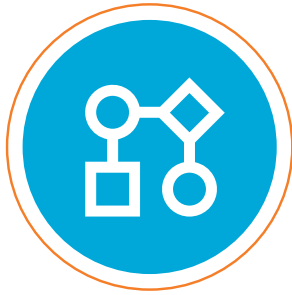
2. Ensuring a seamless user experience

Our websites are fluid, so our processes and workflows need to match. — Brad Frost, web designer, speaker, and consultant

Once your users are on your site, how can you make it as easy as possible for them to find what they need? The easier, the more likely they are to make a purchase. Think of ways to make the user journey as smooth and intuitive as possible, mapping out several alternatives and testing them to determine which one is best. This is an extremely critical, but often overlooked, step of developing a website.

When thinking about user experience also consider your branding: does the entire site and checkout process accurately represent your brand? How can you make your visitors associate the experience of being on your website with their experience of your facility or event?

In addition, is this experience consistent across touchpoints and devices? For example, is the user experience on your site consistent with that of your POS, kiosk and mobile channels?

3. Optimizing for mobile

Part of improving your customers' experience of your site is ensuring it is mobile-responsive. According to Gartner, in 2017 mobile commerce will equal 50% of all digital commerce revenue, so if your site is not already optimized for mobile you could be missing out on significant revenue. Mobile-first design is no longer a nice-to-have, but a must-have.

Of course, this includes ensuring that the checkout process is simple and mobile-friendly, without excluding any of the capabilities of the desktop design, such as product variants.

Another aspect is enabling tickets to be generated in your customers' desired format. This may include a downloadable ticket PDF, or a text message with a link to access the ticket. The easier you make it for your customers to save their ticket, the more satisfied they will be.

4. Implementing a simple and intuitive checkout process

27% of online shoppers have abandoned an order due to a too long or complicated checkout process. If your checkout process becomes a frustrating experience for your customers, they will leave without purchase.

There are several ways you can make your checkout process as simple as possible:

- ⊘ Try and keep the checkout process to as few pages as possible, ideally one.
- ⊘ Reduce the number of form fields customers are required to fill in. For example, allow them to check a box if their billing and shipping addresses match.
- ⊘ Remove any steps of the checkout process that aren't absolutely necessary.
- ⊘ Allow users to check out as guests if they wish to, rather than requiring them to create an account.

Other things you can consider in relation to your checkout process are payment providers; are you accepting the forms of payment your customers require or desire? Should you look into adding new ones, such as Apple Pay?

Finally, when it comes to your checkout process, design is incredibly important. Customers will feel more comfortable making a purchase if the site is well designed and mobile-compatible, as an outdated-looking site will give them the impression that it is not secure. Always ensure that your checkout pages are responsive and have an up-to-date design.

5. Increasing the value of customer accounts

Most business models have focused on self interest instead of user experience. — Tim Cook, CEO at Apple

Although creating an account should be an optional step for customers, it does provide a great opportunity to build customer loyalty and encourage return visitors.

The most important thing to keep in mind here is that account creation isn't geared towards collecting lead data for your sales team. As with every other step of the journey, customer accounts should be ways for you to benefit your customers, not the other way around.

Each customer's account should be a central hub for them to check their purchase information, find and re-download tickets where necessary and keep track of shipping and delivery.

You could also offer special deals and discounts to account owners, or implement a point-accumulation program to encourage future purchases or other actions. For example, you could award points every time a user completes a review or shares content on social media. These are all incentives that will keep you in your customers' mind and encourage them to choose you, and not a competitor, for future purchases.

6. Upselling and cross-selling

The reason it seems that price is all your customers care about is that you haven't given them anything else to care about. — Seth Godin, American author, entrepreneur, marketer, and public speaker

The checkout process also provides great opportunities to generate additional revenue through upselling and cross-selling. You can do this by encouraging customers to purchase upgraded versions of your products, or by recommending relevant products.

Clearly display the upgrade options and recommended products as one of the steps of your checkout process and include positive ratings and "most popular" tags to make them more attractive and give them additional credibility.

Upselling and cross-selling is particularly effective when coupled with personalization, which is the next item on our list. Through personalization you can ensure that relevant recommendations are automatically generated depending on the item being purchased, increasing the chance that customers will purchase them or upgrade.

7. Implementing personalization

Personalization is fast becoming a key element of any web strategy, with marketers reporting a 19% uplift in their sales thanks to personalization initiatives. And online ticketing sites are ideally suited to personalization initiatives.

A great way of implementing personalization on your site is to include relevant recommended products on each page. For example, if you are selling tickets to a festival, a relevant product could be a dining pass or a tour. You can set up recommended products by assigning categories across your site content and dynamically implementing them on each product page.

Personalization can also be applied to content as part of your content marketing strategy. This is an area where you could take advantage of analytics to help you determine what kind of content is most popular with your target audience, and focus your efforts on that.

By including personalization elements on your site you are effectively tailoring the user experience to each of your customers and pushing them in the right direction towards making a purchase.

8. Offering alternative ticket purchasing channels

According to Econsultancy, companies offering more touchpoints across channels are able to convert sales at a 2.5 times greater rate. Two great examples of touchpoints relevant to Ticketing are point-of-sale systems and kiosks.

Point-of-sale (POS) systems and kiosks are complementary channels that can help you sell additional tickets. A POS is a system that you can use to sell tickets on-location, normally using a tablet and a card reader. You can use a POS system to set up a pop-up store anywhere, for example at a festival or a trade show. What a great way to generate additional revenue!

A kiosk is more user-driven and can be placed in relevant locations (for example your venue, an airport or a train station) to empower customers to purchase tickets on their own.

The most important aspect to consider here is that your kiosk and POS systems have a similar user experience as your site. Ideally, users should be able to receive either a printed or a digital QR ticket. This solution is ideal for customers who are making a last-minute purchase, but you could also use it to target potential customers at other events or venues.

9. Providing great customer service

> A glitzy web and unique product is not enough to be successful selling online. What it takes is superior customer service and a customer experience that provides unique value. — USA Today

Finally, great customer service could give your users the final nudge they need to make a purchase. Typically, a customer will contact customer service when they are having an issue making a purchase, or when they are experiencing a problem with a previous purchase. In both cases, a positive customer experience could make a huge difference not only to their ability to make the purchase, but also to the likelihood that they will return to your site in the future.

Ultimately your aim here is to delight your customers; even if a customer is experiencing negative issues on your site, a positive interaction with your support team could radically shift their experience from a negative to a positive one.

Another thing to keep in mind is to make your customers' experience as memorable as possible, to help define your brand and remain in your customers' consciousness. This includes ensuring that your messaging is consistent across online and in-person communications. Is your website's design and user journey consistent with that they experience when attending your events?

OPTIMIZING YOUR INTERNAL BUSINESS PROCESSES

When it comes to increasing ticket sales, your own internal processes are just as important as your customer-focused ones; after all, how you manage your business processes will have a direct impact on what you are able to deliver to your customers.

By optimizing your internal processes, you can significantly speed up your backend workflows and have a positive impact on your users' experience by delivering tickets faster. In this section we go through the main elements involved in this process.

1. Thinking about your content architecture

Making the simple complicated is commonplace. Making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity. — Charles Mingus

The most important element when designing your website is your content architecture, which refers to the way all your site content is organized and structured. The best content architectures are set up according to an organization's unique goals and objectives. This is a truly important and yet often overlooked step of building a website, and will have an immense impact on your future internal processes and user journeys, giving you much more flexibility and efficiency.

When designing your content architecture, think about what your key objectives are (in this case, selling more tickets), and map out your top five or ten user workflows. Once you do this, you can plan your entire content architecture around them, to make it as easy and efficient as possible for those particular workflows to be delivered.

Also try and make your content architecture as intuitive as possible and avoid hard-coding content as much as you can, so that any non-technical users, such as content editors, can easily update the site whenever needed.

The same applies to integrations. With time, you will undoubtedly need to update and add new integrations to your site, so ensure that your content architecture allows for the flexibility and scalability needed to accommodate this.

A well-planned content architecture will not only deliver a better user flow for your customers, but it will also make it as easy as possible for your content editors to build, edit and populate the site. This will increase efficiency both internally and externally, ensuring that tickets are generated and delivered as quickly as possible.

2. Leveraging data insights

> *For every $20 you spend on web analytics tools, you should spend $80 on the brains to make sense of the data.* — Jeff Sauer, Jeffanalytics.

Finally, paying attention to your metrics will give you insight into how your site is performing and, most importantly, how your sales are performing. Sales data will offer you a good understanding of what improvements are needed to make it as easy as possible for your customers to make a purchase. Data analysis is an incredibly important step when optimizing your strategy, and is most effective when done consistently, whether that is daily, weekly or monthly.

On the design side, tools such as Google Analytics can give you key insights into the sorts of user flows customers are taking through your site; do these align with the user flows you would like them to take? Are users able to easily find content? Do any of your landing pages have higher-than-normal bounce rates, and if so, why? Are users leaving your site without converting, and if so, where?

You should also be able to generate and analyze data relating to all online ticket sales, so if your eCommerce solution doesn't provide this you could be missing out on key insights. What products are performing best? How are your special promotions performing? What's your average order size? Could you provide any special offers based on this insight to encourage higher-revenue sales?

There are many metrics you could track according to your specific workflows and strategies, but some key ones are:

Conversion rate by landing page

Looking at your conversions by landing page will show you what pages are performing best; is there a particular product or promotion page that is highly effective? Has any page's performance increased or decreased over time, and why? Could the success of high-performing pages be replicated on low-performing pages?

Per-session value

Knowing your average session value is a great way of establishing which of your products are most saleable based on their price. It is also a good metric to keep in mind when running promotions; you could set up a promotion at a value higher than the average sales value, encouraging visitors to spend a little more and increasing your overall sales revenue.

Bounce rate

Your bounce rate will give you insight into how individual pages or products on your website are performing. If a particular page has a very high bounce rate, there is most likely something you can do to improve it. Does the page title accurately describe its content or product? Or could the page design be unattractive? Is page content clearly organized and is information easy to find? Do you need to encourage users to remain on the site through additional call-to-actions (CTAs) or internal linking?

Top 10 pages (by Pageviews)

By looking at the ten pages with the highest pageviews, you can determine which of your site pages and products are most popular and see if these meet your expectations. Is there a particular page or product that should have more pageviews? Check to see if there is anything you can do to improve it, such as optimizing the design or changing the copy. On the other hand, if there is a particular product page with a high volume of pageviews but very few conversions, check to see if you can make the page more attractive or better describe the product.

TO SUM UP......................................

IMPROVE YOUR CUSTOMERS' WEBSITE JOURNEY BY:

- Increasing your site's speed and performance
- Ensuring a seamless user experience
- Optimizing for mobile
- Implementing a simple and intuitive checkout process
- Increasing the value of customer accounts
- Upselling and cross-selling
- Implementing personalization
- Offering alternative ticket purchasing channels
- Providing great customer service

OPTIMIZE YOUR INTERNAL BUSINESS PROCESSES BY:

- Thinking about your content architecture
- Leveraging data insights

CONCLUSION......................................

When it comes to increasing your ticket sales, your internal processes are just as important as your external ones. By ensuring that your content is well-planned and intuitive, you can have a significant impact on the kinds of customer flows you are able to deliver, leading to a better customer experience and higher ticket sales.

The aim is to find the right balance between a well-designed and tested customer flow and an easy-to-update content architecture, so that a smooth internal business flow will translate into a seamless external one.