

ASPECTS REGARDING THE RECENT DEVELOPMENT OF ONLINE TICKETING PLATFORM IN THE TOURISEM INDUSTRY

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Abstract: My paper sets out to present the recent development of innovating online ticketing platforms in the tourism industry as well as the constant growing potential provided by instant and mobile tickets. The paper illustrates ways in which the increasing number of online ticket sales, mainly as a result of the global IT progresses and the hassle-free entrance provided for tourists, offers a long-term solution against the countless hours spent waiting in line in front of an attraction, show or concert just to be informed that unfortunately all tickets for the respective venue are already sold out. Easy to use, mobile ticketing seems to represent a convenient and fast solution in a world where every wasted minute counts.

Keywords: online ticketing platforms, tourism industry, instant tickets, mobile tickets, fast solution

Introduction The modern foundation of the ever blooming worldwide industry named tourism is also formed out of online ticketing platforms. Nowadays due to the lack of time available people tend to pre-book everything online. After a long day at work, customers wish to buy their groceries, concert tickets, public transportation tickets and hotel ticket directly online without wasting much time. For most internet users the above mentioned solutions are just a couple of clicks away. Today's tourist can plan an entire journey or adventure in a couple of minutes by just sitting comfortably on their own couch while watching TV. Sites like booking.com for hotels and tquets.com for attractions, shows and concerts allow customers to pre-book and pre-arrange everything from home in a simple and fast way by using their own computer /laptop / tablet, smart -TV or smartphone.

Features of online ticketing platforms In order for an attraction or a well planned event to increase its profit, ticket sales must also be done online. There are multiple online pre-registration or ticketing options available ready to serve the ever growing demand. The overall financial success of an attraction, show, concert, sports event, etc. often depends on selling as many tickets

as possible hence it is crucial for a manager to work with a good ticketing company or to have his own ticketing solution.

Each ticketing platform allows users to register for an event (sport-event, concert, show, etc.). Such ticketing platforms in order to be successful must display certain characteristics. They must be:

- 1) *Easy to use platforms.* Each ticketing platform needs to be easy to use for potential customers. Everything needs to be hassle-free, user-friendly and quick to do.
- 2) *Excellent online experience.* Potential clients should be able to book their favorite ticket easily and registration must be stress-free. The perfect scenario should be: registration and check out on the same page
- 3) *Customer dedicated link(s)* for each event, venue, concert, show. Unique URL for each client's favorite event, venue concert, show that can be quickly shared with friends and family.
- 4) *Customer onlineregistration.* If a customer registration page is created it directly help managers increase their bookings and underlines the attractions or events branding strategy.
- 5) *Excellent customer support.* In case problems occur or if something goes wrong there has to be a contact person to speak to in order to resolve the issue no matter what day and time.
- 6) *Smart-phone and Tablet-friendly.* Nowadays smart-phones and tablets are even more popular than laptops and desktops. This is the main reason why customers must be able to access a user friendly ticketing platform perfectly adapted to both smart phones and tablets.
- 7) *Data collection.* It is always in hand to collect data about clients in order to better understand their needs. Some platforms allow attraction and event managers to add custom service fields in order to collect useful data from potential clients.
- 8) *Social Media Integration.* Users should have the option to easily share an event through all social media channels. All major ticketing platforms should be totally social media integrated because it will definitely increase their popularity and online sales.
- 9) *Registrations for groups.* Some ticketing platforms are oriented more or less towards individual customers (for example *tickets.com*). Other ticketing platforms on the other hand concentrate more on groups. For those platform or venues, it is important to offer special group registration and pricing / offers.
- 10) *Constant updates.* Clients and potential clients must be informed about each new update regarding booking procedure, date and time of the event and also current price changes.
- 11) *Various price options.* All major ticketing platforms must be able to accommodate price differences or different types of tickets

12) *Various reporting tools.* Most managers in the hospitality industry want to have monthly, weekly and even daily reports in order to see how sales are doing. Ticketing platforms have to adapt to this request.

In order to differentiate among multiple ticketing platforms one must take into consideration that a good ticketing platform can host, organize and manage hundreds of attractions / events at once. This scenario is similar to the work of a good event manager who “identifying the target audience, explores the brand and plans in detail the entire logistics, analyzing all the technical features (Ramsborg et al, 2008)”.

The ticketing platform should be easily accessible, tech friendly and popular within the target group. Studying the pricing, managers from the industry should consider that a certain commission or sometimes a monthly fee must be paid for all services offered (tickets sold for them) by the ticketing company. For the normal consumer on the other hand, it is a cheap, fast and transparent way to skip a line and buy tickets for their favorite attractions. When it comes down to money distribution and collecting, the ticketing company can offer multiple solutions:

Ticketing platforms can be integrated within an external payment gateway (for example PayPal). This method provides quicker and easy setup with total control and transparency for the event or attraction management. For customers this means a small booking fee and some extra waiting time due to the fact that they have to access an external slide to play.

Ticketing platforms can also provide their own secure payment. This method ensures that the customers can pay without leaving the site of the event or attraction. Managers do not have direct control over their revenue and have to wait for their money to be redirected to them. Clients have therefore just benefits!

Ticketing platforms can allow the money to be paid into an online merchant account such as PayPal Pro. From an attraction or an event manager’s perspective this can take up a lot of time and the set up cost for the platform can be increased. On the other hand, managers have full control over their incomes, being a quick way for them to receive payments.

Along these lines, one of the most important things for event- attracting managers is to have a clear overview of every ticket sold and to increase ticket sales. For customers the most important thing is to have a hassle free, interactive, fast and cheap ticketing platform.

A Success Story: tiqets.com Tiqets.com aims to make people happy all around the world with quick and hassle free cultural visits. The Dutch company tiqets.com that started in 2013 is one of the fastest growing companies in Europe. Tiqets.com is a ticketing platform that developed a

technology to easily enter cultural venues (such as attractions, museums, zoos, concerts, shows etc.). Most ticketing companies provide the following forms of tickets when booking:

E-tickets

Mobile tickets

Printed tickets

Depending on the venue, tiqets.com nearly provides instant tickets and mobile entrance without printing vouchers. Tiqets.com offer their partners a unique technology aimed to help venues go mobile with the Scan App solution. Established in Amsterdam tiqets.com is now active in most European touristic hotspots including Vienna, Paris, London, Rome, Barcelona and Madrid. Tiqets.com is also active in non-European cities like New York or Dubai and it is expanding rapidly in more than 26 cities by the end of 2016 (Table 1). The revenue of the company has grown in 11 months from 200k to 12 million (Revenue in January 2015 to almost 12 million in December 2015).



Table 1: Run Rate Revenue Weighted (A); *Source: Tiqet.com company presentation (first quarter 2016)*

The interactive ticketing company provides tickets for attraction all over the world. Both directly to travelers via www.tiqets.com but also to travel companies via API and white label integration, allowing partner companies to easily and quickly sell "dated" and "non-dated" entertainment to their own customers. This technology is unique because of the real-time data from hundreds of entertainment companies and millions of tickets that are distributed through partners and consumer websites to travelers worldwide.

The ticketing platform provides access to the top 25 venues in every active city, almost always with instant delivery and without printing any physical ticket except by using the costumers' mobile phone. The Tiqets.com technology distributes the bookable content sometimes in 9 different languages across multiple channels. More the 500 national and international tiqets.com venue partners are advised to use scanning devices to easily, quickly and transparently check the tickets of the customers on sight. Everything is automated and explained in several different languages. The ticketing platform provides partner suppliers a modern way to promote and sell entrance tickets and reach a new target audience. The supplier will automatically be promoted on tiqets.com webpage, making their tickets directly bookable for millions of potential customers around the world. Another important aspect is that tiqets.com sells tickets to a new target group before the trip, during the stay and on location through different partners. Tiqet.com supplier benefits from free setup, no monthly fee, no hidden costs and a well organized and prompt customer service team. Tiqets.com also offers a creative supplier service that helps supplier promote their tickets on the platform in the best possible way. "A well organized and structured company will constantly increase its number of clients and potential clients, year by year (Philip, 2006)". Tiqets.com is trying and it is succeeding to offer their customers and partners a simple, transparent and fast way to by/sell tickets worldwide.

Conclusions In a world where every wasted minute counts, online ticketing platforms seem to offer the optimal solution to book a favorite concert, show, event, attraction, exhibition or transportation ticket. Buying the tickets online, paying directly with a debit or credit card and enjoying skip the line instant and mobile entrance is definitely the most convenient and fast way to visit a new attraction. Promotion and marketing strategies should always be directed towards the target group: national and international tourist. With a well-organized long term plan, venues can utilize ticketing platforms as a highly efficient tool to increase their market shares and profit. "Similar to event planning that includes acquiring necessary permits, scheduling, budgeting, site selection, logistics, emergency plans, preparing decorations, etc. (Bowdin and Harris, 2012)", ticketing platforms are also based on hard work, preparation and planning in order to make everything simple and easy for the final customer: the tourist.

Customers should compare and study all major ticketing platforms in order to choose the one which is most suitable for their needs. Nevertheless, planning a city break in advance, gathering all needed information and buying all desired museum tickets directly from home via Smartphone, tablet or Pc is, in our vision, the smartest way to travel.

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