

# 10

## SUCCESS FACTORS IN SELECTING THE RIGHT TICKETING SYSTEM

What You Need to Know



| Item     | Qty | Description                             | Unit Price | Amount |
|----------|-----|---|------------|--------|
| 32289991 | 1   | Adult Event Package                     | 28.00      | 28.00  |
| 32289991 | 1   | Adult General Admission                 | 22.00      | 22.00  |
| 32289991 | 1   | Adult 50 Theater Across the Street P12  | 11.00      | 11.00  |
| 32289991 | 1   | Seating 10/18/2017 1:30 PM Available 12 |            |        |
|          |     |   |            | 108.00 |



# YOU'VE BEEN CHARGED WITH FINDING A NEW TICKETING SOLUTION FOR YOUR VENUE.

Obviously you want to succeed in finding the perfect match to meet your needs and take your business forward in the future. If you recommend the right solution and company to support your team and organization – then you're a superstar. But if you recommend an inadequate solution without the support your organization really needs – well, let's not go there. Between the major providers you might have already heard of and a good ol' fashioned Google search, you'll start getting a sense of who you want to talk with.

So what are those invaluable tips that can make your evaluation process more efficient and help ensure you select the right partner? Read on for the gems we've uncovered in helping hundreds of the world's top attractions do just that.

# 01

## DEFINE ALL YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

You or someone within your organization has identified the need to move to a new solution. Perhaps the decision is being driven to make your operations run more smoothly. Or maybe marketing wants access to visitor data to better craft promotional offers and drive revenue. Whatever sparked the project moving forward, you'll want to determine which departments have a stake in the solution: who owns the project, who needs to be part of the process, what influence or decision-making power each person has, and at what stages of the project you need senior leadership's buy in?



**[TIP]** Departments that could be part of the process include visitor services, information technology, membership/development, group sales, education, finance, marketing, food and beverage, and retail. Check with them all to determine the scope of your project. Don't be overwhelmed by the anticipation of too many conflicting opinions. Be sure you choose a partner who's able to facilitate these discussions and bring all of this valuable feedback into a usable strategy for your project.

# 02

## DETERMINE YOUR MUST-HAVE'S AND NICE-TO-HAVE'S

To ensure success with your final choice, you'll want to figure out what you absolutely need from a new ticketing system and what would be nice to have. Even though you might not be able to meet all departments' requirements right away, this gives you a roadmap to take a phased approach to your project. You can start with the must-have's and then categorize and prioritize your wants into future phases to spread out not only the cost but also the implementation and training of your critical teams.



**[TIP]** Write a list of your priorities. Highlight what you must have to meet your goals (for example, multi-language capabilities, ability to streamline the membership process or accepting online donations) – and what would essentially be icing on the cake. This will help keep your team focused on the bigger picture.

# 03

## IDENTIFY WHO INTERNALLY WILL SUPPORT THE SYSTEM

Depending on the size of your venue, you might have a system administrator who will be working with your system on a day-to-day basis or maybe a small team will be responsible. You'll want to figure out the logistics of who keeps the system running at peak performance and who is empowered to unleash the full functionality of your solution to drive revenue growth. Also think about what you will do through times of turnover or when a large strategic project is handed to you to manage. By planning for contingencies now, you will ensure smooth transitions and project flow later.



**[TIP]** Choose a partner who offers support 24.7.365 to ensure help is there any time you need it. Gateway Ticketing Systems® has around-the-clock support available as well as Managed Services that help fill operational and staffing gaps to ensure seamless operations at your attraction.

# 04

## CONSIDER A UNIFIED SOLUTION

Chances are pretty good that you offer food and beverage as well as retail services within your venue. Evaluate the efficiencies that come with a unified solution that brings together these services with your ticketing system. By unifying your revenue streams, you can get an overall picture of your operations and significant revenue-generating potential. You'll uncover invaluable insight into your visitors and, for example, will be able to offer them compelling promotions and packages that encourage them to spend more at your facility. A consistent platform also simplifies employee training and enables you to move staff around your venue to meet periods of high demands or to fill staffing gaps.



**[TIP]** A unified approach can affect your revenue exponentially. The Galaxy® Product Suite offered by Gateway unifies ticketing, food and beverage, and retail. We also offer CRM and Business Intelligence resources that can help you analyze your data to further drive revenue.



05



# GIVE YOURSELF ENOUGH TIME

Find prospects, check references & visit sites

Selecting the right ticketing partner is critical to your success now and into the future. Make sure you give yourself enough time to dot your i's and cross your t's: it'll be a solution – and a long-term partner – your venue will be working with for years to come.

Whether you make direct contact with the companies that most interest you or send out an RFP, you'll want time to hear what each has to say, what they offer and then thoroughly vet them. Take notice with how responsive and professional they are at each step. Are your emails and calls returned in a timely manner? Can you get a sense of the company's service culture? Your experiences at this stage provide a good glimpse into the level of service and support you can expect during a long-term relationship.

*(continued)*



05

# GIVE YOURSELF ENOUGH TIME

Take the time to check references. Virtually everybody within the attractions industry is open to sharing their experiences with other venues when asked. Pick locations similar to yours in industry (e.g., theme park, zoo, tour) and attendance. Ask what went well in the process, what didn't and how the ongoing working relationship is with their selected partner. Hear what they have to say – and determine how it does or doesn't influence your situation.

After you narrow your choices down to one or two final prospects, visit sites that have implemented those solutions, especially ones that have a similar setup to the one you're considering (e.g., front gate sales with kiosks and online ordering, or a site that's implemented an integrated approach). Nothing beats experiencing firsthand the solution in action.



**[TIP]** When visiting sites, talk with as many departments as possible that touch the ticketing solution. This is a great way to glean best practices as well as learn from their teaching moments.



A blue-tinted underwater scene featuring various coral reefs and several striped angelfish swimming around. The scene is used as a background for the top half of the page.

# 06

## THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE IN A DEMO

Demos provide a peek into what a system can do for your venue specifically. A great demo pops the hood of its “engine,” lets you see the power of its functionality and helps you start imagining what it’ll look like at your attraction – with your brand. Maybe your venue has complicated capacity-managed events that your current system can’t handle. This would be an example of functionality you’d want to see. Remember to invite all your predetermined stakeholders to the demo to make sure their needs are being addressed.



**[TIP]** Determine what “scenarios” you’d like to see during a demo such as walking you through how you would enter a new passholder or member into the system. The more focused a presentation is on your specific business needs, the more you can see how it will work for you.

07

# LEVERAGE INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE TO DRIVE YOUR BUSINESS FORWARD

As you look for the right solution for your venue, consider the additional value you would get by partnering with a company whose entire history has been dedicated to improving the ticketing, access control and other revenue-generating aspects of your industry. The insights you'll learn from this type of relationship are invaluable. Choose a partner with team members at every level who are passionate about your industry, innovation and delivering exceptional service. Whether you're looking to implement new initiatives more efficiently or enhance your guest experiences with new and innovative marketing and guest services programs, choosing the right partner is essential to helping you every step of the way.



**[TIP]** Closely look at the industries served by each company and the experience of its employees. Gateway employees average more than 10 years in the industry and/or in their field of expertise with many of its key personnel having worked in-house at some of the world's best-known attractions. With more than 400 world-class venues in over 40 countries, Gateway has been and continues to be dedicated to helping these locations be more efficient, drive revenue and enhance the guest experience.



08

# LOOK AT CORE VALUES TO DETERMINE IF THEY ALIGN WITH YOURS

To make your business as successful as possible, it's best to align yourself with other companies that share your vision and values. When an organization has core values, you know what they are expecting of their employees and what you can expect from their service to you. Though these attributes aren't as tangible as software, they are just as important in ensuring the long-term success of your chosen solution. Choosing a company you trust and that has a proven track record of integrity in business and the industry will only result in positive experiences for your venue.



**[TIP]** Take a moment to reflect on your organization's core values and what you expect from the companies you do business with. Gateway is committed to customer care, integrity, passion, accountability, teamwork, communication and innovation—all of which have led to our long-term success.



09

# LEARN HOW TO MAXIMIZE THE POWER OF YOUR SOLUTION

A robust, integrated solution relies on the abilities of your people – your system administrator, marketing team, finance department and others – to bring it to life and use it to its full potential. How will you train these teams to improve their skills to maximize the solution and take advantage of new features? Selecting a partner who offers comprehensive learning opportunities in all facets of the solution as well as best practices from its power user community is critical. Ensure your selected partner provides flexible options to train and develop your staff. This will only further engage your team and make your system more dynamic and efficient while showing your employees that you're willing to invest in them and their future.



**[TIP]** Look for a full-service company, like Gateway, that offers ongoing tools for success such as learning courses as well as user group meetings to foster collaboration and customized on-site training. Through our Gateway University, we offer comprehensive onsite, online and self-paced learning options for every need and budget.

# 10

## ENSURE ACCESS TO ONGOING SUPPORT WITH A STABLE COMPANY

Because your chosen solution is so critical to your revenue, you'll want to make sure you've partnered with a company with a proven, stable history who will be there when you need them. Or maybe you have a small IT team and worry about staffing gaps during vacation, holidays or even employee turnover. By finding a vendor who offers managed services you can assure help is always just a phone call away.



**[TIP]** Find a partner who doesn't only sell software or hardware but one who offers additional services – this is a clear sign that they'll support you “after the sale.” Whether you want to start small and then enhance your system in a few years to include new functionality, need strategic input on a new initiative or have a need for continuous ongoing operational support, Gateway has the resources to meet your needs. You'll also want to take time to research the company history of your final choices. Remember that a public company has to make money for its shareholders while a private company can continue to reinvest in its products and services. Gateway is a private company and has been focused exclusively on developing the best unified ticketing solutions for the attraction industries for more than 30 years. Under the same ownership since day one, we're known as a company with integrity – one that always “does the right thing”, and stands by its customers.

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