

Five Signs it's Time to Change Your Ticketing Partner

5 MIN READ



Changing your ticketing partner is at the very least a hassle and at most disruptive to your business and ticket sales. So, why bother? The only things at stake are your money, reputation and peace of mind. On second thought, the first two are pillars of your business and the third is critical for your health! So, these are damn good reasons. But the critical question is how do you know when it's the right time to take on the challenge to make a change? Let's take a look at five clear signs that it's time to change ticketing partners.

1. Your Current Ticketing Partner has an Uncertain Future

This is the most obvious sign that it's time to start shopping around. You may have had a good relationship with your ticketing provider in the past. But if they're in danger of folding, being sold to another company or have lost focus on ticketing as their primary business, you need to protect yourself before it's too late.

If your ticketing partner is a subdivision of a company that doesn't have ticketing as their focus or core business, you should be looking around. If they're in the process of being sold, the people you signed with are likely to leave when new owners take over, which means that relationship you've built is a thing of the past. Even if the initial transition goes smoothly, you still don't know where you'll stand six months down the road. If you see any of this coming, the smart move is to take your business elsewhere before everyone else goes rushing for the door.

2. You're Using Separate Systems to Manage Ticketing, Marketing and Your Website

These days, the average smartphone offers pretty seamless integration between your social media, photos, emails and contacts. Does your ticketing partner do the same thing for your business? If you're being forced to handle ticketing through one platform and marketing through yet another still, then it's a good time to start asking why your business shouldn't be as well integrated as the phone in your pocket.

3. They're Not Being Straight About the Value of Your Data

Other than actual cash, there's nothing more valuable that your business generates than customer data. And every ticketing company in the business knows this for a fact. The question you need to ask yourself (and your ticketing partner) is this: Am I in control of my data? Or does it really belong to the ticketing company I work with? If you've never asked this question, you might be shocked at the answer. Because there are a bunch of companies who keep and control your ticketing data. In fact, some of these companies make just as much money selling your data to your competitors as they do charging you commissions on the ticket sale. Does that sound like a good business partner?

4. They're Too New to the Game

Everyone wants to work in show business. This is why the ticketing industry seems to breed so many fly-by-night startups. But there is dirty little secret everyone in the startup industry already knows that you may not. The endgame for these companies is not to organically grow their business by helping you grow yours. Their business model is to build a big enough customer base so they can sell their company to the highest bidder as quickly as possible (see item #1 on this list).

There are a few signs that your ticketing provider was never planning on being your partner for the long haul. The biggest red flag is when they offer massive signing bonuses for your business. This is a particularly cunning play because on the surface it seems like they're so committed to a long term relationship that they're willing to take a haircut on the front end of the deal. In reality, what they're actually doing is sometimes called "price dumping," a practice of making deals well below their value in order to artificially accelerate their market share. Why is this bad for you? If you're really lucky, they might just sell their business (along with all your customer and business data) to another company. If you're not lucky, they could just go out of business while you're in the middle of an on-sale and ruin the relationships and reputation you've built with your customers. Either way, when you partner with someone looking at the short game, you're risking your own long-term potential for growth.

5. They're Too Old-School

On the flip side of working with some Johnny-come-lately ticketing partner is working with a system that's keeping you stuck in the past. Technology moves fast and you need a partner who's moving with it. Consider this: Arguably the biggest development in the industry over the past few years has been the rise of mobile ticketing. Many businesses that invested big bucks in standalone ticketing software just a few years ago (rather than partnering with a full-service, cloud-based ticketing provider) are now finding themselves the regretful owners of a system that can barely handle mobile ticket sales. To give you an idea of how serious a problem that is, understand that 50 percent of mobile users refuse to even use a website that isn't mobile-friendly. Another 40 percent abandon their purchase at the shopping cart if the page takes more than three seconds to load. So if it seems expensive to walk away from your investment in obsolete software, think about the money not having a mobile-optimized ticketing system might be costing you right now.

Anyone with a little programming experience can indeed write an algorithm to process a ticket sale and take a commission. But it's also true that you need a hell of a lot more than an algorithm to run a successful business. You need a ticketing partner who understands the complexities of the industry and is committed to growing with you. If your current ticketing partner sounds like any of the ones we've talked about here, just give us a shout. We're here to help your business grow, just like we have for thousands of other live events businesses over the past 20 years.