

BUDGET COMMITTEE JUNE 23, 2003

CITY PLAYHOUSE – FUNDS FOR TICKETING SYSTEM

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services recommends:

That additional funds in the amount of up to \$24,000 be approved for the provision of computer hardware and software to support an in-house ticketing system at the City Playhouse.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval for funding to provide an in-house ticketing system for the City Playhouse.

Background - Analysis and Options

The staff at the City Playhouse, the management company for the City Playhouse, has researched various theatre booking systems available on the market. The intention is to reduce operating costs and improve the level of service to our patrons. Staff are proposing a switch to an "in-house" ticketing system, specifically, a program known as Theatre Manager. The attachment outlines the costs and benefits of this system. Theatre staff have also outlined the advantages and disadvantages of our own system as compared to Ticket Master.

Presently Vaughan is using the services of Ticket Master, however the existing contract expires at the end of June. The summer months are the best time to switch the ticketing system, as there are few ticketed events at the Theatre.

Conclusion

Staff are requesting approval for funds to implement an in-house ticketing system during the summer months.

Attachments

1. Ticketing System Information.

Report prepared by:

G. Doris Haas
Commissioner, Community Services

Respectfully submitted,

G. Doris Haas
Commissioner, Community Services



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City Playhouse Box Office

City Playhouse is a community theatre, which needs its own user-friendly software to sell tickets. In doing so we will generate more business through renters and through patrons.
Presently, we are using Ticket Master.

Ticket Master

- A DOS Ticketing System created and useful for major events
- Provides their own software and hardware at no cost to the City
- Keeps all revenue until the end of the show
- It could take up to 20 workdays for settlements

Strengths of Ticket Master

- Builds all shows
- Creates settlements
- Patrons can access tickets 24hrs/day

Weaknesses of Ticket Master

- Lack of control (3rd party confusion)
- High service fees
- Poor revenue tracking
- Difficult to use

- 15 minute waiting periods for phone sales

Presently...

- All sales are done in person
- Unable to sell tickets over the phone
- Poor tracking of our patrons
- Complaints regarding waiting with Ticket Master
- Lack of identity

Revenue

- Cash is immediately deposited through CLASS
- VISA/MC/AMEX deposited through ticket master
- We wait to receive Cheque from ticket master for revenue from VISA/MC/AMEX

Ticketing Fees

- Right now Ticket Master is charging 2.00 on top of all tickets less than 14.99 and 4.00 on top of all tickets greater than 15.00 per ticket.
- In addition they charge 2.50 per order.
- Customers are always complaining about the high Ticket Master fees.

Ideally...

- If all ticket sales were done directly through the City Playhouse
- The Box Office would need its own phone line(s) & computers
- A Box Office assistant would need to be hired on a part time basis
- We would have 100% control of our customer service

Theatre Manager

[Theatre Manager](#) is a integrated box office, development, education, tour, artist and volunteer management software solution for Theatre, Arts, Entertainment, and Sports Administration that runs seamlessly on [Macintosh, Power Macintosh, 95/98/ME/XP, and NT 4.0/Windows 2000 Pro/XP Pro](#) and [OS-X](#) using a number of network configurations.

Theatre Manager was designed by the Arts Management Systems, located in Calgary, Alberta. Theatre Companies, Arts Festivals, Race Tracks, Movie Theatres and Film Festivals, Hockey Arenas, Basketball Teams and Tennis

Tournaments in North America, Australia, and New Zealand have been using this software effectively since 1986.

Box Office Management

- Reserved, festival and door sales
- Full screen view of theatre
- Tailored accounting of cash
- Comprehensive reporting

Patron Management

- Avoids duplications
- Flexible patron classification for mailings
- Customized target marketing

Theatre Manager Can:

- Track patrons
- Record and manage donations
- Manage volunteers and staff
- Build and maintain mailing lists
- Manage all accounting

Cost – Theatre Manager software and hardware

A multiple user system	\$5900.00
A 2 nd user license	\$ 495.00
EXT Thermal ticket printer	<u>\$3150.00</u>
SUB TOTAL	\$9545.00
GST	<u>\$ 668.15</u>
SUB TOTAL	\$10213.15
Training @ 450.00/day	\$2250.00
(Average length of training is 5 days)	
Travel Expenses	<u>\$1500.00</u>
SUB TOTAL	\$13963.15
(There are many ways to decrease the cost of the travel expenses)	
Two computers	\$10000.00
TOTAL	<u>\$23963.15</u>

Ticket Stock

- Our own design
- Potential for donors / sponsorship
- Coupons
- Cross-promotional marketing
- Assuming we sell 30,000 tickets/year with up to 4 sponsors on ticket backs....
\$65.00 / 1,000 tickets
\$1,950 / 30,000 tickets
- If we had four sponsors donate \$500.00 that could offset our costs

Can We Afford This?

30,000 assumed patrons/year
If 50% of tickets are sold via phone/internet...
And we charge a servicing fee of \$1.50 for all phone and Internet sales
15000 tickets x \$1.50 = \$22,500.00
Within the first year Theatre Manager will pay for itself.

References

Blyth Festival - Linda Hearn

Box 10
107 Queen Street North
Blyth, Ontario N0M 1H0
Canada
(519) 523-4345 x 207

I like how it works. It helps managing tickets as well as donations and season sitting. It deals with volunteer information, staff information. It's quite flexible and their support line is incredible.

Linda

Roxy Theatre - Judith Glover

Box 41
Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5P1
Canada
(519) 371-3425
roxy@bmts.com

Sudbury Theatre Centre - Kathy Heimbecker

Box 641, Station B
170 Shaughnessy Street
Sudbury, Ontario P3E 4P8
Canada
(705) 674-7788
stc@isys.ca

Eryn –

The ticketing software we used is called Theatre Manager. I have used this software for approx 4 years now, and am very pleased with it. Theatre Manager has so many different possibilities, that it is difficult to narrow down the qualities that could be most valuable to an organization (since we each operate differently).

Kathy

Other Clients Include

Second City
Collingwood Theatre
Orchestra London
Theatre and Company (Kitchener)
Owen Sound Attack Hockey
Roxy Theatre - Owen Sound
Sheridan College
Brookstone Performing Arts Centre... T.O.
Victoria Hall - Coburn
Victoria Playhouse - Petrolia
Theatre Aquarius
Thousand Island Playhouse
Sudbury Theatre Centre
Blyth Festival
Westbend Arts Festival

