



Maximising Revenue at Liverpool's Royal Court

Case Study

How Liverpool's Royal Court maximised their revenue streams to ensure their positioning as one of the leading production houses in the UK.



LIVERPOOLS
ROYAL
COURT



Introduction

Liverpool's Royal Court, The People's Theatre

With a trip to The Court always a night of great entertainment, it's no wonder that the team wants to offer audience members the best possible experience at each attendance. In order to achieve this, the team at Liverpool's Royal Court utilise up-selling and cross-selling through Ticketsolve while also maximising their revenue streams.

Renamed the Royal Court Theatre in 1881, the theatre has been at the very heart of culture in Liverpool for nearly 200 years. The Court is unique to Liverpool having developed an individual style of theatre for Liverpool audiences which primarily includes theatre produced in Liverpool, starring Liverpool actors and written by Liverpool writers. All rehearsals take place in Liverpool and even the sets are built within the city. Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre is proud to say that 95% of all monies spent by the theatre are reinvested back into the local economy of Liverpool.

Recognised as one of the leading production houses, Liverpool's Royal Court offers audience members pre-show dining and a wide range of drinks served both before and after shows. Most recently, the venue has introduced a Community Choir, Youth Theatre, and People's Players (amateur drama company) to improve access to the arts for people from surrounding areas.

Liverpool's Royal Court places a lot of emphasis on community. Their team organise and implement a large community programme which offers free access to children and young people aged 11 - 25 from all parts of the city. Their youth theatre programme is designed by young people for young people and is considered a fresh, innovative and relevant youth theatre company. The Royal Court also organise an amateur theatre group, The People's Players, which welcomes people of all ages to act, sing, and dance.



Overview

The importance of revenue generation and redevelopment funding

Until last year, Liverpool's Royal Court did not receive any external funding from the Arts Council of England or their local authority. Over the years, their team has had to look at every aspect of the theatre and identify which areas derives more income in order to maintain their sustainability.

The organisation is purely commercial driven and generating revenue is of vital importance for the sustainability of the theatre. In order to keep the doors of the venue open to the wider community, the theatre needed to cover all costs through revenue self-financed through the bar, restaurant or box office.

The Royal Court had received capital funding for redevelopment which includes, new seating, improved toilet facilities, disabled access with a lift installation to create easier movement to every level, and better food and drink options for audience members. A new 150 seater studio venue was also developed and with better dressing rooms for actors and backstage staff. The refurbishment also involved converting the building next door into the Courtyard Bar & Restaurant.





The Strategy

How do Liverpool's Royal Court Maximise Revenue?

With a laser focus Liverpool's Royal court reviewed all aspects of their venue in order to assess which areas could maximise revenue. These are the streams which they examined:

Up-selling Meals

Liverpool's Royal Court is a unique venue in that the venue's stalls consist of a mixture of tables and chairs. This flexibility allows their team to get creative with their audience offering. Liverpool's Royal Court offer their audience members the option of booking a meal when they are purchasing a ticket. Up-selling meals has proven to be very popular for their audience members as it provides further enticement to attend a show at the Royal Court as they are offered a great night out, with dinner and a show. Ticketsolve worked closely with the team at Liverpool's Royal court to develop these system capabilities to enable their team to utilise this up-selling opportunity.

Utilising the Extras Feature within Ticketsolve

Liverpool's Royal Court take advantage of the extras feature within Ticketsolve on their meal offerings for their audiences. Through Ticketsolve, the Royal Court offers audience members a wider variety of choice for meal options and the team know in advance exactly which meals to prepare for audience members.

Up-selling Programmes

Liverpool's Royal Court has increased their programme revenue by 20% since introducing product suggestions to audiences during their booking journey.





Upgrading Meal Offer

This year, during their Christmas season, Liverpool's Royal Court trialled upgrading their menu offerings to a two-course meal. The trial generated as much as **30% more** on food revenue from their Christmas show which runs for over two and a half months. The team then decided to put this offer on pre-sale for their audiences for next year and these tickets have already sold out.

Enticing Audience Members to Arrive Early

Encouraging their audience members to arrive at Liverpool's Royal Court is an easy task for the team, through up-selling meals. Audience members arrive at the premises up to an hour and a half before the show starts. They sit and enjoy their meal all while buying drinks and confectionery until curtain call. Encouraging audiences to arrive early means that they are more likely to spend more money at the venue as opposed to a bar or restaurant in the city.

Meal tickets at Liverpool's Royal Court are immensely popular amongst audience members and tend to sell out quickly. This suspense and anticipation to purchase a bundled ticket means that their audience members are buying tickets further in advance before each show.

Encouraging Individual Giving

Previously Liverpool's Royal Court utilised a voluntary donation and implemented a pre-ticket donation box in their audience members' booking cart. The team felt that the pre-ticked prompt was working well however, they didn't feel it was the best approach to encourage their audience members to donate. The team then decided to introduce a restoration donation levy within the ticket price. From inside charges set up through Ticketsolve, Liverpool's Royal Court has generated **over £1 million**. This revenue is being used in two ways: to redevelop the building, as well as provide evidence of match funding for funding bodies who require that Liverpool's Royal Court raise partial sponsorship themselves.

“

We've noticed a tendency for customers to spend more if they arrive earlier to Liverpool's Royal Court. A lot of our audience members pre-purchase their meal with their ticket weeks in advance so they feel as if they haven't spent anything on the night. This usually means they are more willing to spend at the bar until doors open and during the interval too.

”



Iain Christie, Marketing Manager
Liverpool's Royal Court



Increasing Ticketing Opportunities

Liverpool's Royal Court transformed their basement area into a 150 seating studio venue. Developing additional performance space within the venue has increased the number of performance and show opportunities for Liverpool's Royal Court which allows their team to generate additional revenue through ticket sales.

Dynamic Pricing

Increase of ticket price is an area all arts organisations need to be sensitive to in order to avoid any bite back from audience members. Liverpool's Royal Court demonstrates that it is essential to know and understand your audience when implementing any changes to pricing.

One method in particular which has proven very successful for their team is creating dynamic pricing through Ticketsolve. With long-running shows, Liverpool's Royal Court use this tiered pricing module to create audience anticipation from the very first show event. Audience members have the opportunity to purchase a ticket for as little as £14 for the first show but the same seat at the end of their run might have increased to **£40**.

This approach ensures that audience members are talking from the very beginning of a show and for the duration of the run. Word of mouth is very important for gaining attraction on longer show runs and has been a powerful tool for increasing ticket sales.

Driving Efficiencies

Maximising ROI with Digital Marketing



Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre is one of the largest production houses outside London so orchestrating individual creative campaigns is crucial to the success of its programming. As highlighted in our recent editorial with **Arts Professional** on why failing fast is good for you, data is a fundamental driver behind the results for Liverpool's Royal Court.

Track and Monitoring Campaigns through Data

The venue's Marketing Manager Iain Christie says: *"For each show we monitor the response to cast-focused, show-focused and venue-focused messages across a number of online media. As the response to each campaign becomes clear, we adjust budgets to capitalise on the more impactful campaigns. We also review the campaign messages and formats (text, image and video) so we are reaching as many ticket-buyers as possible."*

Fail Fast Approach

The team is constantly assessing what the data is telling them. They control where to invest their marketing budget to increase their ROI, focusing on which areas are targeting their audiences effectively - and perhaps more importantly, which campaigns are not performing well.

"For each show we use Google Tag Manager to track the impact of different forms of online advertising. The way this dovetails with Ticketsolve means we can respond quickly based on the data we receive and be much more creative, matching specific campaigns to specific audiences. We can see which campaigns are working and, more importantly, which ones are not. Since we have implemented this strategy there has been a sharp increase in return on investment across social media, online advertising and email campaigns."

Print at Home Tickets

In 2014, Liverpool's Royal Court took a stand against standard theatre tickets and stopped printing tickets from their ticket printers. Their goal was to decrease the cost of ticket stock and ticket printers within the Court and immerse their audiences fully with print at home tickets. Now using an A4 printer and paper in the box office, their team have not experienced any issues or disgruntlement from audience members.

Significantly, Liverpool's Royal Court has seen that more and more of their audience members are now enjoying the convenience of e-tickets and using their own phones to store their tickets. Their team utilise this opportunity to attract the attention of local business to consider purchasing an advert on their print at home tickets.

Utilising E-Ticketing with Ticketsolve

More and more audience members are using this fulfilment choice and the team at Liverpool's Royal Court are eager to see how they can better utilise this to their advantage. The team have discussed introducing scanning and selling space on their PDF tickets to local businesses as an advertising opportunity. This will increase sponsorship for Liverpool's Royal Court while offering bars and restaurants the opportunity to drive secondary spend.



Other Strategies

Thinking Creatively to Build Loyalty and Develop New Audiences

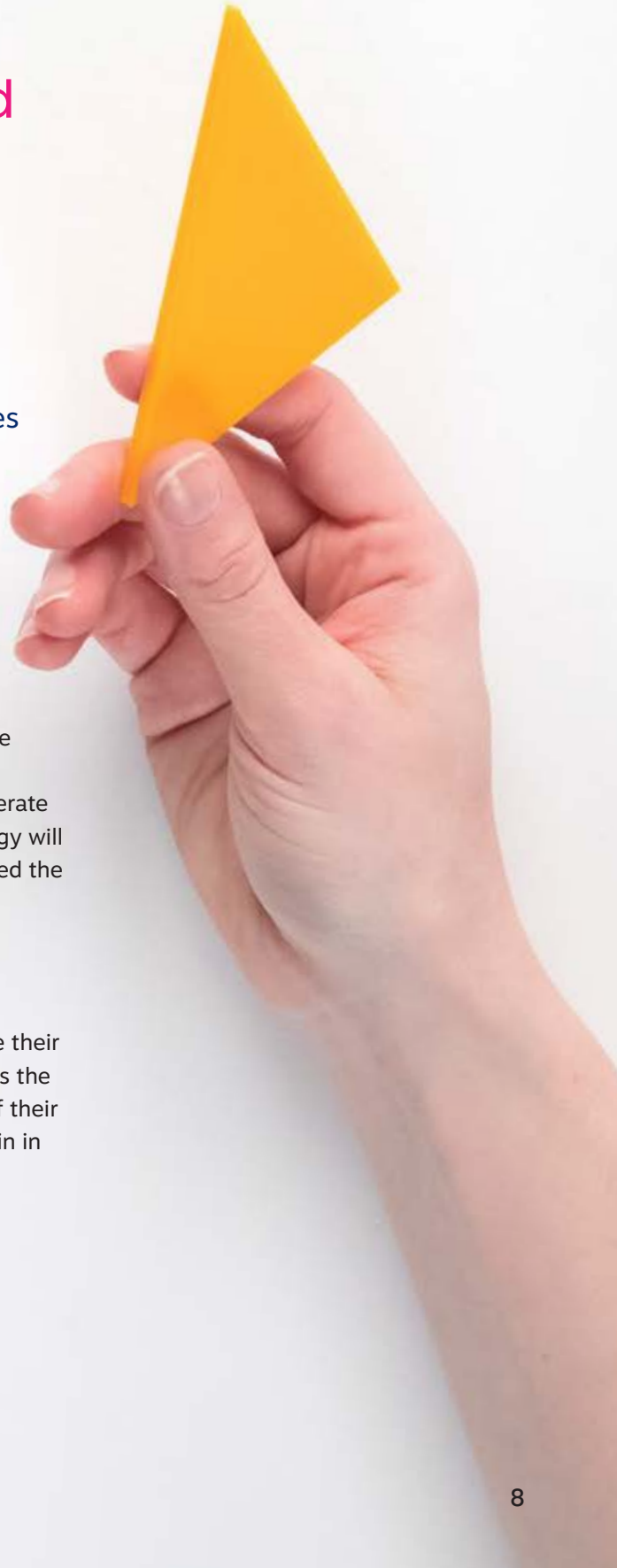
Liverpool's Royal Court are continuously looking at the various ways to increase their revenue while maintaining and building meaningful relationships with their various audience segments. Two strategies which have derived great results for the team are digital advertising and fundraising are:

Digital Advertising

Liverpool's Royal Court has installed multiple digital screens inside the venue and have placed one large screen outside their venue. With a focus to move paperless, this strategy will, over time, generate significant savings on print and brochures. In addition, this strategy will help engage new audience segments who might not have attended the Royal Court previously but pass by on their commute to work.

Adopt a Seat

As part of their £10.6 million refurbishment campaign to renovate their grade II listed theatre, Liverpool's Royal Court offered their donors the opportunity to adopt one of their 403 seats in the Grand Circle of their main auditorium. Royal Court appealed to high-level donors to join in the story and adopt a seat for £250.





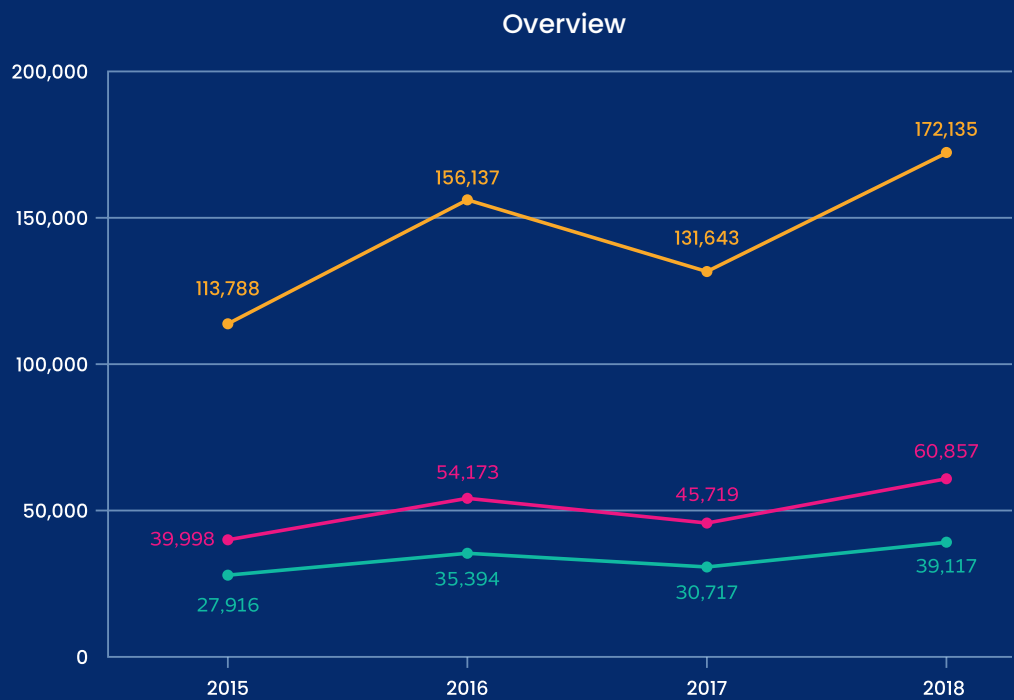
The Results

Assessing the data of the Royal Court over the past four years has highlighted some interesting results in revenue, print at home orders, meals, online sales, and breakdown of total revenue.

*In 2017 and at the beginning of 2018, Liverpool's Royal Court were in the middle of their refurbishment project incurring reduced programmes and periods of closure.

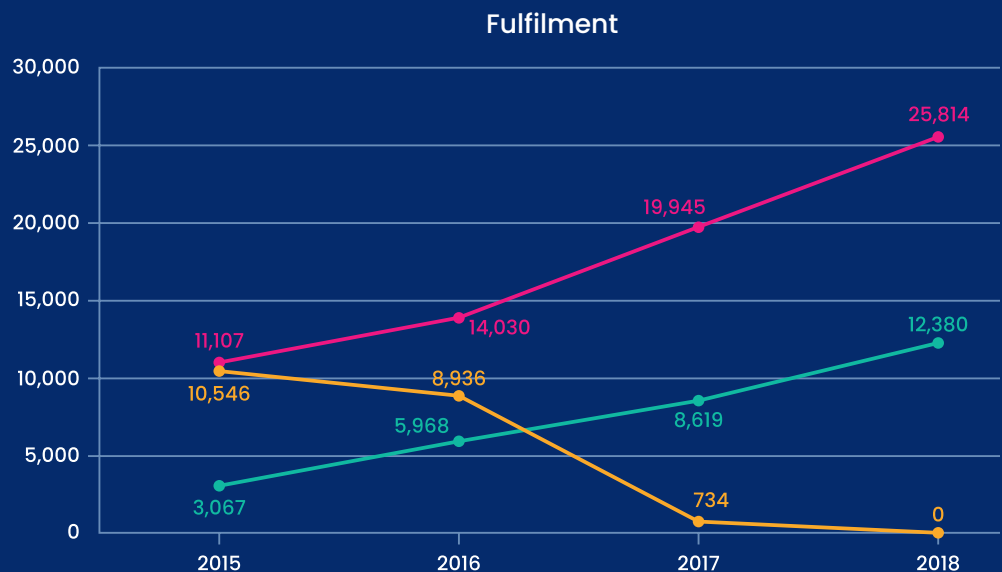
- Tickets
- Orders
- Customers

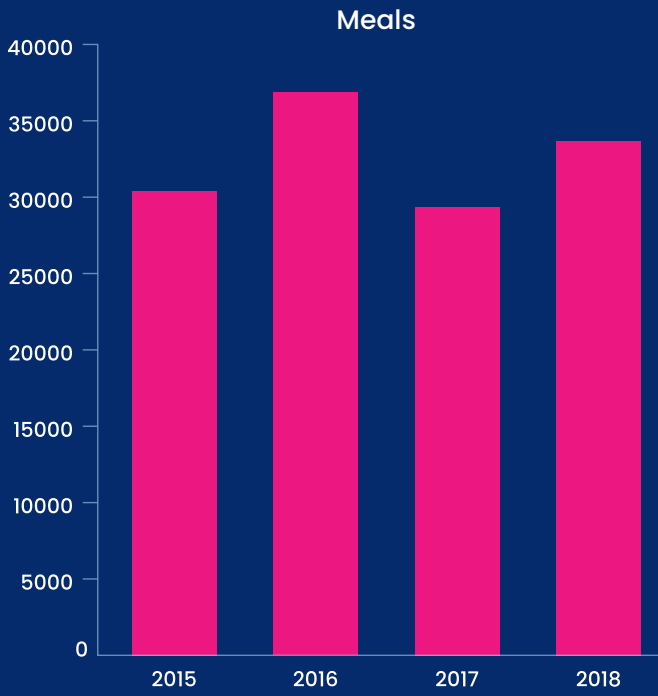
Revenue since 2015 has increased by a staggering **38%**



- Postage
- Print at home
- CBO

68% of all print orders are at home



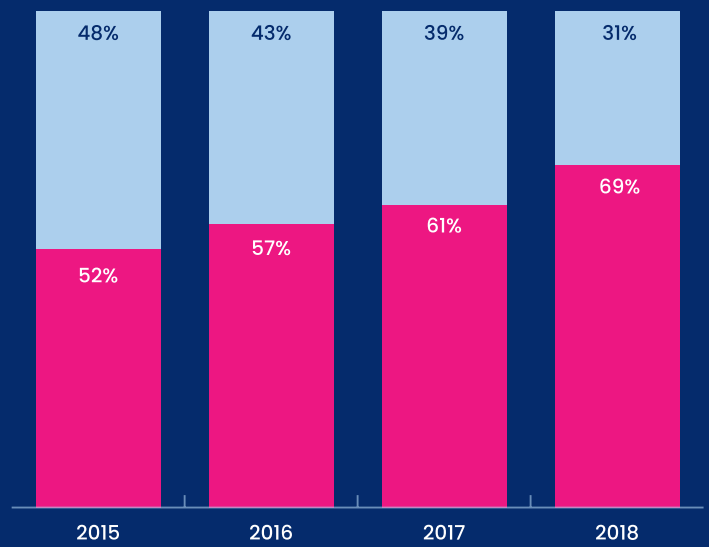


Revenue from meals has increased by

▲ **14%**

Order Source

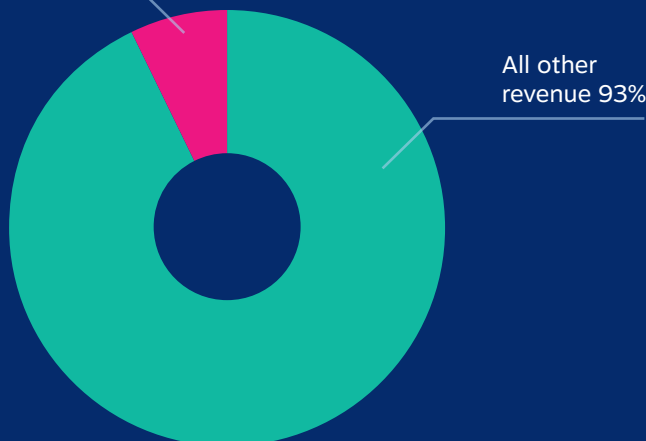
- Online
- BO/Phone



Online sales have grown by

▲ **17%**

Ticket levy 7%



Revenue from the ticket levy accounts for

▲ **7%**



Thank you

We would like to thank the entire team at Liverpool's Royal Court for their help in putting this case study together. We are so proud to consider them an important part of the Ticketsolve community and look forward to helping them grow even more in the coming years!

Get in Touch

Ireland

The GCE

Taylor's Lane, Dublin 8

T +353 (0) 1 524 0954

United Kingdom

Piccadilly House

49 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2AP

T +44 (0) 1865 987 667

talktickets@ticketsolve.com

www.ticketsolve.com