



**SANKARA**  
EYE FOUNDATION

**PurplePass**

professional ticketing for professional people

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## About The Sankara Eye Foundation

The Sankara Eye Foundation (SEF) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to reach out to the rural poor and provide quality eye care free of cost to the needy by building operationally self-sufficient super specialty eye care hospitals across India. In addition to fundraising efforts through their website GiftofVision.org, the company organizes events and concerts around the United States to help fund these hospitals in India. Together, these efforts help support the organization's ultimate goal of building hospitals in India where free surgeries can be performed. To date, there have been over 1 million free surgeries provided to the poor.

## The Challenges

The events organized by SEF are typically between 2,000 to 5,000 guests in attendance with some events exceeding 10,000 or more. Although some events, such as their very popular Dandia, are general admission, most of them do require assigned seating. This posed several challenges as SEF typically had to manage and track the assignment of seats by hand. Each seat would be manually assigned, pulled from inventory, and the tickets placed into an envelope which would either be mailed to the customer or held at will call.

When third-party resellers were involved, things became even more complicated. Blocks of tickets were allocated and set aside for each reseller as this was the only way to ensure the same seat was not sold twice. One major challenge with this setup is that customers buying from a reseller would have a limited selection to choose from. Another challenge is that once a reseller sold out, they had to wait to be allocated more tickets before they could start selling again. Lastly, keeping track of which tickets were with which reseller as well as how much money is owed by each greatly contributed to the SEF workload.

Another challenge was that when customers purchased tickets, they did not know where they were sitting until they received their tickets in the mail or if they chose will call, the day of the event. Unfortunately, this made it difficult for friends and family members to book seats near each other.

Customers would have to call in to the SEF office to find out where everyone was sitting and put in a special request to be sat next to them. This further added to the SEF workload. When it came to general admission, their Dandia events also presented their own unique set of challenges. Since there was no digital ticketing and all customers were put on will call, upwards of 5,000 guests would need to be checked in one-by-one at the event. This was a tedious process which created a slow and congested entrance.

Tracking sales and the return on investment for their advertising and marketing was also a challenge, since sales couldn't often be directly linked to one advertising method or the other. Paired with the fact that the tickets were being purchased from a third-party website in an offline fashion, their marketing efforts were not as efficient as possible.

One of the reasons for not making the switch to a digital ticketing platform sooner was that some of the venues had limited or no internet access at all. This made the option of running a web-based box office difficult. So even if SEF had made the switch to an online ticketing platform, they would not have been able to take advantage of it due to the limited internet access at the venues.

## The Solutions

The first solution that was implemented to address several of the challenges was an interactive assigned seating map. This allowed customers choose their own seats while purchasing tickets. This not only improved the overall buying experience of the customer and reduce the workload for SEF, it also allowed for purchasing seats next to friends and family quickly and easily.

Even with the new interactive seating map, SEF still had the task of managing and fulfilling physical tickets since some venues required their own hard tickets to be used rather than outside digital ticketing. SEF took advantage of the built-in fulfillment system to identify new orders, print packaging labels, and mark orders as shipped once they were packaged up and sent out. This reduced the amount of manual work and changes of human error since everything was tracked digitally through Purplepass.

Addressing the return on investment of ads was also important to the foundation, and with Purplepass, SEF was able to see their marketing performance in a whole new light. They were now able to see precisely how many tickets were sold and how much revenue was generated for each marketing channel, be it through their newsletters, website ads, PPC ads, Facebook ads, affiliates, etc. This made it possible for the foundation to optimize ad spending by focusing dollars on channels that were producing results and cutting off channels that were underperforming.



While implementing such a wide array of solutions, SEF was able to still maintain strong branding for the customers from start to finish. The website interface, purchasing pages, email receipts, and packaging slips were all branded with Sankara Eye Foundation.

The issue regarding third-party ticket sales was resolved by adding the embedded ticket widgets to their websites. This meant that guests would have access to the same pool of available seats and purchase their tickets, regardless if they were on the GiftOfVision.org website or a reseller's website. Resellers wouldn't have to be assigned a block of tickets as they did in the past, saving SEF time while improving the buying experience for the customer. Real-time seating information was provided to all widgets from the central database, so there was no risk of selling the same ticket twice or selling out of that reseller's allocation of. An added benefit was that SEF was then able to track all ticket sales, regardless of channel, through a comprehensive statistics and reporting page in their Purplepass account. This made it easy for SEF to calculate the commission due to each reseller.

On the day of the event, a cloud-based box office could be accessed anywhere Internet access was possible. This cloud-based box office has an interface with information on will call guests, orders, ticket replacements, cash/credit sales, and admission statistics. Real-time sales data was saved to the cloud, and guests could now quickly have their tickets scanned and could enter the venue without a long wait. By providing an onsite server to power the box office, Sankara Eye Foundation had the freedom to run a complete electronic box office system without having to worry about the internet access at the venue. They were able to utilize upwards of a dozen POS stations to scan tickets, check in will call orders, sell tickets at the door as well as view real-time admission data all without any internet access.

***"I am so happy to have found Purplepass. We just completed a series of three concerts in three different cities. Total attendance was over 18,000. Purplepass made the management of these events very easy. We will continue using their wonderful service for future events"***

**Anil Lal**  
**Sankara Eye Foundation**

