



PurplePass

professional ticketing for professional people

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About the Scottsdale Culinary Festival

Billed as “Arizona’s Tastiest Fundraiser”, the Scottsdale Culinary Festival is a non-profit event that raises money for the Scottsdale League for the Arts. The event attracts more than 30,000 visitors each year, and all proceeds go directly to the League for the Arts. The Scottsdale Culinary Festival continues to grow in popularity, and it was voted the Best Food and Drink Festival by AZCentral.com in 2015.

Taking place over 25 acres, the Scottsdale Culinary Festival offers something for everyone. For the foodies, the festival offers food tastings, culinary contests and instructional wine seminars. Families can enjoy a free family fest with games, crafts and bouncy houses. Beer fanatics can attend the Southwest Festival of Beers, which has more than 250 beers available for sampling. Live entertainment is presented on multiple stages throughout the festival to keep the guests on their toes and dancing when they aren’t enjoying the food or drinks.

In addition to these standard attractions, the Scottsdale Culinary Festival also offers a VIP package that features unlimited food and wine tasting, as well as the opportunity to meet top chefs.

The Challenges

The biggest problem faced by the Scottsdale Culinary Festival was the nature of the festival itself. Although the event is commonly known as the Scottsdale Culinary Festival, the festival is actually a combination of smaller events. The Scottsdale Festival of Beers, for example, was a separate event held within the main event of the festival, the Great Arizona Picnic. Coordinating sales and admission control for this event within an event created several issues, the primary one being customer confusion in terms of gaining access.

This wasn’t just a problem from a logistic sense. Many of the individual events charged separate fees for admission. It was necessary to find a way to sell tickets to all of these events, as well as several packages



that included multiple events, from a central location. This would allow visitors to plan their visits and to make all of their ticket purchases ahead of time so that they could focus on enjoying the festival.

Selling tickets in one place was one issue for the multiple parts of the Scottsdale Culinary Festival, but it was far from the only issue. Each of the different events, and the tickets for those events, needed to talk to each other and share information across the platform. If a package was sold to a visitor, each event had to have its own unique tickets issued automatically and given to the customer in one simple transaction. Infrastructure was also needed to scan package tickets that were purchased the day of the event, even if those tickets weren't directly sold by that particular event.

The issue of ticket scanning was a particularly big problem because of the nature of the typical ticket purchase. With weather being a concern for many potential visitors, a large number of visitors waited until the last minute to buy tickets so that they didn't waste money on a rained out event. Unfortunately, the rush of last-minute traffic often led to long lines at the entrance of the festival. Staff needed to identify a way to keep the line moving and ensure that visitors made their way inside, as opposed to turning around and going home.

Another entrance-related issue was the fact that there were four admission gates that were city blocks apart from one another. A technological solution had to be uncovered that would prevent the same ticket from granting admission at multiple gates. In essence, the ticket booths had to operate independently, yet they had to act as part of a larger unit at the same time.

Sponsorship is a large part of any festival, and the Scottsdale Culinary Festival is no different. Sponsors are more apt to pledge more money if they have a great deal of visibility. Therefore, a big challenge was identifying ways to prominently feature their sponsors throughout the festival. Additionally, sponsors needed to have their own pre-printed tickets so that they could enter and enjoy the festival with no interruptions.

The Solutions

As soon as Purplepass came onboard, all of these challenges were addressed head-on. The first thing Purplepass did was set up ticket widgets on the festival's website. Doing this allowed customers to go directly to the Scottsdale Culinary Festival website to learn more about the events and purchase tickets. Whether they were purchasing single tickets or multi-day passes, they could select everything they wanted and complete their purchase from start to finish directly on the event website. This streamlined the buying experience for the customers and since everything was in one place, it made it easy to figure out which events they wanted to attend.



In addition, the Scottsdale Culinary Festival had the ability to create any packages they wanted in order to sell multiple events at once. Those who purchased packages received multiple tickets so that they had one ticket for each event they'd be attending. It helped the festival to track the number of packages they sold, while still enabling them to manage the ticket inventory for each individual event. Visitors could simply print out their tickets with the knowledge that they had everything they needed to enter the events they wanted to attend.

The decision to provide multiple tickets to visitors attending multiple events also helped out festival personnel. Workers were provided portable scanners so that they could scan each ticket and validate that each attendee was a paid customer. Doing this eliminated the chance of unpaid visitors sneaking into the festival. It also meant that each ticket for each event could have its own bar code. No longer would there be any confusion about people trying to get into multiple events with one ticket.

The ticket scanners were linked with the cloud system set up by Purplepass. Not only did this facilitate communication between all four of the entrance gates and the individual events, but it made life a lot easier for the sizable walk-up crowd. Instead of rushing the gate, these individuals could purchase tickets online and show the digital barcodes they obtained on their phones. This drastically reduced the time needed to get visitors through the door, and it made those visitors much more excited about their trip to the festival.

To appease the desires of additional sponsor recognition, the Scottsdale Culinary Festival offered those sponsors the opportunity to have their own custom artwork printed on all pre-printed and print-at-home tickets. This let them know that the festival cared about giving them the best possible platform for exposure. It also gave those companies the chance to create something special for the festival, which could result in even more goodwill.

By utilizing the centralized guest list management system, the tasks of issuing guest tickets, sponsors, COMPs, and media passes were drastically improved. By entering information directly into Purplepass, all guests were issued digital print-at-home tickets which were emailed directly to them. This allowed all of the guests to have their tickets in hand prior to the event so when they arrived, they could go directly to the entrance and get scanned in. Not only did this greatly improve the overall experience for their valued sponsors, media, staff, and other COMPed guests, it also reduced congestion at the box office since they no longer needed to manage guest lists.

The technological and logistic improvements implemented by Purplepass will help the Scottsdale Culinary Festival in future years. They now understand the true appeal of each event within the festival and how much each event contributed to the Scottsdale League for the Arts. They can use this data to tweak their offerings to make sure visitors have the best possible experience and that the Scottsdale League for the Arts receives the largest possible donation.