

Encore Tickets



Based in Leicester Square, at the heart of London's theatre-land, Encore Tickets is the fastest growing ticketing wholesaler in the UK, supplying 7% of the West End's tickets. 75% of incoming and domestic tour operators use Encore as their preferred ticket supplier for London theatres, restaurants and attractions and total sales for year ending September 2005 will top £13 million.

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Director of Marketing at Encore Tickets, Sean Sweeney

Encore Tickets has its own reservation system, however a large number of bookings are made via email. Director of Marketing at Encore Tickets, Sean Sweeney explains, "We are a service business and as such the repeat business we receive is as a direct result of our clients' experience in booking with us. We need to be 100% confident that every prospective email booking reaches us in a timely fashion."

"We have a simple IT requirement, but it is vital to the success of our business that we are up and running 24/7. With our previous system, we were constantly experiencing IT problems from major email disruptions to total system crashes."

As a small, growing company it was not realistic for Encore to employ an in-house IT person.

"In addition to the cost implications it was recognised that a member of staff would have holidays and occasional sick days and if the system went down during this time we would be unable to provide adequate cover," explains Sweeney.

The solution was to outsource the management of its IT function to an established consultancy. Sweeney states, "When you are placing such a critical element of your day-to-day business in the hands of someone else you need to be sure you chose wisely."

Two IT companies were invited to tender for the project, however it was the knowledge and understanding of Encore Tickets' requirements that won ramzac the contract.

Adds Sweeney,
"We immediately felt comfortable that they understood our concerns and the strategic role that IT played in the success of our business. We were also reassured by a personal recommendation from our accountancy firm."

With 14 years' experience of IT outsourcing Surrey-based ramsac was able to hit the ground running, quickly assessing the current state of the IT systems and acting to deliver the most appropriate strategy. Technical Consultant at ramsac and IT Manager for Encore Tickets, Paul Mew explains, *"We needed to put fundamental business processes in place that would make IT simple for Encore Tickets."*

The first job was to stabilise the network to stop the constant IT system crashes. Many of the PCs were operating on different versions of Microsoft Windows and needed to be standardised to run on the same software. A server was in place but staff were saving important documents locally. Also, the organisation was running Exchange Server, but staff were again storing email locally in Outlook Express.

As the email mountain continued to build it would reach the 2GB limit and the

PC would crash, leaving the member of staff unable to access email, often losing important messages and unable to access all other documents stored on the PC.

A new server was specified and installed by ramsac and Exchange correctly configured to ensure that the storage of all documents and email was centralised, freeing up hard-disk space and therefore reducing the frequency of system failures. ramsac also realised that it could reduce the cost of communications by making use of an available leased line. *"These new processes encouraged more information sharing across the organisation and increased operational efficiency whilst reducing communications costs considerably,"* adds Mew.

Once the network was stabilised and business processes streamlined a package of both on-and-off site service and support was provided by ramsac to Encore Tickets. A dedicated telephone helpdesk service and an IT Manager was provided, who visits the site once a month to troubleshoot any issues, offer advice and discuss plans for ongoing IT requirements.

Sweeney has been impressed with the quality of service that Encore Tickets has received, *"ramzac has proven itself to*

be dependable, helpful and professional. We can now rely on our IT network and the applications it hosts. If a problem arises we know that help is immediately available to keep us up and running."

Mew states, *"We endeavour where possible to resolve an issue within one-hour of receiving the call from the helpdesk. Our trained team of Support Consultants are able to dial in remotely to the Encore Tickets' network and quickly diagnose and solve the problem."*

ramzac's pricing structure also works particularly well for Encore Tickets, Sweeney adds, *"Before we were continuously fire-fighting our IT issues and could not effectively budget our expenditure. ramsac bills a monthly fee, which we can factor into our yearly budget, enabling us to implement strategic IT planning for the first time and at the fraction of the cost of employing a full time IT manager."*

"As Encore Tickets continues to expand and further entrench its position as the market leader, we will continue to look to ramsac to support our IT needs, allowing us to focus on our business with improved efficiency and without unnecessary interruption," concludes Sweeney.