



EventbriteTM

Upton Blues Festival: From 5,000 attendees upwards!

Upton Blues Festival is one of the UK's largest free blues festivals. It is held in July each year around the town of Upton upon Severn in Worcestershire. The festival was established 12 years ago by a handful of people who are passionate about blues music and has just become a registered charity.

With a small budget, the organising committee originally wanted to create a free music festival for the people of Upton. At the time it was a small affair held in a number of local pubs that mostly attracted a crowd from the town. Upton upon Severn is a pretty riverside town that has a history of hosting other festivals, that have become the towns' way to promote itself. Since its small beginnings, the festival has grown rapidly to fill the town with visitors, while still offering free entry to all events. To raise revenue and continue growing, the organizers began offering camping facilities in a nearby field and selling camping tickets.

Today, Upton Blues Festival is a national event that welcomes about 5,000 attendees a day, 1,000 of whom are campers. The festival encompasses three main stages around the town and gigs taking place in nine additional pubs. The festival attracts top UK blues names and in 2012 featured 96 live music performances over three days.

"We need a ticketing solution"

Before 2012, the festival organisers had never used an online ticketing system. Until then, camping tickets could be purchased through the festival website via Paypal. "We used to manage the ticket sales ourselves, which meant manually typing campers' details into a spreadsheet. It was very time-consuming" says Sue Braithwaite, one of the festival's volunteer organising committee, "We were also concerned that there was a small amount of fraud, with people sharing a Paypal receipt on email. We needed a more secure system."

Using Eventbrite

Sue heard about Eventbrite from someone who had used it for a charity event. She says: "From my first conversation with Eventbrite, I knew we had

Eventbrite provides:



***Easy to create
event pages for online
ticket sales***



***Easily tailored
communication with
registered attendees***



***No more fraud at
the door thanks to
individual QR codes***

found what we were looking for. " She continues, "We are not technical people, so the fact that we could call and get help on the spot from a human being made all the difference." Oliver Carpenter, another member of the organising committee mentions: "After an initial conversation with Eventbrite, we created the festival event web page ourselves on the Eventbrite platform, as it is surprisingly straight forward and user-friendly!"

The organising committee kept things simple in 2012 by charging a single camping ticket price online and a higher price on the gate.

The goal for 2013 is to attract more campers, since the festival prides itself on being self-funded with little support from the Council or sponsors. The organisers explain "70% of the festival revenue comes from campers, so the sale of camping tickets is vital for the success of the event".

Great features!

Upton Blues Festival used Eventbrite's Entry Manager mobile app to check people in and to scan printed tickets. Grahame Bunn, another committee member and local publican says " It worked like a dream! It is so simple! We were expecting some kind of problem or challenge and it simply did not happen!" He continues, "The tickets with QR codes gave us the confidence that once someone had been checked in, their ticket could not be used by someone else to check in again. No more fraud!"

Another feature that the team used extensively was Eventbrite's free email functionality, which allowed Upton Blues to communicate to attendees before the event started. Oliver explains, "All campers came with their tickets printed on paper, due to very explicit directions we sent before the event via the confirmation email." He adds "It was really simple to send out emails to our attendees, grouping them according to the day when they had bought a ticket."

'We had to change the location of the camping field ten days before the event due to the river flooding' adds Grahame. 'Recent ticket buyers knew about the new location but the early-birds needed to be told the news Having the ability to target a specific group of attendees with a tailored message was fantastic!'

"This is not a youth market we are aiming at. Blues fans are generally 30-65 so the use of QR codes and smart phones is a little alien to many of them, including us, but despite the introduction of the new technology, everyone felt very comfortable with how efficient it was."

Another feature that was surprisingly simple to use was the ticket refund option, which was "very straightforward" according to Oliver.

Sue mentions, "We found the reports that Eventbrite created for us really interesting. A report told us where attendees came from, around the country. Our key findings were that we had more Londoners than expected

EVENTBRITE REPORTS

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USER-FRIENDLY INTERFACE

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HAPPY TO HELP

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Sue Braithwaite,
Upton Blues Festival
organising committee

and the campers did not necessarily come from far away.” She continues, “We now need to make the most of these data and to work with other organisers on the blues circuit, to co-promote each other’s events to the UK’s blues festivals fans.”

Next year, the Upton Blues Festival organising committee hopes to attract 20% more campers, and to sell merchandise and programmes prior to the day of the event on Eventbrite.

“Social media integration is another feature of Eventbrite we plan to use next year” explains Oliver. “We already have a very active Facebook community and are working to maximise it.” He adds, “We advertise the event in a couple of blues magazines and get some coverage with the local press. Due to budget restrictions, social media has become an important promotional tool for the future.”

Coming next

Next year, they also plan to offer campers the option to use the Eventbrite App for check-in to avoid having to print their ticket “Some people don’t have access to a printer, and it’s greener not to print anything” explains Sue.

Oliver concludes: ***“What makes the Eventbrite experience great for us is the user-friendly interface from both the organizer and attendee’s point of view, where all the details have been thought about and anticipated.”*** He concludes, “The fact that there is someone on the phone to help you at any time makes Eventbrite a more useable option for people like us who run an event but aren’t technology focused.”

Get ready, the next Upton Blues Festival is on 19th to 21st July 2013!
www.uptonbluesfestival.org.uk

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or contact us to speak with a sales representative: 0800 652 4993**