Spirit uses Zebra MC40s to speed up front-of-house processes at the Royal Opera House

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Customer satisfaction is a top priority for prestigious entertainment venues such as the Royal Opera House. One key element of satisfaction is to have as few delays for customers as possible – which means developing faster and more efficient processes. The Royal Opera House therefore invited Spirit Data Capture to source suitable handheld devices that could be used for scanning the barcodes on vouchers and tickets. This is already successfully streamlining the movement of customers within the venue.

The Royal Opera House is based in London's Covent Garden and is home to both the Royal Opera and the Royal Ballet. Many of Handel's operas and oratorios were first performed at the theatre in the 18th century. In 1997, a major redevelopment project started, with the current building being completed in 2000.

Defining the issue

With such a popular and attractive venue, it's important to keep customer delays to a minimum. However, until recently, members of the theatre's staff were involved in visually checking all vouchers and tickets and keeping physical copies. The theatre decided it needed to streamline these processes and to try and reduce the amount of paper involved.

It therefore started exploring the potential of handheld scanning devices that would enable staff to scan tickets in the queue rather than customers having to visit the ticket counter. The use of barcode scanners would enable the theatre to introduce more etickets and evouchers that could reside on customers' mobile phones. This would also reduce the amount of physical stock used throughout the building.

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

Developing the solution

The Royal Opera House therefore started searching for a suitable solution for its front-of-house services. A fellow theatre recommended Spirit Data Capture, an independent specialist in the mobile data capture arena.

Following subsequent discussions with the Royal Opera House, Spirit recommended the Zebra (formerly Motorola) MC40 – a sleek and compact mobile computer that can read 1D and 2D barcodes. It has an omni-directional scanner, an Android operating system and a 4.3 inch colour touchscreen display.

Jenna Dobson, Business Analyst at the Royal Opera House, says: "We've started using the Zebra MC40 scanners with an application that works with our CRM system. They are being used to scan vouchers for programmes and champagne by the front-of-house team and by bar personnel.

"We will also eventually be using them for ticket scanning. Members of the public will either be able to print out their tickets at home, or have them on their mobiles – so we won't have to print so many. The same process also applies to any vouchers that they bring to the performances."

Reaping the rewards

To date, the MC40 scanners have been working very well. Jenna remarks: "They have been incredibly reliable, so we tend to use them every night when we have a performance, and every day for matinees. This means that we'll be using them five or six days a week for scanning vouchers - and they'll also be used for scanning tickets later in the year. We've had no issues with them – they're easy to work with and very robust."

At the moment, the Royal Opera House is going through another large renovation project. One of the studio theatres downstairs and some of the visitor-facing areas are being redeveloped. Jenna says: "In the future, we might explore the possibility of expanding our use of ticket and voucher scanners to other areas of the building."

She adds: "Working with Spirit Data Capture has been a really positive experience. They've been quick, really reactive and great at handling our requests for equipment. In terms of the MC40s, we've had a really good response from customers and from staff around the building. The scanners have really helped to modernise and streamline our processes for our front-of-house teams and have made the experience a lot quicker and easier for visiting members of the public."

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