Foolproof tips

FOR A SUCCESSFUL SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION

We've overseen 190+ implementations at Spektrix so we've learnt a few pearls of wisdom about what's important (and what's less so) along the way. Here are the top 4 things to pay close attention to right away followed by a list of things you should avoid for a stress-free, successful software implementation. Focus your attention on:

1. Your website

We shouldn't need to tell you that your website is arguably the biggest sales tool that you have. At the very least, your online booking process needs to be integrated carefully into your website and keep customers on your branded website from beginning to end. However, the best websites are built with the online booking software in mind from the beginning, making the most of all the available features.

Test, test and test again on different browsers, on tablets, on mobiles and make it as easy as possible for people to invest in your work and buy a ticket. Borrow ideas from other arts or e-commerce sites that you rate and give ticket sales top billing alongside promoting your work and brand.

2. Your people

At Spektrix we see a lot of 'muscle memory' when we see people using their legacy systems. People know exactly where and how to click and, like most of us, they can go into autopilot when they know a piece of box office software well.

Even the most intuitive piece of software is still new; so give your staff time to get used to if before you go live. With Spektrix you'll have at least one 'migration' of data from your old system before switching if off for good. Let *everyone* have a go at selling a ticket and don't let your new system be a stranger on go live day.

3. Your mission

Don't let the mission of your arts organisation get lost in the fog of project planning and

SPEKTRIX《

deadlines. If your aim is to shout about new writing and get first time bookers through the door then keep that in mind all through the process.

Be upfront with your project manager about what's immovable from the very beginning – chances are they've got a few ideas of their own about how the new software can support your goals and they'll be more than happy to share them.

4. Bells & whistles

You probably partly chose your new system because it has additional, improved ticketing, CRM or fundraising functionality that you didn't have at your fingertips beforehand.

If your customers can now see the view from their seat, add a donation, book a table in the restaurant, get a voucher for an interval drink and then tweet/Facebook their booking from the checkout, let them do it!

Don't leave setting all of it up for a rainy day – make the most of added value of your new software from the very beginning.

It's not all about the new things you should be embracing, however. There are a few things you should avoid too. In our experience, these are the things that can make the process of implementing a new piece software less successful...

1. Paying too much attention to your reports

It sounds harsh but you're not going to be sitting down to produce the greatest portfolio of data analysis in the known universe in the first week of having a new system, you'll have plenty of other demands on your time. Yes, make sure the basics are covered so you can reconcile your takings, know how much you've taken for each show to update your producers, etc.

But – any box office system worth its salt will have considered the 'bread and butter' reports and they'll only ever be a few clicks away. If you need something custom and specific, that's absolutely fine, but get your head fully around the concepts in your system before you try and replicate the same old analysis that may no longer be applicable.

2. Sticking to old habits

Implementing a new piece of software is an excuse to scrutinise operational practices and processes that you already have in place across your arts organisation. Never believe that 'because we've always done it that way' is a reason to continue doing something.

SPEKTRIX

You've likely built your reasons around the restrictions of your previous system, so take the opportunity to make changes. No software solution is a like-for-like replacement for another – take the initiative and 'upgrade' your processes at the same time.

3. Panicking(!)

Your new box office software is absolutely not there to make you or your team feel deskilled – we really can't say this enough.

The best software is built with usability in mind so master the tools of the system and you'll put you and your organisation in the absolute best position going forward. Share your system knowledge across the organisation and help everyone think big and feel clever.

4. Worrying about what's going to happen next week/month/year

Your new software supplier won't leave you in the lurch after you've gone live and you shouldn't shy away from getting in touch with them either. Ongoing support, training and consultancy is a massive value-add for any system and if it's available you should make good use of it.

At Spektrix we like to think we're in a long-term committed relationship with members of our community. If our users stop calling and emailing us we'll likely show up at your door asking if everything is okay (or ask if you'd like a Support visit for a catch up – we're not that scary).

Helen Gage is a Team Manager (Support and Projects) at Spektrix, whose mission is to help arts venues be more successful through better ticketing, marketing and fundraising.

www.spektrix.com / hello@spektrix.com / @spektrix