

Data Sharing: how Sadler's Wells put the customer first and increased touring company customer data by 25%

At a glance

- **Objective:**

Sadler's Wells needed to put in place safe and secure ways to share personal data with their touring partners as a requirement of Arts Council England (ACE) funding.

- **Project:**

Sadler's Wells partnered with The Barbican, Southbank Centre and Purple Seven to produce a tool that met ACE National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) requirements in full and facilitated the easy and secure sharing of opted-in customer data.

Sebastian Cheswright Cater, Director of Marketing and Sales and **Matt Kirby, Head of IT** at Sadler's Wells share their knowledge and expertise about their best practice to date and how putting the customer first has helped them meet ACE requirements, stay legally compliant, support their artistic partners and save hours of valuable staff time.



April 2016 - new requirements established:

Sadler's Wells is committed to developing audiences for dance at a local and national level, and data sharing plays an important part of that work. As both a venue and a touring producer, we have received requests from our touring company partners for data, as well as made requests for data to the venues we tour to. The ACE regulations set the sector a challenge to find a solution to data sharing, and through working in partnership with The Barbican, Southbank Centre and Purple Seven, we collectively devised a practical response that satisfied ACE's needs. As an industry, we are all still in the early stages of developing best practice, which will only come with time, but we have worked closely with our Associate Artists and Companies, and NPO touring partners, to support them as they develop their own data protection systems and policies.

Concerns:

- 1.

Ensuring that we were **obtaining clear and actionable consent** from ticket bookers for their data to be responsibly shared.

- 2.

Ensuring that any subsequent **data transfer was tracked and secure** and clearly showed the demarcation point between ourselves and the company that we are sharing data with, so that it's clear where our legal responsibilities as Data Controller end and the touring company's begins.



The 'Data-Sharing' solution Purple Seven have developed with us delivers a secure portal that is easy to use by both us and our NPO partners.

Putting the customer first:

Our starting point for this initiative has always been to start with the customer, and focus on what it is that they want. We have never been concerned about 'owning' the customer, as we know through Purple Seven's audience insights that while arts attenders may attend our venue frequently, they also choose to visit a range of other venues as part of their cultural mix. We have always seen our role as custodians of the customer's data - firstly, in following data protection legislation and protecting their data, and secondly in striving to give our customers a good balance of communications that are targeted to their interests.

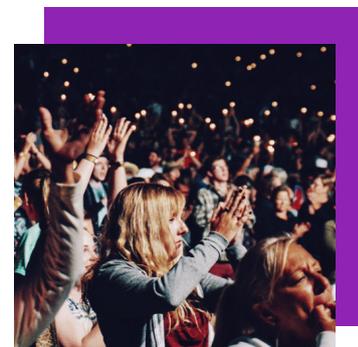
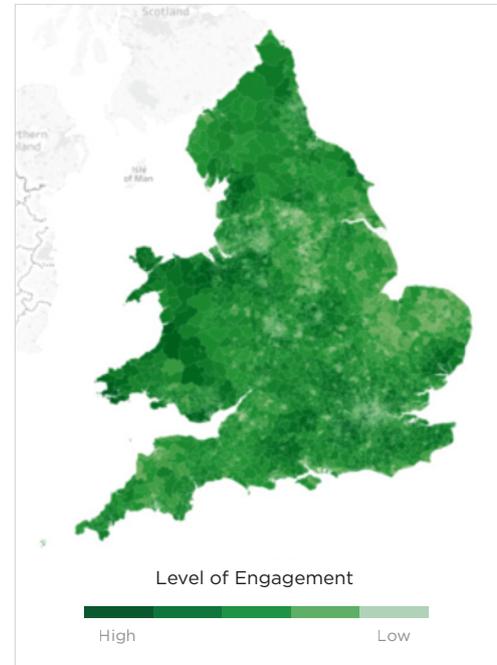
When we launched this initiative, we held a series of meetings with our Associate Artists and Companies, and talked through the ways in which we can collaborate to integrate our communications to support our partners' needs. This included adding a link to their website newsletter sign-up page on our post-show emails, and tweeting this link as well.

We are hopeful that our approach of putting the customer first (as per the data protection principles) and making it clear that we will treat their data as we have explained to them will foster a greater level of trust between the audience and ourselves. We hope this will encourage greater opt-ins as our customers know we are only sharing with the company whose work they are seeing, and not sending it out to unknown third parties - perhaps their biggest fear given the recent charity data selling scandals in the news.

How much data have you shared since this initiative began?

We have contacted all the eligible NPO organisations who have appeared on stage here (17 to date), and actually shared data with four organisations. Others are eligible and are in the process of setting up the required safeguards, but many are addressing resourcing needs before being in a position to process the data in a secure and legally compliant way.

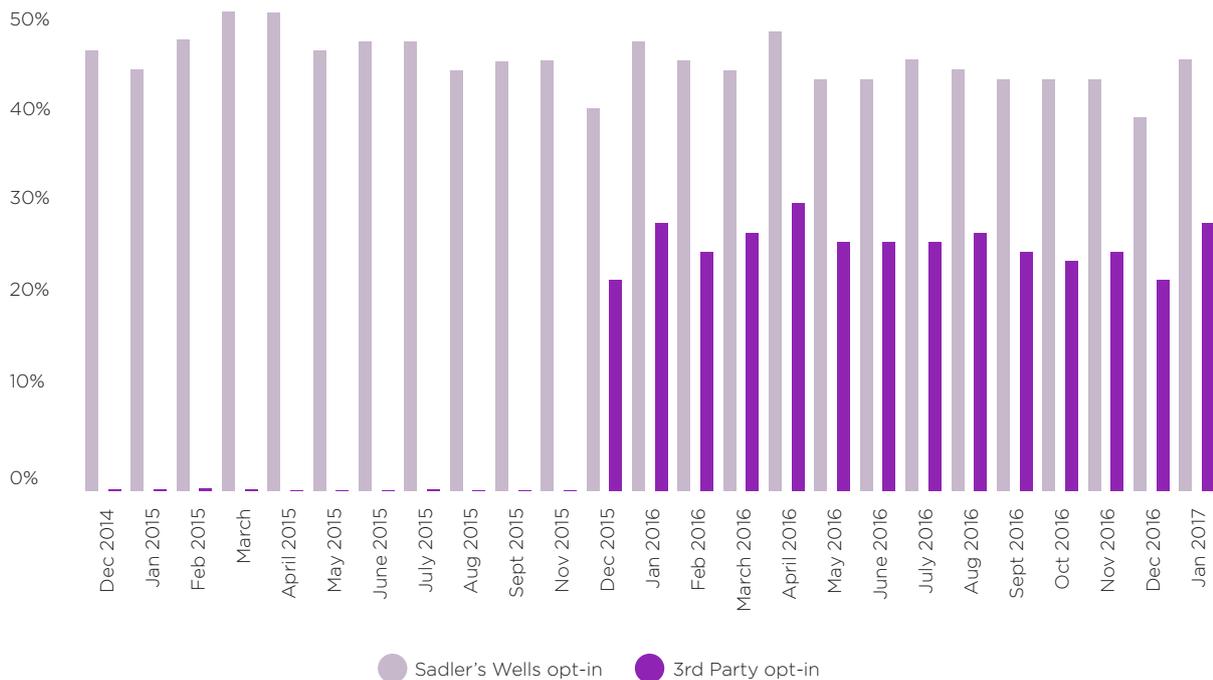
Fig 1. Arts Dimensions from Purple Seven understanding of arts attendance across the country based on 5.2million bookers.



Subscribe explosion!

In keeping with industry best practice in December 2015 we changed our opt-in question for data sharing from a generic 'third party' to a more accurate and descriptive 'company whose work you're seeing on stage'. This resulted in an explosive increase in sign-ups, from practically zero to around 25%! At the same time, sign-ups for Sadler's Wells have remained at around the same level, so there's been no noticeable loss in data to ourselves, and a huge increase to our NPO partners.

Fig 2. Monthly opt-in results (new customers)



Below are some recent case studies showing the balance of sign-ups between Sadler's Wells and third party/NPOs:

Show	Venue	Sadler's opt-in	3rd party opt-in
Physical theatre company	The Peacock	59%	15%
Ballet company	Sadler's Wells main house	60%	18%
Cutting edge contemporary	Sadler's Wells main house	56%	18%
Narrative dance	Sadler's Wells main house	58%	17%

Once 'Data Sharing' was fully operational, we estimated a 3rd party/NPO sign-up rate between 15-20%, which has proved accurate, and we anticipate this number increasing over time. But what does this tell us? It proves that arts audiences do indeed want to hear from the companies whose work they're seeing and are open to building relationships with touring companies on a personal level.

It is therefore important that the industry adopts a way to share sensitive data like this in a secure way, to maintain its reputation as trustworthy custodians of customer details.

How has 'Data-Sharing' helped?

The main benefit is being able to share the data securely and having a clear record of the transfer being successful. As the system is so automated, with only limited input from us we are saving considerable amounts of time compared to a more cumbersome manual alternative.



Advice:

Our advice to other NPO venues is to comply with the relevant data protection regulations and ensure they can demonstrate that their practises are safe. We would be happy to share the documentation that we use with any NPOs needing assistance, by emailing data.protection@sadlerswells.com, and we also recommend reading this document: <https://ico.org.uk/media/1624219/preparing-for-the-gdpr-12-steps.pdf>

It is definitely worth considering such a facility as Purple Seven's 'Data-Sharing'. Without a solution like this in place it's very easy to end up sending data insecurely – for example, sending it unencrypted by email. If the attachment is encrypted people often put the password in the same email – so if anyone intercepts that email they have everything they need to access the data. It also means if there is a data breach it's very hard to demonstrate which party is at fault, which could mean both venue and touring company are liable for a hefty fine from the ICO.

Response from NPO partners:

Through the meetings that we've held with our NPO partners introducing the principles of this initiative, we established right from the start a very positive, constructive working relationship with them all. We were keen to find a way that we could support them as much as possible, as many had not had to get involved in data protection before to this level. There is definitely more work to be done in relation to reporting, but this is something we can explore in the months and years to come, once all the partners have the correct systems and processes in place.

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Sebastian Cheswright Cater

Director of Marketing & Sales, Sadler's Wells

Matt Kirby

Head of IT, Sadler's Wells

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