

Writing a good tender for **ticketing** in **culture**

1 Why a good tender matters

A ticketing system is much more than a sales tool. It is the digital backbone of your audience engagement, marketing, reporting, and service. Yet calls for tender for ticketing systems are often drafted too generally, too technically, or with the wrong assumptions. This leads to frustrations after delivery, operational limitations, and missed opportunities.

A good tender ensures that you:

- compare the right solutions, not just prices or buzzwords
- sharpen your own needs
- choose a system that fits your vision and operations

This guide helps you draft a well-founded, focused, and future-proof tender.

2 The 10 building blocks of a strong ticketing tender

1. Functional requirements

Provide a clear overview of the basic functionalities you need, for example:

- sales by event type, seat, or segment
- memberships, subscriptions, vouchers
- waiting lists, price differentiation, promotions
- export of visitor lists

Avoid overly technical wording. Describe what you need rather than how it should work technically.

2. Support & collaboration

Ask explicitly how support is organized:

- response times to questions
- availability during peak moments
- communication about updates

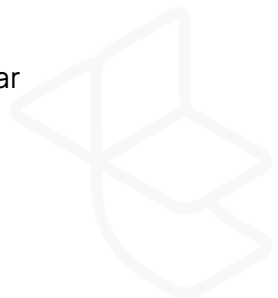
Important:

- For speed and expertise, support should ideally come directly from the software developer, not through an intermediary.
- A good ticketing system is also about people. Ask how the team works, and how knowledge transfer is managed.

3. Mobile applications & app

The future of ticketing is mobile. More and more visitors use their smartphone for tickets. Ask about:

- availability and usability of a mobile app where tickets automatically appear
- self-service for customers (manage data, transfer tickets)



- targeted communication with users
- secure ticketing options to combat black-market sales

4. Marketing & audience data

A modern ticketing system supports targeted audience engagement. Ask about:

- user-friendly audience database
- configurable audience data, accessible for external tools
- segmentation of visitors by behavior
- integrated email marketing tool
- automated campaigns or triggers

5. Reporting & insights

Make sure you don't navigate blindly. Ask about:

- real-time dashboards
- accessible reporting for non-technical users
- ability to create custom reports

6. API & integrations

A good system doesn't live in isolation. Explicitly ask about:

- a solid approach to sustainable data integrations
- existing integrations with CMS, CRM, email marketing, payment platforms, etc.
- synchronization possibilities with other tools (venue management, catering, ...)

7. POS integration & refunds

Ask how the system handles:

- sales at the counter or by phone
- quick refunds and rebookings for cancellations
- cash, card, and voucher processing

8. Stability during peak loads

Pre-sale moments are crucial. Ask about:



- infrastructure scalability
- built-in protection against traffic spikes
- backups
- examples or references of comparable peaks

9. User-friendliness for end users

User experience drives conversion. Ask:

- how the ordering process works on desktop and mobile
- what adjustments are possible in flow or look & feel
- whether A/B testing or user statistics are available

10. Autonomy & adaptability

Avoid dependency on developers for every small change. Ask:

- which elements you can edit yourself (texts, flows, price tables)
- whether templates or editors are available
- how branding is integrated



3 Common pitfalls to avoid

- **Scope too broad**

Avoid “all-in-one” tenders covering very different needs (sports camps, hall rental, registrations for playgrounds or courses). Delivering high-quality ticketing for performing arts is already challenging; successful suppliers are specialized in specific ticketing domains.

- **One system for multiple organizations**

Collaboration is important, but each party needs a tailored, high-quality solution with reporting, branding, and audience data. Experience shows that separate systems work better than one shared system with limitations, problems, and privacy risks.

- **Too much technical detail**

Avoid prescribing technical specs such as database fields or server setups; focus on functional needs and desired outcomes, so suppliers can propose innovative solutions.

- **No room for differentiation**

Don’t force suppliers into a uniform mold; allow them to showcase their strengths, expertise, and unique approaches, so the market isn’t unnecessarily limited.

- **Unrealistic timing**

Plan a realistic implementation timeline, with enough time for analysis, technical integration, training, and testing. Too tight a schedule often leads to mistakes and higher costs.



4 Practical tips

- Review **sample tenders** from peer organizations.
- Use a **balanced scoring matrix**: assign clear weights per component, and don't let price dominate. Also value usability, support, integrations, references, and other quality aspects important to your work (e.g. 40% functionality, 20% support, 30% price, 10% usability).
- Add an appendix explaining your **audience engagement strategy**: context helps suppliers respond better.



5 Conclusion: how do you know you're on the right track?

A good tender is not only technically sharp, but also strategically thought-out. Choose a supplier who:

- understands your operations
- communicates clearly and quickly
- can show references in the cultural sector
- thinks ahead with you

Ask for a demo. Call a reference client. And ask yourself with every offer: “If tomorrow we want to try something new, can we move forward with this system?”

That's how you build a sustainable solution — and prevent your tender from becoming a hurdle instead of a lever.

Good luck!

