

Gateway Ticketing Systems

Case Study



Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium Improves Web Store Customer Service and Reduces Costs with eGalaxy Web Store

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium
Location: Tacoma, WA

Key Challenges

- A redirect to a third party host created a high error rate on delivery of PrintAtHome tickets
- Had no hands-on control of Web store content
- Updates to Web store information could take up to a week to complete and incurred additional fees
- Third party credit card processor required paying additional fees and choked staff efficiency with a cumbersome reporting process
- Staff had a lack of confidence in the Web store sales process

Solution

Upgrade to eGalaxy Web Store to:

- Increase sales and improve Web store customer service by minimizing PrintAtHome delivery errors
- Improve staff efficiency and accountability by simplifying reporting process
- Reduce costs by using one credit card processor and avoid third-party transaction fees
- Establish control of Web store content management

Business Results

- 98% decrease in online order errors
- 61% increase in online sales
- Improved operations efficiency

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium located in Tacoma, Washington, has 792 animals and 98 different species on display. The facility, founded in 1905, covers 29 acres of land overlooking Washington State's Puget Sound, and is part of the 700-acre Point Defiance Park. Point Defiance is engaged in the Species Survival Plan, run by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, for several endangered species.

Third Party Hosting Was Adversely Affecting Web Store Customer Service

Point Defiance has been using Galaxy to offer PrintAtHome ticketing for their annual Zoolights event since 2005, using a third party to host the Web store. Zoolights is open nightly from Thanksgiving to New Years Day and attracts an average of 90,000 visitors. With such a large volume of tickets being sold online, it was clear that a robust system for Web sales was critical to the success of the event.

Unfortunately, working with a third party to host the Web store did not provide Point Defiance with the online sales system they required. "We had some major challenges," said Donna Powell, Business & Administrative Services Manager of the Zoological & Environmental Education Division. "There was a lack of hands-on control of the online store content. Any changes we needed to make to the store required our staff to submit the information to technical support at the Web store host. There was often a delay— at times up to a week— before the information was updated," she said.

In addition to the delays was the cost. "Each time we had a change to be made we had to pay a fee to the host. Program additions or deletions, ticket price updates, etc., all cost extra," she said. Powell added, "Because of the redirect from our site, we also experienced a high error rate on delivery of the PrintAtHome tickets. I estimate that over 60% of the tickets ended up in the customer spam folder or were blocked."

Using a third party credit card processor for online sales was also an issue. "We had to pay additional fees, and the reporting process was cumbersome. It hampered staff efficiency and created a lack of confidence in the Web store," said Powell.

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Upgraded to eGalaxy Web Store to Restore Customer Service Reputation

Because more than half of PrintAtHome tickets never reached the customer after purchase, Point Defiance’s reputation for excellent customer service had taken a serious hit. Upgrading to eGalaxy Web Store would ensure that their Web store functioned properly, ran smoothly, and did its part to restore customer confidence.

Reducing the costs involved with working with a third party host was also a top priority. By integrating eGalaxy Web Store instead, Point Defiance can make changes to Web site content on the fly, with no additional costs. “Also with eGalaxy Web Store we can use one credit card processor for our online transactions and save a lot of money in processing fees,” Powell said. “Reporting is much simpler now too, and doesn’t require so much time and effort from staff,” she said.

Integration Makes All the Difference

Powell reports that the best feature of eGalaxy Web Store is how it incorporates with Galaxy itself. “The ability to sell any event that we offer online and over the phone at the same time without the worry over selling is great. Add to that the fact that you can publish any ticket to the Web store and you have a spectacular product for quick and easy online sales,” she said.

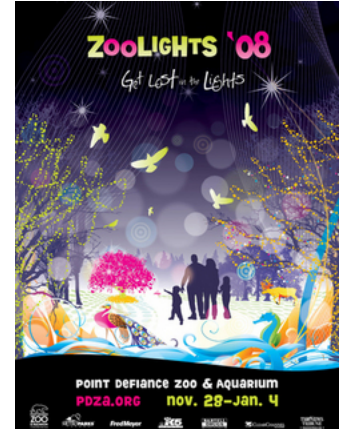
Results: Online Sales Up, Errors Down

What are the primary improvements Point Defiance has experienced since upgrading to eGalaxy Web Store? “I’d have to say number one is ease of use. Changes can be made quickly and we have the ability to be more creative in how the information is presented on our site,” Powell reported.

“We can sell capacity managed events online now, with real-time counts. Updates are instant and changes are no longer based on how soon a third party company can post them for us.”

In addition to a significant increase in operations efficiency since the upgrade to eGalaxy Web Store, Point Defiance has experienced a 61% percent increase in online order sales and a 98% decrease in online order errors.

When asked what she would tell another zoo if they were in the same situation as Point Defiance before they made the switch, Powell said, “Make the change! Incorporating eGalaxy Web Store with Galaxy is the smart move.”



Point Defiance offers PrintAtHome ticketing through their Web store for the annual Zoolights event, which draws 90,000 visitors per year.



Reduced costs and improved efficiency are some of the benefits they’ve experienced since upgrading to eGalaxy Web Store.

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-Donna Powell,
Business & Administrative Services Manager,
Zoological & Environmental Education Division