



## London Theatre Direct Presents APIs for Better Ticket Selling

A modern platform, innovative partnerships, new business, increased sales

"With our open APIs, we saw a huge increase in tickets sold, and a +500% increase in the value of those ticket sales. Mashery rocket-boosted our existing API to take advantage of our sales platform."

— Co-founder Francis Hellyer

### DETAIL

## 4 MILLION

Number of theatre tickets on sale at any one time since implementing API.

### CHALLENGE

London's historic West End theater district has the largest English speaking audience in the world. But as London Theatre Direct (LTD) cofounder Francis Hellyer explains, since the first theater opened in 1663 not enough about the way tickets were bought and sold had changed. "Ticket buying and selling was extremely inefficient, and resulted in lost sales. A large portion of tickets were sold by agencies manually allocated by box office teams.

"If an agency sold out of its allocation, it would need to call box offices to find additional tickets. Theaters had to manually move allocations around and couldn't monitor yield or availability. There was no real-time view. Anytime from a week before, to the day of the performance, unsold tickets had to be returned to the box office. No one knew if there was any last minute availability.

"It was also a terrible buying experience. Customers would need to go around to different agencies and sites to see what seats were available. Choice and availability were limited by the particular agent's allocation. It was a business model pleading for technology disruption."

### SOLUTION

"In 2013, several theaters began to open their ticketing systems to agents, providing direct connection to seat inventory," says Mr. Hellyer. "We believed that the use of open APIs would only grow because in many cases theaters that didn't use them saw their ticket sales suffer.

"We recognized that the model was shifting, seat allocation was nearing an end, and APIs would be a game changer. We researched the API management market, and selected TIBCO Mashery®. It was essential that the solution be robust, scalable, and easy to use."

## LONDON THEATRE DIRECT

London Theatre Direct (LTD) was one of the very first websites to sell theater tickets online and has sold more than a million London theater tickets since its launch in 1999. It has won several major awards for growth, and moved from direct selling to a B2B model, offering partners a ticketing platform with a booking engine and a range of solutions.

## FAST FACTS

**Distribution:** All major London theater groups

**Firsts:** First ticket vendor accepting bitcoin

## BENEFITS

### BETTER SERVICES AND INCREASED SALES

LTD added substantial value to its sales platform by providing a secure booking engine, interactive seating plans, customer reviews, and real-time availability. “If a customer sees all the available seats, they are often more willing to spend a few pounds extra to sit closer to the stage,” says Hellyer, “For example in Q3 of 2016, a show previously only available via allocation to LTD switched to our platform and we saw a 700% increase in tickets sold, and 500% increase in the value of tickets sold. Mashery rocket-boosted our API to take advantage of our sales platform.”

### A MODERN PLATFORM AND INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

“We knew that approximately 30% of London tourists visit the theater, and we saw a massive opportunity to provide tickets through a variety of partners,” continues Hellyer. “Through the Mashery platform, we make it very easy for new companies to partner with us. We can onboard a new partner in two hours, giving them a fully functional white label website showing ticket availability and seat maps for all the shows. They have the same purchasing experience as through LTD, and they earn commission on ticket sales.

“Airlines and hotels are a target market for us. Airlines can sell tickets directly from their own websites. Hotel guest relations can show real-time availability of shows and the seats. They can purchase the tickets for the customer, bill them, print the tickets, and profit. Ticket inventory is available right up until show time.

“We have a leading platform with benefits and features not offered by any other ticket agency,” says Hellyer. “It’s a differentiator. We offer the benefits of security, high volume traffic, stability, reliability, and a superior customer experience with better conversion and higher basket value. Using Mashery sends a signal to the market that we are taking technology and innovation very seriously.”

### NEW BUSINESS

In late 2016, LTD won a major ticketing contract. “Despite the company being a market leader they didn’t have access to the full range of tickets,” says Hellyer, “They signed with us because we had the most robust and advanced API platform, and they were confident we could handle high levels of traffic.”

## FUTURE

LTD continues to innovate and is looking to partner with leading companies for which ticket sales would complement or add value to their brands. It plans to introduce a 2-3 step buying process to improve the buying experience even more, as well as additional features to increase customer loyalty.



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