



Case Study

JUDITH WRIGHT
CENTRE OF
CONTEMPORARY
ARTS

Cloud-based Venue Management Solution Simplifies Event Management And Brings Greater Visibility to Bookings data at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts

Named after the poet, the Judith Wright Centre in Brisbane is home to a unique blend of cabaret, circus, dance, music and contemporary performance.

Located in the heart of Fortitude Valley's creative precinct, the Centre develops and presents work created by Queensland artists and supports arts organisations including Circa, Expressions Dance Company, Carbon Media and the Institute of Modern Art.

The Centre contains five distinct venues, each of which are available for companies and artists to hire. The spaces comprise a 300 seat theatre known as the Performance Space, an intimate 80 seat Shopfront, music and theatre rehearsal spaces, and a 24 seat board room

suitable for meetings. There are also three artist apartments that are regularly booked by artists-in-residence.



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Key Challenge

These highly flexible venues cater for everything from performances and film screenings, workshops and seminars, through to major product launches, trade shows, arts festivals, awards nights and conferences. The Centre supports its functions with the offer of catering, a full bar licence, and an extensive range of audio-visual equipment for hire.

Ruth Hodgman, Director of the Judith Wright Centre, estimates the spaces are booked 65 to 70 percent of the time. "Our operations span across 50 weeks a year, 7 days a week and up to 15 hours on some days with activities in spaces across all 5 storeys of our building," she explains.

From the day the Centre opened in 2001 until late 2013, the organisation used Events Perfect, a professional venue management software solution, to keep track of all bookings. The software kept staff informed of room bookings and acted as a central record of requirements for each function. However, over time, Hodgman says, "The software began to show its age. Compared to current offerings, it had become complex to use and clunky."

Aware that it was time to upgrade, Hodgman's staff investigated a variety of software solutions. "Our critical requirements were a system with clear charting, so we could have a simplified view of what's on each week. Data entry of event information needed to be simple and intuitive and good reporting was essential."

The answer is in the cloud

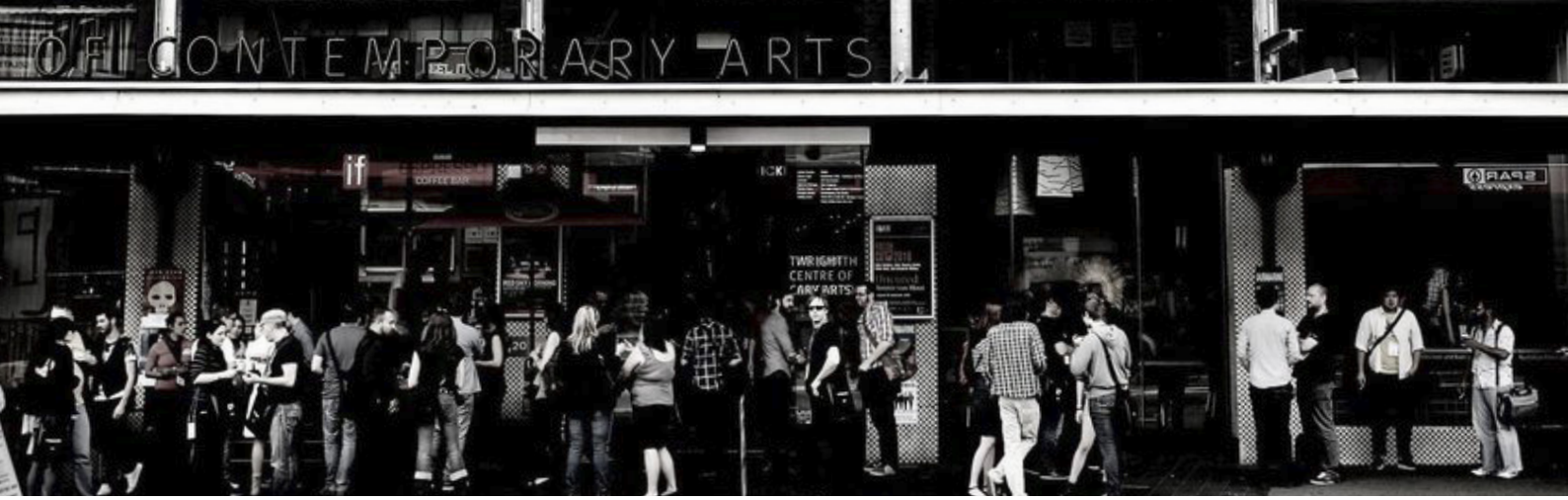
One option that caught the organisation's interest was Priava, a new, cloud-based solution based on features of the old Events Perfect. "People on staff had used different systems elsewhere, so we took a look at different providers, but we were all used to the logic behind Events Perfect and this logic was carried over into Priava. The system was simple and quick and it looked like it might give us savings in terms of productivity," Hodgman notes.



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Another factor in Priava’s favour was its cloud delivery. “This meant every member of the team would be able to log onto the system from anywhere, even if they were mobile, and add in any new requirements that a client has asked for,” Hodgman points out. Given the frequency with which clients can add requirements and details to their hiring demands, this was a particularly appealing thought.

A central source of booking information

In late 2013, the Centre took the plunge and deployed Priava. Two months later, on 1 January 2014, after running the new and the old venue management systems in parallel, Events Perfect became reference only.

Priava is now the Centre’s sole repository of venue management information. All data

relating to each booking is captured in the system, enabling staff to quickly prepare contracts, agreements, booking letters, events sheets and more. The software supports capturing financial activities for reconciliations and helps to manage equipment, food and beverage bookings.

Hodgman states, “We use the system for inventory such as tables, chairs, projectors and other AV equipment. The benefit of this is that as we allocate equipment, Priava prevents us from overbooking.”

We also created a bookings venue that captures our on-line and off-site activities including artist’s promotional performances, live-streaming and webinars.

Simple for staff

Hodgman believes Priava’s reporting capabilities are a big improvement over the old system. In the past staff had to rely on the IT department or seek external technical help to develop customised reports. This took time and cost money. “It made changes slow,” Hodgman states.

“Now that we have Priava, we have standard report templates that we can modify ourselves to suit our reporting needs. The software is less complex. More staff can add little bits of information because the system is so easy to use. It doesn’t require a lot of training. All the users need is to understand our protocols.”

With more employees able to input information, previous data entry bottlenecks have been removed. Hodgman points out that as a result, the system is capturing more (and more detailed) event data, which in turn is providing all staff with a new level of visibility into bookings



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Summary

The Judith Wright Centre already has strong bookings for 2015 and has a number of major events locked in for 2016. “We also have one or two of our regular events that are booked for the next four or five years,” Hodgman states.

All are being managed through Priava.

“At our weekly meetings, Priava is the tool we go through to coordinate all the different departments and to see what’s outstanding for the events coming up. It’s a central tool in our business, used on a daily basis. It’s important that Priava is easy, simple and that it holds all the information we need. It’s a critical piece of equipment in that way,” Hodgman concludes.

Benefits

For the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts, the benefits of the Priava cloud include:

- Centralised solution means that there are no delays in adding or accessing up-to-date information
- Simplified weekly views of upcoming events
- Easy data entry encourages greater capture of booking data
- Flexible, customisable event reports are keeping all staff informed
- Easy management of every venue booking, from initial query to contract through to event completion
- Improved Inventory management reduces overbooking of equipment
- Mobile working – access this system from any location
- Less IT support required internally