



# Corporate sales & ticketing at Chester Race Company

In January 2007, Chester Race Company bought the TALENT Sport system, aiming to launch a new and improved ticketing service, reduce administration costs and streamline their corporate sales and hospitality operations.

With one of the biggest events of the racing calendar now out of the way, has the system lived up to expectations? And what do Chester Race Company think of the support they are getting from the IRIS Software4Sport team?

## MORE THAN JUST THE TICKET

Chester Race Company have a few days breathing space. The first event of the season, the May Festival, was a big success last week. But with a busy calendar of events coming up, the team can't relax for long.

As well as running Chester and Bangor-on-Dee Racecourses, the company hosts events such as the Home and Garden Show and the Liverpool Daily Post Wedding Fair, and sells tickets on behalf of Chester Festivals who organise events in the city, including the Fashion Week, Summer Music Festival and Literature Festival.

With such a diverse range of events on offer - each with very different seating, catering, pricing and location criteria - the company wanted a flexible software package that would help them to sell tickets and corporate hospitality more

efficiently, and was keen to launch a new and improved web sales service. Another challenge was customer information. Chester Race Company was using separate IT systems for ticketing, web sales and finance.

Alex Evans, Financial Accountant, says, *"With separate systems, we found that we were duplicating a lot of work keeping them all up to date, which wasted a lot of time. From a sales and marketing point of view, we didn't have a clear picture of who our customers were and what they had bought from us."*

In response, the company set about looking for a new ticketing system with built-in corporate sales and customer relationship management functionality. After evaluating the different systems on the market, the company selected TALENT Sport from IRIS Software4Sport.

Alex says, *"We looked at a number of different packages and TALENT Sport*

*came out as the best option for us - it's a high calibre system that covers all of our needs, and it came very well recommended from Liverpool Football Club who we visited earlier in the year. It will also stand us in good stead for the future if we move to an access control scheme and it will integrate to our accounting software."*

## THE BENEFITS

So is the system living up to expectations? Chester Race Company now use TALENT Sport to manage all of their ticket sales for Chester and Bangor-on-Dee racecourses, as well as for events and festivals in Chester.

Hilary Orton, Ticket Office Manager, says, *"TALENT Sport has made our life much easier and saved us a great deal of time. With the system's reporting tool, we can now see what we have sold on a minute-by-minute basis. It also links ticket sales to*

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*Now, with TALENT Sport, online sales are automated... Tickets are sold straight off the main inventory and processed securely by the system. This has saved us huge amount of time - I estimate around a couple of hours a day.*

*each customer, which has really helped us keep tabs on who has bought what."*

One of the key benefits Chester have gained from installing TALENT Sport is a new and improved web sales service.

Hilary continues, "Our web sales used to come in as emails, which we had to process manually. The problem with this was that the customer had to wait for a response to find out whether the sale had been successful. It also meant we had to judge how many tickets to allocate to the web so that we didn't go over capacity."

"Now, with TALENT Sport, online sales are automated: tickets are sold straight off the main inventory and processed securely by the system. This has saved us huge amount of time - I estimate around a couple of hours a day. It also means that the customer gets an instant confirmation of their purchase, and we no longer need to allocate tickets to the web."

#### **Corporate sales**

With hospitality such a key part of racing, it's a tough job, but using the TALENT Sport system has helped to reduce the workload for the team.

Katie Armitage, Corporate Sales and Hospitality Manger, says, "The bookings in racing are always very detailed. Clients specify their food and drink orders, what time they would like to be served, who by, the seating arrangements... everything you can imagine - right down to what linen they would like. For the May festival this year, we had bookings for 8500 guests in 36 chalets, 23 private boxes, 5 restaurants, 5 parade ring marquees and 5 paddock suites."

"Before, I used to enter the orders into our old ticketing system, then I'd have to type it all out again into word for the catering company, which duplicated the work. It was also open to error, and if there were any modifications to the order, I would have to update both the system and the caterers again."

"Using TALENT Sport has saved a good few days work for each event. I now just enter the orders into TALENT Sport and run an automated report, which I pass to the caterers. It's far more accurate as well. Normally, after each event I meet the caterers, and there are a few queries over what has been ordered and paid for, but this time, everything was correct."

#### **Sales, marketing and service**

For racecourses, building up a good CRM database is essential, with such a wide variety of events to promote and so many customers to look after.

TALENT Sport covers ticketing, web sales,

corporate sales, marketing and more, all in one package, and underpins all of these modules with a central CRM database that records all the information about your customers.

Katie says, "We can now see everything relating to our customers - their contact details, correspondence, what they have bought from us, notes from recent conversations... As a result, if a customer contacts us now, anyone can help them, rather than us having to pass them to a particular member of the team as in the past. It also means we can be much more focused for sales and marketing campaigns instead of blanket mailing."

#### **PROJECT SUPPORT**

What do Chester Race Company think of the support from the IRIS Software4Sport team?

Hilary says, "The training in using TALENT Sport was great, really thorough, and the team here find it easy to use. The support has been brilliant. We have a project team who we are in daily contact with, and the IRIS Software4Sport helpdesk is available for any queries we have."

Katie adds, "For me in corporate sales, it was more of a challenge. Chester is IRIS Software4Sport's first Racing client, so we had to work together to set the system up to cater for the extra elements that racing involves. But IRIS Software4Sport helped us through the process and it's now working really well."

#### **TALENT SPORT ADAPTED FOR RACECOURSES**

TALENT Sport is used by a wide range of sports clubs and venues, including Newcastle United FC, Liverpool FC, Panathinaikos FC, Burnley FC, Durham CCC, Natal Sharks, Bradford Bulls, Saracens, plus many more.

Glenn Jackson, Managing Director of IRIS's Software4Sport division, says, "We are very pleased to welcome Chester Race Company to the IRIS Software4Sport client base. Racecourses have a very different structure to sports clubs - corporate sales and hospitality play a huge part - and putting together the packages can be very complicated. When Chester approached us, we knew we would have to adapt the system and add new functionality to cater for their needs. This has now been achieved. We are delighted with the benefits Chester are now getting from the system."



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