

CUSTOMER STORY: Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium

The Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium strives to foster positive, lifelong connections between animals and people. Whether through exhibits, educational programs, or numerous conservation projects, the goal is to make certain the Earth remains a suitable home for all life by discovery of the interconnectedness of the natural world.



“With all of the advantages of using Altru® for online ticket sales, we’ve saved our staff time, shortened lines, and eased congestion all while increasing our ticketing revenue!”

— Sam McGough, Database Administrator

CHALLENGE

Zoo Brew is an event designed to bring young adults to the Zoo for a night of beer tasting and animal appreciation. Despite the event’s success, it was a logistical headache because the Zoo’s online ticket sales weren’t linked to its onsite system and didn’t offer print-at-home tickets.

Previously, after a ticket was purchased online, the Zoo would print out a ticket and mail it to the individual. With more than 2,000 tickets sold, it took 2 full-time employees more than 2 months to print and send tickets.

Additionally, mailed tickets were often lost and the staff had no easy way to confirm ticket purchases. Entrance to the event was then allowed based on the honor system. Concerned about un-ticketed visitors, the Zoo capped ticket sales well below capacity.

SOLUTION

Pittsburgh Zoo went live with Altru the day before launching online sales for the spring Zoo Brew—two months before the event. Although the marketing department was a bit nervous about moving to a new software solution so close to an important event, the advantages gained from Altru outweighed the hesitation.

“Going live on a new ticketing solution the day before tickets went on sale for Zoo Brew was a risk for us,” Sam explained, “but we felt comfortable because the Altru Services Team was supporting us the whole way.”

RESULTS

With print-at-home tickets, staff members who were previously tasked with printing and mailing tickets were able to focus on more strategic work.

If a visitor showed up without a ticket, it was quick and easy to look up the record in Altru. When the Zoo didn’t have to worry about extra, un-ticketed visitors, it was able to sell to max capacity. That meant more accurate data collection from one year to the next, and resulted in over 300 more tickets sold and nearly \$20,000 in additional ticketing revenue.

Perhaps most importantly, there was a huge improvement in the experience of the event attendees. Using timed tickets for a staggered entry, the Zoo was able to drastically reduce lines and ease the crowds.

“Prior to moving to Altru, Zoo Brew administration was complicated for the staff. The staff no longer dreads working the front end of the event anymore. Instead of focusing on logistics, we can focus on the real goal of Zoo Brew—bringing in new visitors to appreciate the animals.”