



## WHAT MAKES YOU TICK?

**Andy Fry** runs the rule over latest developments in ticketing technology and assesses the imaginative ways it is being harnessed to drive effective customer relationship management programmes.

Of course, the question of who is in what seat isn't just a concern for content owners. There are also implications for the corporate sector, says Jim Daigle - head of US ticketing solutions company Sports Systems. "The economic crisis has led to a lot more scrutiny of the way companies use their ticket allocation," says Daigle. "In the US, we have had congressmen and the media asking what the value of sponsorship and hospitality really is. And many companies aren't able to give a decent answer."

### Answering questions

According to Daigle, this debate is particularly heated in the realm of ticketing: "Just who is allocating tickets in companies and what are the criteria for receiving them?"

Companies which can't answer those questions are likely to find themselves in trouble with the media, politicians and the federal tax system - not to mention the fact that they are short-changing themselves in terms of their ROI. After all, many sports ticket allocations come with flights and hotel accommodation attached to the overall price."

So how does Sports Systems fit in? "We're usually brought in by sports marketing agencies to help companies develop a robust ticket audit. We don't tell them how to allocate their tickets - but we do help them put in place a process that usually represents a saving."

It is not an off-the-shelf solution, says Daigle, "because companies have different requirements and different legacy systems. What we do is configure a software programme so that it is relevant to any company whether its in the banking, insurance, mobile or IT sectors."

In truth, it's hard to believe that companies can get something as fundamental as ticketing wrong. So how does it happen? "Well in some cases it's because the client hasn't really decided who is in charge of the process," says Daigle. "But for big companies spread across multiple markets it can be difficult. How does someone in London assess the validity of a ticket request from a fellow executive Hong Kong? And who reviews the decision? Whatever the reason, it's something that brands need to have a plan for."