

Demystifying Ticket Summit

by TICKET_GURU on JULY 20, 2009

This past week I had the opportunity to attend [Ticket Summit](#) in Las Vegas. I was prompted to attend the conference when I was invited to participate in a panel discussion on ticket pricing. Prior to being invited, I am embarrassed to admit I had only known of the [National Association of Ticket Brokers \(NATB\)](#). When I researched Ticket Summit, I quickly learned it was run by [Ticket Network](#), a leading broker and provider of technology solutions to ticket brokers. So, if NATB is supposed to be the leading industry association, why is a large broker running an event that seems very similar to [NATB's World Ticket Conference](#)? I attempted to contact the NATB on two occasions via phone and email to inquire about attending the World Ticket Conference, which was to take place at a neighboring Las Vegas hotel. That contact went without reply and I was unable to attend that conference.

What I learned by attending Ticket Summit is that though the event may appear to be constructed on a self interested agenda, it appears better run and more organized than NATB's World Ticket Conference. For example, Ticket Summit has a dedicated [public relations contact](#) that went out of her way to make sure I had face time with key leaders attending the conference – bear in mind I am a hobbyist blogger not a reporter for the New York Times (and one was there too). Then there is the content of the panels, Ticket Summit had rich [discussions](#) ranging from “Futures Markets”, “Pricing Strategies for Ticket Sellers” (for which I was a panelist), and “Internationalizing Your Ticket Base”. NATB's World Ticket on the other hand had [no PR contact](#) I could locate and [panel topics](#) that seemed less interesting, including “How to Fix a Broken Sales Team” and “Is Your Website Hurting Sales?”.

In fairness, Ticket Summits panel discussions need improvement in two key areas. First, some panels were too short for the material and issues being discussed – some felt rushed. Second, the quality of discussion on the panels could benefit from stronger moderators. For example, the keynote panel on “Ticketing in a Recession Economy” lacked continuity in discussion. The panel I participated on was dominated with questions about dynamic pricing which distracted the panelists from talking about “Pricing Strategies for Ticket Sellers”.

Of course, Ticket Network being a technology provider for ticket brokers is well suited to run a conference for its customers, but the conference leaps beyond this purpose in that it includes key competitors, including StubHub (whose president gave a keynote) and their show case features businesses that are clearly competitive to Ticket Network. It would make a little more sense for Ticket Network to go to all this trouble if they were making money on the event, but even if 500 attendee's all paid the \$249 conference fee, \$124,000 and some sponsorships could not possibly pay for two and a half days of meeting rooms, catering and two receptions.

So, why does Ticket Network run Ticket Summit? Simple, Don Vaccaro, CEO of Ticket Network, is a very smart guy. By investing in the conference, he drives the agenda and keeps his customers close and his competitors even closer. From the outside it appears selfish, but up close it is more “fair and balanced” than FOX News.

As the week progresses, some writings will follow on interesting issues raised at the conference.

I was prompted to write this article to help academics ([market designers included](#)) and outsiders have a better understanding of Ticket Summit and the premise of the conference which takes place twice a year.

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