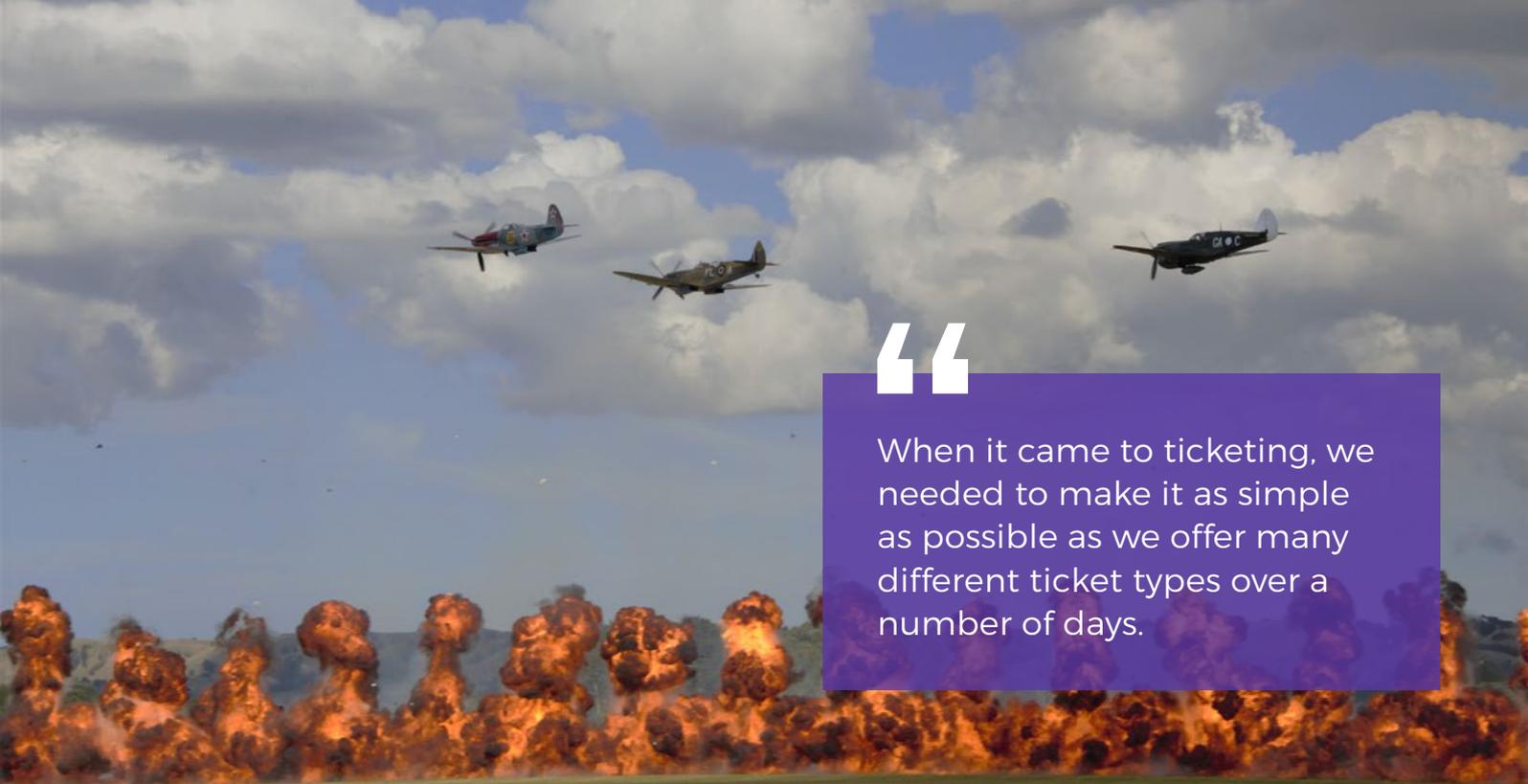




CLIENT CASE STUDY

# Wings Over Wairarapa Air Festival

How reputation and relationships built a  
trusted ticketing partnership



When it came to ticketing, we needed to make it as simple as possible as we offer many different ticket types over a number of days.

## Summary

The Wings Over Wairarapa Air Festival partnered with Eventfinda in 2021 to provide pre-sale planning, ticketing services, on-site support and post-event management. This is a large-scale event with many complexities but when the event's final day was cancelled mid-way through the festival due to a Covid-19 outbreak, the Eventfinda team took the lead to ensure the client and event attendees received the best outcome and service possible.

Eventfinda's flexibility in both its staffing and platform capabilities enabled a smooth ticketing experience for attendees of the event and facilitated a simple and efficient refund or ticket reallocation process.

### The key outcomes achieved for the client were:

1. New ticketing software onboarded with custom requirements for a complex ticketing setup
2. On-site box office support during the event resulting in much-improved gate management
3. Financial reconciliation for the unforeseen event of partial cancellation and ongoing support

**Ticket sales: 17,066 total tickets sold**

## About Wings Over Wairarapa

Wings Over Wairarapa Air Festival is a three-day event of aerial action that typically attracts over 25,000 attendees. Spectators have the chance to see over 70 aircraft including vintage and military planes, jets and helicopters, as well as aerobatic displays and skydiving. It's a large family-friendly event with as many activities and displays on the ground as there are in the air.

The event is run by the Wings Over Wairarapa Community Trust, a charity that delivers this popular festival every two years with the help of a team of around 400 including defence force personnel, volunteers, contractors and pilots.



## Challenges and event objectives

After operating for over 20 years, in 2021 Wings Over Wairarapa moved their ticketing to Eventfinda. Following the uncertainty of the year that had preceded it, Jenny Gasson, Event Manager and GM for the trust said:

“Our first goal was to ensure we could actually deliver the event at all. We didn’t have that confirmation until six months before the event date.

Our second goal was to deliver the best event we could in the current circumstances with a reduced budget and a significantly reduced timeline. When it came to ticketing, we needed to make it as simple as possible as we offer many different ticket types.”

The team had faced challenges in the past with ticketing providers and were looking for some support and advice on how to best run or improve their event’s ticketing operations. They felt they had never experienced a straightforward process, timelines were often shifted and they struggled with finalising financial reconciliation – so subsequently they had lost trust in their provider.



Eventfinda’s reputation was not just about what others said about it but it was also about seeing what the platform could do.

## Choosing a new ticketing provider

The team were looking for an open and authentic relationship with a new ticketing provider and one that would result in a more equal partnership.

“We needed a knowledgeable and reliable ticketing provider that we could form a trusting relationship with,” said Jenny.

Finding the right partnership and using a trusted brand was important. Having worked with Anna Magdalinos, Eventfinda Head of Ticketing previously when managing an event, Jenny knew that she liked the platform and that the service and skills behind it would support her needs. She said:

“Anna had an honest and direct approach and she was great to work with.”

Jenny was impressed with the reputation of the company. Eventfinda is well known in the area and was stable during the uncertain times of the pandemic when other ticketing providers had been unable to continue operating. This company reputation backed up her personal user experience with the platform saying:

“Eventfinda’s reputation was not just about what others said about it but it was also about seeing what the platform could do. I knew it could cater for all our complex needs and I knew the people were dedicated and knowledgeable.”



I loved the ability to fix things. I could do most of what I needed to myself but if I got lost I could always rely on the Eventfinda team to help.

## A new partnership with Eventfinda

Once the Wings Over Wairarapa Community Trust had decided to partner with Eventfinda everything moved quickly:

“We were up and running in weeks and the whole process exceeded my expectations” said Jenny.

There was custom development required to ensure that Wings Over Wairarapa Air Festival had all the functionality they needed for their ticketing needs, but all pricing and timelines were clearly defined from the start, delivering the open and honest communication they were keen to establish.

Amit Rathor was assigned as their dedicated Account Manager to support the client alongside Anna. Jenny was very pleased with the customer service she experienced:

“Our designated Account Manager Amit was so helpful. He was very responsive to any of our changes and requests.

We can be quite demanding with our requirements and he always did his best to find the solution. Anna was also very attentive and would always accommodate our needs.”

Having previously used the Eventfinda platform, Jenny found it very easy to use and felt confident doing what she needed to. She was able to make suggestions, ask questions and be given guidance on how to get the best results. This empowered her as a user and as a leader of a ticketing team:

“I loved the ability to fix things. I could do most of what I needed to myself but if I got lost I could always rely on the Eventfinda team to help. The flexibility of the customer service and platform was a stand out for me.”

“The biggest thing for me is that the Eventfinda staff are flexible throughout the whole process. Their approach was always to help or find a solution that worked for us.”



“

Their expertise showed on the day and ensured everything ran smoothly.

## Ticketing transformation on event day

The Eventfinda team were not only available to support Jenny and her team online, they also attended the event to support the box office team on-site. This transformed how the gate management worked compared to previous years and they sold over 1,000 tickets over two days.

With little information on the setup, the team were able to take charge, find solutions, follow processes and guide the Wings team on best practice. Jenny recalls:

“They just had to figure out how to run the event with various challenges including being 1km away from our wifi router.”

The big difference that Jenny noticed by having Eventfinda present during the event days was that there was hardly any need for questions from the on-site box office.

“Usually, I would get constant queries from the sales team on the floor – instead Anna and Amit were able to deal with it all.

They used their initiative and are obviously very experienced. Their expertise showed on the day and ensured everything ran smoothly.”

After the event, Anna and Amit were able to give the event team a debrief on improvements they could make and how to improve on the progress they'd made at this event.

Large events face many challenges in any given year but especially during the uncertainty of the pandemic. This Air Festival was not immune to these troubles as the third and final day of the event had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restriction changes. But it was the response and management of the Eventfinda team that proved they had chosen the right ticketing partner, as they faced what could have been a very stressful time for both organiser and attendees.



## When the unexpected happened, financial reconciliation was stress-free

When a new Covid-19 community outbreak was discovered and new restrictions came into effect, the event organisers were informed at 9pm on Saturday that Sunday would have to be cancelled. Anna at Eventfinda went to work immediately that night to plan how the ticketholders would be notified and how any refunds would be calculated and processed.

The complexities of the tickets presented a challenge as there were many different ticket types including three-day passes which came as a package.

As the event was cancelled with one day remaining there were three options offered to ticket holders:

- ▶ Refund their ticket
- ▶ Transfer their ticket to the next Wings Over Wairarapa event in 2023
- ▶ Donate the ticket value to the charitable trust

By Sunday morning Anna had visited the client in person with all the financials to present via Eventfinda reporting tools. Jenny recalls:

"I was so impressed with the reporting capabilities of the platform. It was a messy situation for Eventfinda due to our multiple ticket types and three-day passes which meant partial refunds or donations to the trust to be calculated and processed. It was all managed so well with great communication."

Key figures:

- ▶ 1,257 refunds processed
- ▶ 245 ticket cost donations made
- ▶ 304 ticket transfers made to 2023

Jenny complimented the Eventfinda team in their handling of this unforeseen event:

"The whole process was amazing. It was such a relief to know that it was all under control and that took away all the stress. The team was proactive in chasing down the info they needed from us and took care of all the communications and the processing of refunds. All the other tickets were reconciled quickly. It was impressive."



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## The future

Wings Over Wairarapa Air Festival reported a significant decrease in turnaround time for ticketing requests compared to their previous provider, received accurate information and deliverables, and the ticketing operations were user friendly, effective and efficient on the day.

They are impressed with the reporting capability and how simple it was to track key metrics. For their next event, they intend to report on:

- ▶ Ticketholders' locations
- ▶ Ticket purchase dates
- ▶ Ticket purchase method – online or in-person

Wings Over Wairarapa are planning to continue partnering with Eventfinda for their future events.

“Choosing a ticketing provider is not solely about the systems and how they work for your event - it's about the people, partnership and vision. We would absolutely recommend Eventfinda to others” concluded Jenny.



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## Eventfinda, far more than a ticketing platform

Eventfinda's unique ticketing system has been created specifically for the performing arts and events sectors. Built by our industry experts, we offer you maximum flexibility and functionality with a toolkit for event ticketing, marketing and audience engagement.

We pride ourselves on our industry-leading technology and personalised service and we're committed to helping you achieve your goals. We're the only organisation in Australasia offering an ever-evolving audience development and engagement suite combining an events discovery site and a ticketing platform.

**Want to know more about Eventfinda's ticketing and marketing offering?**

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