The Client

Since 1779, The Piece Hall has stood proudly at the heart of Halifax, England. Originally built to support the trading of ‘pieces’ of cloth, it has been a meeting point of Halifax’s commercial, civic and cultural life for almost 250 years.

The Challenge

As a visitor attraction it is essential that The Piece Hall understands the number of people who visit each year in order to measure the success of the venue.

Following the transformation project, there are a number of independent cafés, bars and restaurants within The Piece Hall, as well as a large courtyard where they host events throughout the year.

There are four gated entrances to The Piece Hall, as well as a newly transformed link from the Grade II Listed Square Chapel Arts Centre to The Piece Hall foyer.

The Piece Hall is operated by an independent charity, The Piece Hall Trust, who wanted to know the usage of each gate, including which was the busiest entrance. This would help them to monitor capacity levels to keep visitors safe and to measure visitor footfall.

The Piece Hall is also home to a gallery, shop and an interactive heritage space ‘The Piece Hall Story’ and it was important for the Trust to understand how many people were using each of these spaces.
The Solution

In order to resolve the two objectives put forward by The Piece Hall Trust; to count the number of visitors on an hourly/daily basis and to monitor the capacity at any given time, we deployed two of our solutions, Shopper Count and Occupancy. Shopper Count gives an accurate number of visitors to a defined area such as the shop and gallery and our Occupancy solution is refreshed every two minutes to provide a near-real time report on capacity numbers within The Piece Hall.

What we did

To understand which entrance gates were most utilised and how many visitors were using the three defined areas; gallery, shop and The Piece Hall Story, we installed thermal sensors to count visitors in to each space. The Piece Hall Trust is able to view visitor footfall on our secure global platform and can compare usage of each entrance and space, as well as view historical data since the sensors were installed.

The occupancy of The Piece Hall is measured in real-time and refreshed every two minutes using additional data of visitors leaving the venue. An accompanying ‘traffic light’ system is in place to alert staff of high capacity numbers - ensuring optimum staff numbers at all times.

The Outcome

Ipsos Retail Performance’s sensors have counted 1.4 million visitors during the first six months since The Piece Hall reopened, meaning they are on track to far exceed the estimated annual target of 1.6 million.

The Piece Hall Trust has accurate data that ensures staff are always informed of capacity levels using the alert system and to help measure the success of The Piece Hall as a visitor destination.

Chief Executive of The Piece Hall Trust, Nicky Chance-Thompson said, "We can isolate our four gates to monitor the flow of visitor footfall and understand how many people are visiting to provide the best welcome to our magnificent building"

WE ARE NOW ABLE TO REPORT BACK TO FUNDERS, UNDERSTAND HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE VISITING, AND MONITOR OCCUPANCY LEVELS DURING BUSY EVENTS TO KEEP OUR VISITORS SAFE

NICKY CHANCE-THOMPSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE PIECE HALL TRUST

About Ipsos Retail Performance

Ipsos Retail Performance is one of the world’s leading retail consultancies specialising in footfall monitoring, shopper tracking and in-store behavioural research. Monitoring over 3.1 billion store visits per year, Ipsos Retail Performance is constantly evolving and innovating to deliver performance improvements for clients. With over 25 years’ experience of delivering increased revenue for clients, decreased operational costs and improvements in customer service, Ipsos Retail Performance has long-term relationships with the world’s biggest brands.

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