

## TICKETS

### QCUCE INTRODUCES DYNAMIC TICKETING TO DALLAS STARS



*Qcue CEO Barry Kahn (right) is seen here with Russ Stanley from the San Francisco Giants and Sonia Sanchez from Tickets.com at INTIX (VT Photo).*

Ticketing upstart Qcue has signed another deal to bring dynamic ticketing to a professional sports franchise. The Dallas Stars of the National Hockey League have signed an agreement to sell most of the American Airlines Center upper bowl using a yield-management model similar to the airline industry. Working with Tickets.com, the system allows the team to make real-time price changes based on demand, opponent and historical sales data.

The system is already in its second season with the San Francisco Giants, another franchise powered by Tickets.com. Qcue CEO Barry Kahn said his Austin, Texas-based company helped the Stars set the prices for their first 14 home games, which go on sale Saturday.

“That’s when the big change in price occurs,” said Stars Exec. VP of Sales and Marketing Geoff Moore, adding that tickets are released in batches of 14 every two months. Last season, nearly all tickets in the premium terrace were priced at \$60. Now, less than 25 percent of tickets are priced that high. Tickets drop to \$50 for an Oct. 30 game against Florida and go as low as \$36 per ticket for games against Los Angeles or Calgary. A second game against Nashville on Oct. 14 was selling for \$24 less than the opener against the same team.

“They definitely kept the fans in mind and came out of the gate with low prices that they expect to rise,” Kahn said, later adding that tickets “were underpriced across the board to reward those who purchased early.”

The strategy is to price the tickets low for the initial on sale and then slowly increase in price as more tickets sell. While he said the Qcue web-based application gave him the ability to make daily price changes, the team would more likely adjust their prices on a weekly basis.

“The technology actually told us to raise the price on a couple games, but we didn’t feel comfortable doing that,” Moore said. The goal is to sell more tickets and not necessarily to extract more revenue out of the same ticket. In Texas, the live experience of a packed hockey game is almost as important as the product on the ice, Moore said.

“And that’s a critical piece when you’re competing for entertainment dollars with football and other sports,” Moore said. “In a fragmented media landscape, it’s become very difficult to communicate offers to people through traditional media. We’re trying to make it as easy and simple as possible to understand our pricing. When we advertise, we can just push everyone back to dallasstars.com and they can check the price of the game for that date.”

Prices for the seats won’t drop below the season ticket value and Moore said the team expected to have a multi-year relationship with Qcue. Kahn said that Qcue’s earnings would be based on sales volume revenue benchmarks tied to increased sales.

“We have a strong sports market here in Dallas, and we have a growing hockey market. Our challenge always is to market our team and find the right value proposition for the sports fan,” Moore said. “Dallas fans like hockey, but they love football. Sometimes when you like something, then price and value become a strong part of whether people will buy tickets or not.” — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Geoff Moore, (214) 387-5505; Barry Kahn, (512) 626-5503*