



## CASE STUDY

# Rogue Island Comedy Festival Doubles Profits in their Second Year

Every Columbus Day weekend, the Rogue Island Comedy Festival delivers good times and belly laughs to the seaside town of Newport, Rhode Island. This young festival, started in 2015, is no laughing matter, though. The comedy festival is the only one of its kind in the state and is already profitable in its second year of production. Newport, with its vibrant arts culture and relaxed, small-town vibes, is integral to the local feel of the festival. “Unlike other comedy festivals, we host our shows in intimate club-like venues in downtown Newport rather than at a massive main stage,” says Katie Latimer, marketing director at the Rogue Island Comedy Festival. “Each show is presented in an intimate atmosphere; comedians are hanging out with the crowd and it feels personal.”

The Rogue Island “crew” is comprised of Latimer, and co-founders Doug Key and Rob Greene. “Five of us put the whole thing together—three of us do most of the work up front until the festival kicks off.” Despite their lean team, there is no problem bringing in big talent. Past comedians include Dan Soder, Gary Vider and Sam Jay as well as acts that have been featured on “Inside Amy Schumer,” “Late Night with Conan O’Brien” and “America’s Got Talent.” “We bring in a lot of comedians from New York and Los Angeles, but also make a point to showcase up-and-coming local talent,” says Latimer.



### COMPANY

Rogue Island Comedy Festival  
[roguislandcomedyfestival.com](http://roguislandcomedyfestival.com)

### TYPE OF EVENTS

Rogue Island Comedy Festival is Rhode Island’s first and only comedy festival, featuring 50+ comics over four days and multiple venues.

### SUMMARY

The festival sought a partner to ease their ticket sales and reporting challenges. The team employed Vendini to increase advance sales, streamline door sales, improve reporting and keep audiences laughing.



The attractive lineup—and accessible ticket prices—help Rogue Island draw a diverse crowd. “We were pleasantly surprised to discover that the festival didn’t attract just one demographic. It’s a fun night out that’s not terribly expensive. That appeals to a range of people, from college kids to older couples and more. It was pleasant to see a mix of first timers and repeat attendees.”

And the crowd is growing. This year, Rogue Island added additional shows and expanded to larger venues to accommodate bigger crowds. With a thriving festival, the team sought a ticketing partner it could grow with, in its second year and beyond.

#### **Upgrading Systems to Stay on Brand**

In its first year, Rogue Island’s ticketing company was unable to accommodate the festival’s needs. “As far as the backend, I had an extremely difficult time. The system

*“All the features Vendini offered were valuable to us and fairly priced.” - Katie Latimer, Marketing Director, Rogue Island Comedy Festival*

wasn’t built for a multi-day festival with many events, event times and different venues. It was very difficult to try and set up four days of our events.” Looking for a better solution, Latimer discovered Vendini after searching the web and discovering other festivals and comedy clubs successfully using the platform.

“Everything was very transparent,” Latimer explains. “The admin area, which I had a chance to try on a test account, was very simple and clear. All the features Vendini offered were valuable to us and fairly priced.” On top of the ease of use and reasonable price, Latimer wanted a

solution that would play nicely with the website and positively reflect the brand. “We spent all this time designing a great website and then online buyers had an unpleasant buying experience. It wasn’t seamless. I wanted something professional that would integrate smoothly with our website.” With Vendini, Latimer keeps the strong brand at the forefront of the buying experience and simplifies the online buying experience.

#### **Setting the Stage for a Sell Out**

Despite these challenges, Rogue Island’s first year was a success thanks to great talent, strong community support and a dedicated team.

*“We nearly doubled our profits. This year we sold more tickets before the festival started than the whole festival last year.”*





PHOTOS: PHIL PROVENCIO

However, the ticket buying experience and entry process left much to be desired. "We had a long line before each show. Some people bought online tickets, some had coupons, and some had their student ID and wanted to buy discounted tickets at the door. It was a mess." Latimer realized she needed a better way to track sales, inventory and patrons in one place. She needed a way to make her life as a festival producer easier.

After implementing Vendini, Latimer was able to streamline ticket sales by encouraging online sales.

"We pushed people to buy tickets in advance from the website. We did a lot more advance sales this year. That helped cut down on lines the night of and gave us a better idea of how to plan for attendance and staffing." By simplifying the process for the crew and festival goers, Latimer says they "eliminated 95% of the issues" from the prior year. "Online sales were smooth and simple. By mid-afternoon each day most of our evening shows were sold out."

Rogue Island experienced staggering success in 2016. "We nearly doubled our profits. This year we sold more

tickets before the festival started than the whole festival last year."

#### **More Good Times Ahead**

The future looks promising for Rogue Island, but Latimer and team are vowing to stay humble and "not get too big, too fast." Unique in its approach and reasonable in its ambitions, the Rogue Island Comedy Festival is headed for a third year of continued success in 2017. "We want to make the festival more successful, more profitable, and boost attendance."

Rogue Island looks forward to continuing its partnership with Vendini—a partner that stands behind their mission and passion. "Right off the bat the Vendini team was supportive and interested in what we were doing." And after all, that's what it's really about. "We're all in it because we love it."

*"Right off the bat the Vendini team was supportive and interested in what we were doing." - Katie Latimer*

Vendini makes the business of live events simple. We designed our all-in-one system to help organizations easily promote events, take donations, and leverage mobile ticketing and customer insights to deepen experiences with their audiences — and ultimately sell more tickets. Vendini is based in San Francisco, CA, with offices in Petaluma, CA, Los Angeles, CA, Boston, MA, New York, NY, Knoxville, TN, Vancouver, BC and Gualdo Tadino, Italy. To learn more about Vendini, please visit <http://www.vendini.com>