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# For Those about to Mosh

Over the past decade, Moshtix has been the young and fresh alternative for ticketing solutions. The company is steadily coming to age and standing on its own in the growing live-event industry.

Images courtesy of Moshtix

In June 2012, Harley Evans was promoted from chief operating officer to CEO of News Ticketing, News Limited's ticketing agency comprising Moshtix and Foxtix. Harley worked for various live-entertainment groups before coming to News Ticketing. "It's always been based around entertainment," he says, "with eight years at Ticketek in Australia and New Zealand, four years with Fulham Football Club in London, and a brief stint with the promoter Paul Dainty, it's one of those industries that's very infectious. Once you're in, it's quite hard to leave."

Twelve months following his appointment, Harley stepped up and acquired the company from News Ticketing while winding down Foxtix. "There was a lot of encouragement to look closely at the business from a number of mentors both within and outside the industry whose opinions I valued highly, including my wife who, as a lawyer, is quite savvy in this area," Harley expresses. "Having been in the business for several years, there weren't too many question marks about how the company operated."

According to Harley, there were several key factors that made the acquisition feel right. The first element was his ability to keep the Moshtix team together during the restructure. "This was crucial, as the quality of our people is a key point of difference for us in the market and is truly valued by our clients and customers. It is something we are quite well known for. It was extremely important to me that we maintain this standard."

The next factor was Moshtix's relationship with its clients (promoters and venues), which would only improve if the company became independent. "The Moshtix brand is also very well regarded by the public. We have great engagement with ticket buyers compared to other players in the market who are often described as being 'necessary evils,'" Harley explains. "We recently did a Moshtix consumer survey on the state of the music industry and had 5,000 respondents up from 2,000 when we last did the survey. This shows our customers are not only passionate about music, but that they see Moshtix as a trusted and relevant brand when it comes to

servicing the interests of the industry. It takes years to build that type of relationship with your customers, and it is a fantastic reflection of the brand and the people who have worked at Moshtix over the past 10 years.

"Ensuring we were bulletproof when it came to managing the financial side of our business was the other key element. My business partner, Vanessa Bond, has a distinguished career in financial management, so her involvement created a level of confidence in our ability to run the business effectively and serve the team and brand well."

Harley believes that being a part of News Limited has helped establish and build the Moshtix brand. "More than anything, it helped us attract the quality of people that we have in the business today," he says. "But we now get the chance to stand on our own two feet and can be very nimble in our approach. There's both risk and reward potential in being able to do what you want to with your business, and, for us, we can be extremely responsive and creative when it comes to finding solutions, which is something our clients value." >



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- Harley Evans

Foxtix was originally launched by Rupert Murdoch in an attempt to break up the ‘cosy duopoly’ within Australia’s ticketing industry, which is held by Ticketek and Ticketmaster. However, the live-entertainment sector has come a long way since then. “The live-events industry is very broad in Australia, and there are many ticketing companies that tend to specialise in particular segments,” Harley highlights. “You’ve got ticketed events from high-school productions to food and wine shows, exhibitions, pub and club gigs, AFL Grand Finals, and everything in between.

“Ticketek and Ticketmaster are dominant in the mainstream theatre, sports, and arena music sectors, but not particularly so in other areas as their service and commercial offering doesn’t suit those markets. Moshtix’s focus is live music and cultural events in pubs, clubs, and festivals, and we have another arm to our business which offers full-service ticketing under a white label. Ticketek and Ticketmaster tend not to be focused on or known for these sectors, so it’s actually quite rare that we find ourselves competing with them.

“Our focus is less on trying to challenge the Ticketek/Ticketmaster model and much more aligned to providing the best services and solutions we can to our clients and the ticket buyers—essentially, letting our work do the talking and making sure event organisers know we are a genuine partner option for their event.”

Upon establishing Moshtix as an independent entity, the team developed pillars to define the company and what it stood for. “First and foremost is that our team and culture is an absolute priority,” Harley notes. “Our people drive everything we do, and our overarching objective is to be, and be seen to be, a great place to work. This helps us attract and retain people who are the best in the industry and make the company what it is.

“Trust is also right up there. Our clients need to know we’ll deliver consistently and to a very high standard. We learned the hard way over many years that not taking full responsibility for your mistakes leads to distrust, which is a form of cancer in any relationship. And there are so many things that can go wrong in ticketing, it would surprise most people.

“You need to be very transparent to build that trust. The same goes with our relationship with our customers, the ticket buyers. They instinctively know when they’re being given the run-around, so we really strive to help people when they need help, solving the issue quickly and transparently, and putting steps in place to try to prevent the issue happening again. In a small industry like ours, you’ll find that trust is a huge part of what drives decisions.

“We’re obsessed with delivery, and stringent when it comes to wanting to make sure we do the basics brilliantly as well as use technology and innovation in a relevant way. We pride ourselves on being solutions-focused. Many businesses probably say that, but when we asked a selection of our clients recently to describe us, being solutions-focused was something that came through very strongly, so we think we’re heading in the right direction with our efforts there.

“Finally, and possibly as important as anything, we’re all really passionate about what we do. We’re lucky to work in an industry that for most people is their lifestyle hobby, pastime, or passion. Everyone in the team loves live music and getting to live events, getting out there and being active. It would be really hard to do what we do with the long hours and weekend event work if we didn’t love what we do, and that comes across in the commitment and quality of work that the guys consistently produce. You see lots of people that struggle with the detail and pace of ticketing, and that passion is

often the thing that can carry you through those tricky times.”

Employee engagement and cultural alignment are crucial tenets of Moshtix, and the company genuinely cares about this and applies itself to it on a daily basis. “One of our leadership team members is specifically tasked with managing our culture-related efforts and deals with me on a daily basis as part of our commitment to the team.

“Our approach has been to involve the team in the process and try to break down the barriers in the business that can often result in silos and those sorts of things. We have a really flat structure where everyone is encouraged to participate and put their ideas forward about how we should run the business. Good ideas could come from someone in our call centre or someone in our leadership team. Our organisation chart is more of a HR document than a symbol of how we operate and communicate with one another.

“Our cultural alignment starts at the recruitment stage, where we will always prioritise team fit above technical skills. Then it flows through our business in everything we do. We talk about having a culture of consideration, and we try to stick to this wherever we can, recognising all the while that we’re not machines and we will slip up from time to time; but because we care about our culture, we work hard to get things back on track quickly. Our culture is something all the guys are pretty proud of and protective of.”

As a CEO, Harley takes leadership inspiration from multiple avenues. “The biggest influence would be the millions upon millions of mistakes I’ve made over the years, and continue to make every day,” he says. “Having kids has proved a great leveller and a reminder that work is basically what I do when I’m not with them, and that takes a bit of heat out of some of the stress that can come with work. And Colonel Sanders would be a

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key mentor; he brought joy to millions when he was alive, and continues to do so in death, especially to me.”

The future of Moshtix will see further development of a strong culture that resonates through the company while being understood by external stakeholders. “We see an opportunity to help event organisers and venues drive live-event attendance and create ‘stickiness’ with their customers, rather than just providing a transactional service,” Harley concludes. “We’re always looking for ways to help the fan connect with the artist, and the better we become at that, the more value we can add to our partners. So we’ll be trying to raise the bar as far as that’s concerned, and really demonstrate that an expensive one-size-fits-all model is not what event organisers are stuck with in this country. There are other, better options out there.

“Our mantra is that working with Moshtix and The Ticket Group, formerly Foxtix, means a better experience for event organisers and the fans, and if we can deliver on those things, we should have helped the industry along the way because competition for the consumer’s wallet these days is fierce, and the public expects services like ours to become cheaper and easier. We think we can be leaders in achieving that.”

As the live-entertainment industry splinters into finer niches, the duopoly of Ticketek and Ticketmaster is dwindling, creating a more diverse market. Moshtix offers promoters, venues, and customers the opportunity to work with an organisation that understands this point of difference and differentiates itself from the pack by being a truly independent alternative that focuses on a younger and more engaged demographic. •

*“Working with the team at Moshtix is all about collaboration and innovation. We work together to provide their clients with the best services for the supply of ticket stock, distribution services, and point-of-sale technology.” - Nathan Simonds, Managing Director, House of Tickets*

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Moshix

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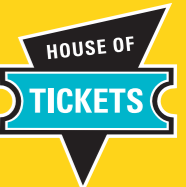
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