Client Overview

Heide Park Resort, located in Soltau, Germany, is the country's largest theme park offering a variety of attractions, roller coasters, and entertainment experiences including more than 30 attractions for children under the age of 10 years old. The Resort typically attracts over 1.6 million visitors annually where they can enjoy attractions such as "Colossos - Battle of the Giants", the immersive theme world of DreamWorks "How to Train Your Dragon" and the colorful "Peppa Pig Land". As part of the Merlin Entertainments Group, Heide Park continually seeks to enhance the park experience for guests of all ages through innovation and operational efficiency.

The Challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic presented Heide Park Resort with an urgent need to implement strict capacity limits to reopen safely. Previously, over 70% of guests purchased tickets onsite, often spontaneously or with promotional coupons. To comply with regulations and manage visitor flows responsibly, Heide Park had to transform its traditional ticketing model and shift entirely to a digital approach. This involved ensuring that every guest had a dated, pre-booked online ticket with an assigned time slot. This abrupt change introduced several challenges:

Very short implementation timeline due to reopening deadlines.	Concerns about guest acceptance and communication effectiveness.	Need for operational restructuring and digital readiness.	Uncertainty about system integration and user experience.

Emotions ran high around these risks. The team worried about whether the digital system would be ready in time, if staff could adapt quickly, and—most critically—how guests would respond to the sudden elimination of onsite ticket sales. .

> "Only with the technical set-up of the Accesso platform and the close, uncomplicated cooperation with the customer support team were we able to transform our digitalization project—both to our satisfaction and with happy guests."
>
> — Marion Olsen, Marketing Manager, Heide Park Resort

The Solution

Heide park partnered with **accesso** to implement a fast-track digital transformation using the accesso Passport eCommerce ticketing platform. The implementation included:

100% Online Ticketing with Time Slots: Guests could now only buy tickets online, each with a specific date and time slot, eliminating walk-up sales.	Reconfiguring Existing Infrastructure: **accesso** adapted Heide Park's existing ticketing setup to accommodate the new time-slot requirements and fully digital process.	Promotion Integration: Existing promotional coupons were migrated from the ticket counter to the online store.	Close Collaboration: The rollout involved continuous coordination between Heide Park, **accesso**, and the Merlin central team. A dedicated **accesso** contact ensured consistency and rapid issue resolution.	Ongoing Development: Heide Park continued to refine its pricing strategies, upselling opportunities (e.g. parking, photo passes), and customer journey through the **accesso Passport** platform. .

Despite the complexity, the flexibility of **accesso's** system and the strong partnership made It possible to meet the tight deadlines and reopen successfully.

The Impact

The digitalization initiative exceeded expectations, delivering both immediate and long-term benefits:

- Online ticket sales surged from under 20% to 75%, marking a radical shift in consumer behavior.
- Onsite ticket sales plummeted from over 70% to less than 5%, virtually eliminating queue congestion.
- Enhanced Data Collection: The park now has deeper insights into guest preferences, enabling better engagement before, during, and after visits.
- Efficient Staffing: Advance booking data enables more accurate forecasting and staff planning.
- Upsell Potential: Online purchases now include add-ons like parking, express passes, and photo packages.
- Resilience & Readiness: The park is now positioned for agile response to future challenges and continued digital growth.

Conclusion

Heide Park Resort turned an urgent pandemic challenge into a strategic digital triumph. What once seemed unthinkable—shutting down traditional ticket counters—has proven to be a future-forward move that streamlined operations, delighted guests, and set a new standard for park admissions.

One-Sentence Summary

Out of necessity, do the unthinkable and profit from it: Complete digitization of ticket sales.