

priceff

Pricing lessons from football and live sport

Fill the stands at the right price

Practical lessons from football clubs

Demand for a match is shaped by factors no one can predict. The opponent, the team's form, the league table, a cup run, the weather or a kick-off moved for TV can all change ticket sales in unexpected ways.

Yet the price is usually decided months in advance, when the fixtures are published, and it holds whatever happens afterwards. If the match turns out bigger than expected, the tickets go too cheaply. If demand stays weak, the price is too high and the stands stay half empty. Either way, revenue is lost.

This guide brings together what we have learned from working with football clubs and other sports organisers. A match that sells out in minutes can feel like a success, yet most often it means the tickets were priced too low. The best result is a stadium that is nearly full at the best possible price.

The key points

- Demand for a match is hard to predict when tickets go on sale. Yet the price is set right then and often holds until kick-off.
- If the match turns out bigger than expected, tickets were sold too cheaply. If demand stays weak, the stands are left half empty.
- Every seat in the stadium has its own demand. Stands, sections and fixtures differ from one another sharply.
- In football, many tickets are bought in the last days before kick-off, once the form, the table and the weather are known.
- A fair price cap protects the club and its relationship with supporters. Pricing aims for the right price within the limits the club has set.
- The best result is a nearly full stadium at the best possible price. A sell-out within minutes usually means money was left on the table.



1

A price set in advance can cost you dearly

Most clubs know there is room to improve in their matchday ticket pricing. Here we go through the most common ways a fixed or pre-set price eats into revenue, often without showing up in any report.

The price is locked in when you know the least

Tickets go on sale when the fixtures are published, long before anyone knows how the season will unfold. Yet the price is decided right then, and it often holds for the entire sales period.

The closer the match comes, the more information about demand builds up. Tickets sell well or slowly, the team strings results together, a new signing makes the headlines, the forecast clears. All of this information is valuable, yet a fixed price ignores it. The price stays the same while the situation changes daily.

A fast sell-out is a sign of lost revenue

A sold-out stadium feels like a success, and "sold out in a day" makes a good headline. Most often, though, it means the tickets were priced too low.

If a match sells out immediately, demand would have supported a higher price too, and the difference was lost. The best result comes when the stadium fills to around 90–95 percent at the best possible price. Selling every ticket within minutes is a different outcome altogether.



"A sold-out stadium is not automatically a success. If the tickets vanished within minutes, the price was probably too low, and that difference goes straight out of the club's pocket."

Thomas Gräsbeck
Business Consultant, Priceff

The same price for every seat leaves money on the table

A stadium rarely sells just one product. There are different stands, sections, hospitality and family areas, and their demand varies sharply. The seats along the halfway line can be sold out while the upper tier behind the goal still gapes empty.

When everything is priced by the same logic, the most popular seats sell too cheaply and the less sought-after ones stay empty. Every section has its own demand curve as matchday approaches, and pricing should follow it.



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What happens when pricing starts to work properly

Every seat in the stadium has its own demand

Within a single match there can be dozens of seat categories whose demand differs sharply. The centre stand is a different product from the seats behind the goal, hospitality differs from the family stand, and a Saturday derby is an entirely different product from a midweek cup tie against lower-league opposition.

When everything is priced by the same logic, the most popular seats sell too cheaply and the less sought-after ones stay empty. The most sought-after sections could bring in more, and the quieter stands would fill at a lower price that draws a bigger crowd. Priceff's demand-based pricing reads the demand of each ticket category separately, so each one can be priced correctly on an ongoing basis.

Every fixture sells at its own pace

Not every match sells at the same rhythm. For a derby or a top-of-the-table clash, tickets can go weeks in advance. For many league matches, a large share of purchases comes in the final day or two, as supporters wait to see the team's form, the table and the weather. Cup ties add their own twist, since the opponent and the date are confirmed only shortly before kick-off.

This difference in timing matters, because it tells you when the price should move and in which direction. A fixed price treats every fixture the same, whatever its sales are actually doing. Demand-based pricing adapts to the rhythm of each match.



"In football pricing, the club's brand and its supporters are part of the equation. The best price fills the stadium and keeps the fans happy for the next match too."

Kim Martesuo
CEO, Priceff

A fair price protects the club and its relationship with supporters

Football pricing has an important difference from many other industries. Squeezing the highest possible price out of every ticket is never the goal. Even if some supporters would pay a very high price, it can damage the club's reputation and weaken its bond with the fans who come back week after week.

That is why pricing is kept within clear limits. The club sets a price cap that the price never exceeds, however strong demand may be. Pricing then looks for the best result within a fair price, and no single ticket climbs to a level that would look bad in the headlines. Demand-based pricing means finding the right price within the limits the club has set.

Success Story

More revenue per match and a more evenly filled stadium

FC Inter Turku, a club in Finland's top flight, priced the tickets for its 2026 UEFA Conference League matches with Priceff's demand-based pricing.

Ticket revenue grew by 16% per match, and demand spread 22% more evenly across the stand sections.

+16%

more ticket revenue per match

22%

more even demand across stand sections



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The opportunities of demand-based pricing in football

Two things are usually expected of demand-based pricing: more revenue from the big matches and fuller stands for the quieter ones. Both are usually realised, and there is more to the picture. Here are three things that come up when pricing starts to follow real demand.

A full stadium is valuable beyond ticket revenue

When the price of a quieter match is lowered, more supporters turn up. That matters beyond ticket revenue. A full stadium creates a better atmosphere, gives the team a stronger home advantage, looks better on TV and makes the club more attractive to sponsors and partners. Empty seats send the opposite message, even if the tickets that were sold were priced high.

A lower price for a quiet fixture is therefore more than a discount. It is a way to build a fuller stadium that delivers value in several ways at once.

Automation frees up time to build new tickets and packages

When pricing runs automatically, the club can be bolder in building different products: ticket categories, match packages, family offers and hospitality. Pricing each new product no longer requires separate manual work, because the system finds the right price for each one according to its own demand.

The range of products is no longer limited by how many prices someone has time to manage. The club can focus on which products serve its supporters best, while the system handles the daily pricing.

The first movers gain a head start

In football, demand-based pricing is only now becoming common. Most matches are still priced fixed, and where prices do change, it is often done by hand, when someone follows sales and adjusts prices now and then. Automatic pricing that reacts to demand continuously is still rare.

That means the clubs that adopt it first can gain a head start before it becomes the established way. Airlines and hotels adopted demand-based pricing decades ago, and today it is a given for them. Sport is on the same path.



"A full stadium is more than ticket revenue. It's atmosphere, visibility and the reason supporters and sponsors come back for the next match."

Thomas Gräsbeck
Business Consultant, Priceff

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Implementing Priceff

Demand-based pricing can sound complicated, but in a club's day-to-day it shows up surprisingly simply. The way prices are set changes. Everything else stays as before.

The partnership begins with a mapping

What is being priced, how does pricing work today and what should it achieve? Do you want to use competitor monitoring and in what way, and in which direction should pricing be steered? We configure the system to support your strategy.

Weeks 1–2

Mapping and configuration
We go through the current pricing, the goals and the historical sales data. The system is configured to match your club's operations. It is often wise to start with one stand or competition, gather experience and expand from there.

Weeks 3–4

Test run
The system calculates prices but does not yet take them to sale. We look together at how the prices appear and make the necessary fine-tuning.

Week 4 onwards

Pricing goes live
In the early stage we hold short weekly check-ins, which become less frequent as we learn the setup.

Ongoing development

Once or twice a season we hold a broader workshop, where we go through the results and develop the strategy further.

At the same time we analyse the historical data. We go through several seasons of the club's sales data and identify demand patterns: the opponent, the day and kick-off time, the stage of the season, and differences between stands and ticket categories. This groundwork ensures the system understands from the very start what kind of environment it is working in.

The system is up and running in a few weeks

Implementation usually takes two to four weeks. The integration is done alongside the existing ticketing system, either through an interface or a file transfer, and it requires neither replacing the system nor a large IT project.

Before launch, a test run of a few days is carried out, where the system calculates prices but does not yet take them to sale. This gives the chance to see how the prices look in practice and to make the necessary fine-tuning before launch.



"Every customer has their own starting point in their business. Our job is to make sure the system serves your goals specifically."

Kim Martesuo
CEO, Priceff

The system works in the background

Once the system is running, it calculates and updates prices continuously according to demand in real time. Every match and every ticket category is priced separately. The club sees the full picture in a view that shows where things stand and why.

The club always sets the price limits within which the algorithm operates. These limits keep pricing fair and ensure that no single ticket climbs to a level that would damage the club's standing with its supporters. Your own demand determines where the price moves within the limits, and the cap always keeps it reasonable.

In the early stage we hold short weekly check-ins, where we go through the situation, answer questions and suggest changes as needed. Over time the meetings become less frequent, as the system finds its balance and the club learns to read the data it produces.

Development continues

After the season we hold a broader workshop, where we go through the past matches and make the necessary changes for the next season. Where did we gain more revenue, where a fuller stadium, and what can still be improved?

Demand-based pricing is an ongoing process that is refined season by season as data accumulates and the club develops.

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Thomas Gräsbeck | Business Consultant, Priceff

Let's look at your situation together

The same question comes up almost every time: how much revenue is lost because the price is set in advance and does not react to real demand?

Book 30 minutes in my calendar, and we'll go through your situation and see together what demand-based pricing could bring to your matches.

Book a call »