

**Professional  
Association of  
Canadian Theatres**

# **PACT Advocacy Survey – September 2022**

## **Ticket Trends**

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# Our Survey

In September, we asked the PACT membership about their current ticket sales trends. We received responses from 31 theatre companies, with representation from every PACT region and from small, midsize, and large companies.

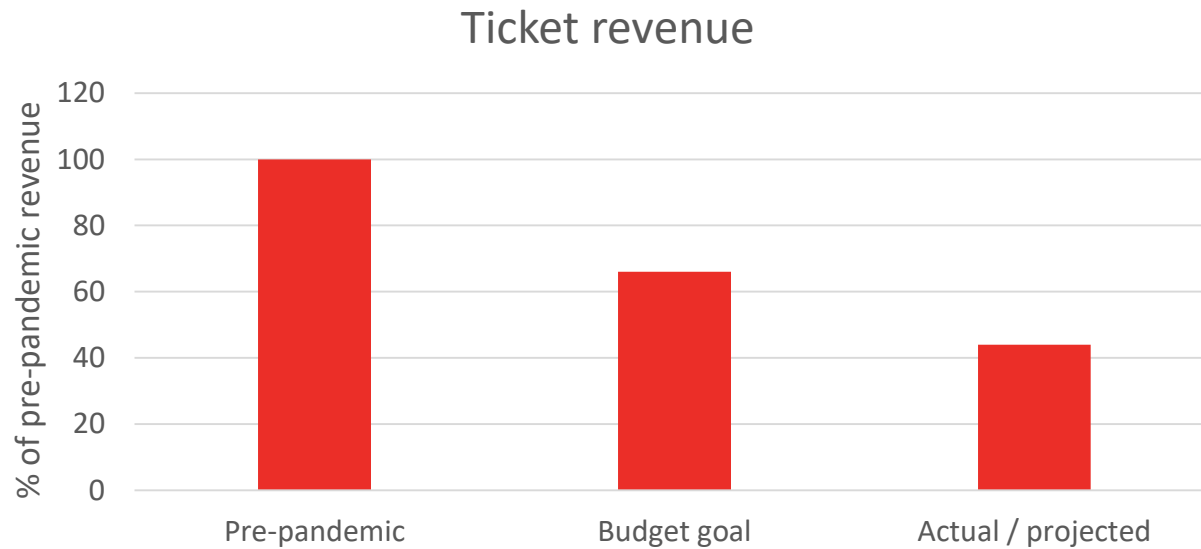
We asked companies to look at their sales for the 2022 summer season or for the upcoming 2022-23 season, whichever made the most sense for their business model. Where actual sales numbers were not available, we asked for their best estimates and projections.

While not a scientific study, the results do provide a snapshot of current ticket sales trends and the challenges facing Canadian theatres.



# Our Findings

- On average, theatres were aiming for 66% of pre-pandemic ticket revenue, and reaching 66% of that goal. This puts the average company's **total ticket revenue at 44% of pre-pandemic levels.**
- Similarly, theatres were aiming for 67% of pre-pandemic ticket numbers, and reaching 66% of that goal. This puts the average company's **total tickets sold at 44% of their pre-pandemic levels.**



# Our Findings

- **Slow ticket sales were reported by nearly every theatre.** Out of 31 respondents, only two companies were at or above 80% of their pre-pandemic ticket sales revenue. Only four companies reached or expected to reach their own budgeted ticket sales revenue.
- **Smaller companies are faring worse than large companies.** The large companies with annual budgets of \$5M or greater had recovered 56% of their pre-pandemic revenue, compared to just 38% for small or midsize companies with budgets below that mark.
- **Companies with shows during the winter are faring worse than summer theatres.** Summer theatres had recovered an average of 60% of their pre-pandemic revenue, compared to a projected 38% for companies that operate year-round or have fall-to-spring seasons.



# Trends & Context

As context for their reduced sales, theatres cited factors such as fewer subscription sales, cancellations of performances or productions due to COVID-19, challenges with travel and tourism, and financial hardship experienced by their audiences. Some common themes:

- **Audiences are reluctant to return indoors.** Theatres report that, after two years of being warned against large indoor gatherings by public health, many audience members remain hesitant to attend indoor theatre productions.
- **Audiences are resistant to planning ahead.** Theatres report that fewer audience members are purchasing season subscriptions and many are purchasing their tickets much closer to the performance date than before.
- **Decisions about health protocols put theatres in a difficult spot.** Companies reported a “lose-lose situation” due to the polarization of audience opinion – some audience members won’t attend without protections such as mandatory masking, while others refuse to attend if they are required to wear a mask.



# The Outlook

The survey asked theatres at what point they would face significant financial hardship if their current ticket sales trend continued:

- 13% reported that they already face significant financial hardship
- 52% would face significant financial hardship by summer 2023 or earlier
- 26% would face significant financial hardship in more than a year
- **Only 10% would be alright indefinitely at their current levels of ticket sales**

