PAF Audience Benchmarks
Collecting the evidence for 2025

Hello!

Thank you for participating in Performing Arts Forum's Audience Benchmarks project 2026. Katy Raines from Indigo and I are collaborating to support arts centres, theatres and festivals get the evidence you need to grow and broaden audiences. We aim to answer your Who?, How?, Why? and So What? questions about your audiences. You can also use the Audience Benchmarks in funding applications and reports to stakeholders.

This element of the project focuses on box office data for events in 2025 and compares it with 2019 and 2022 to 2024. You will get answers to these questions:

How are we doing?:
- total attendance including unticketed events
- number of events
- tickets put on sale
- tickets sold
- % capacity excluding comps

Are we maximising income?:
- average value per ticket sold
- average annual income per ticket buyer

Are we growing audiences?
- how many customers have purchased for the first time?
- how many customers have we kept from last year?

How engaged are they?:
- % of ticket buyers purchasing for one event only
- How many customers purchasing in this year can we communicate with?

NEW In response to feedback, we are introducing new benchmarks looking at social media effectiveness:
- reach – number of unique individuals seeing your content
- engagement – total number of interactions
- number of followers
- social media budget

I will send you a report that shows you your organisation's results and, if you have participated in the project before, your trends, comparing them to the average for organisations like yours.

I will be the only person to see your results apart from you. I will only share with anyone else the aggregated averages and ranges for all festivals, small-scale venues and large-scale venues.

Here are the step-by-step instructions, so, when you're ready, log into Ticketsolve and let's get started.

Step 1: Tell me about your programme

Open the Excel spreadsheet you downloaded along with these step-by-step instructions. Save it with this filename: **PAFBenchmarks25_Results_[your organisation name]**

Enter your organisation name in the spreadsheet as you want it to appear on your report. Then tell me anything out of the ordinary you think I should know about your programme in 2025. We want to show the overall impact of your organisation so if you programmed any unticketed events in 2025, please enter the number of people who attended – estimate if you need to.

Did you sell tickets in 2025 through anyone else's ticketing system? For example, a promoter may have sold some tickets through their own channels. If so, please enter the number of tickets in the spreadsheet (this is because they won't be recorded on your Ticketsolve system).

Step 2: Get rid of duplicates

It is important that there are as few duplicate customer records as possible on your system. If there are more than a handful, you will appear to have kept too few customers and have too many first-time attenders and customers who have only bought tickets for one event. Here's how to run Ticketsolve's deduplication routine: https://ticketsolve.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/209689963

If you have large numbers of duplicates, you might want to consider asking the Ticketsolve team to do a mass deduplication for you: https://ticketsolve.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/12787216675732-Mass-customer-deduplication

Step 3: Exclude any events that weren't yours

What to include
We want to look at the overall impact of your organisation on the community so INCLUDE all these types of event for 2025:
- events by professional artists
- light entertainment and popular culture
- amateur events
- venue rentals or hires for arts and entertainment performances and workshops
- events that your organisation has programmed and promoted outside your venue eg in community centres (but exclude tours of the same event outside your catchment area)
- films, workshops and participatory events.

What to leave out
There are some types of activity in 2025 that it would make sense to exclude from the analysis. If you sell tickets on behalf of other promoters for events that do not take place in your venue or are not part of your festival then you should EXCLUDE them.

Please also exclude things like car parking, restaurant bookings or sales of artworks from your gallery. If in doubt, email me at heather@heathermaitland.co.uk.

Exclude them by doing ONE of the following:
- Add all shows that should be excluded to a program (call it something like "Exclusion" program) and then exclude that program from reports using the **Events in program for** filter

- Add all shows to a category (call it something like "Exclusion" category) and then exclude that category from reports using the filter **Events in category**
- When creating your 2025 reports, use the filter **Saw shows** to exclude the shows you don't want.
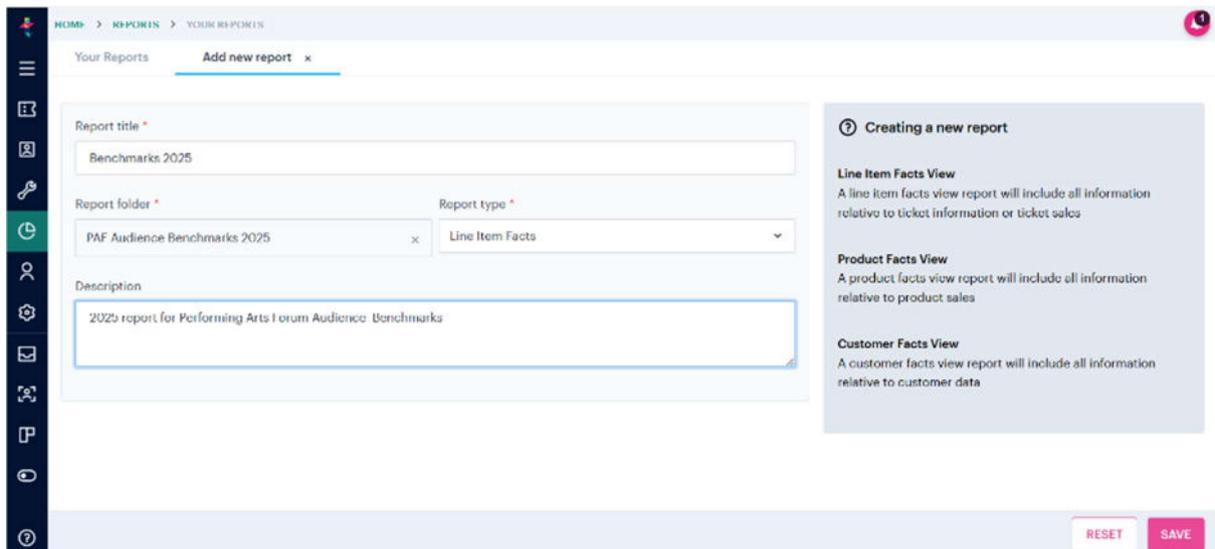
Step 4: Create your 2025 report

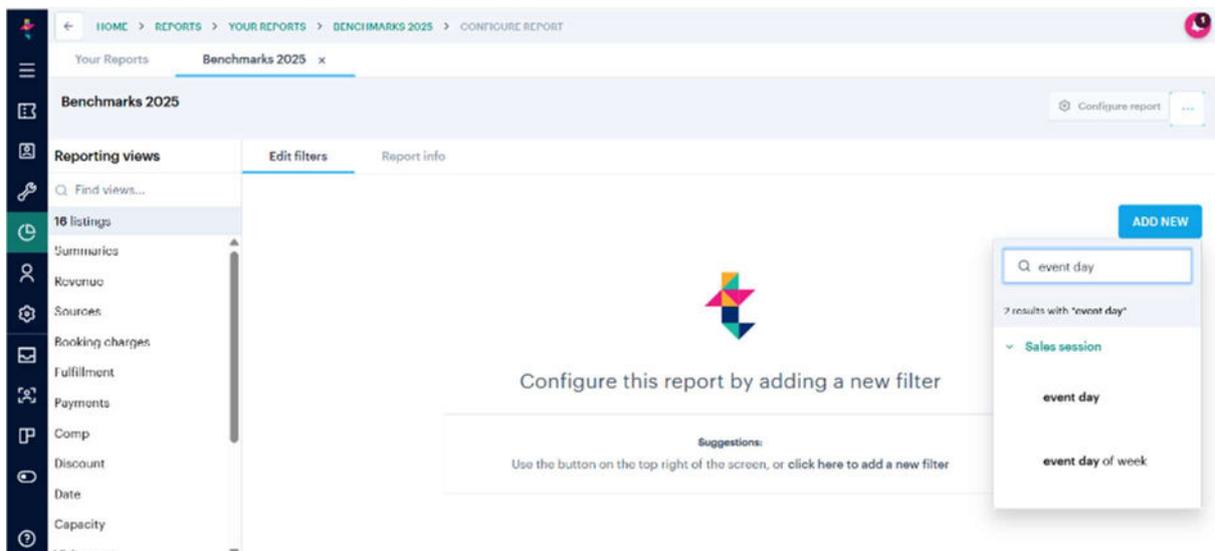Go into **Reports** then into **Your Reports**
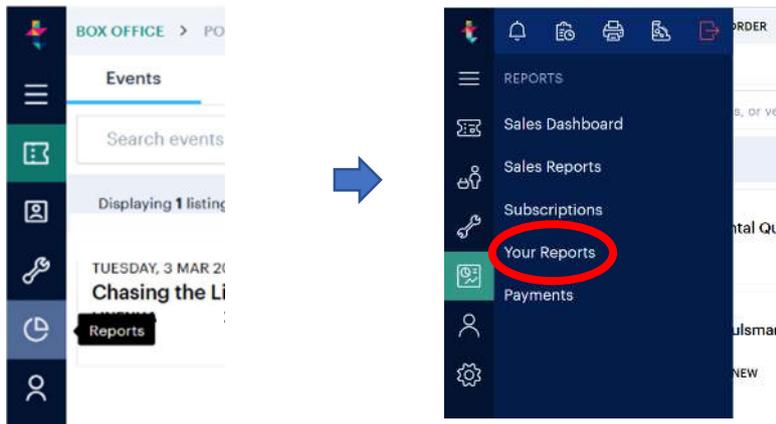
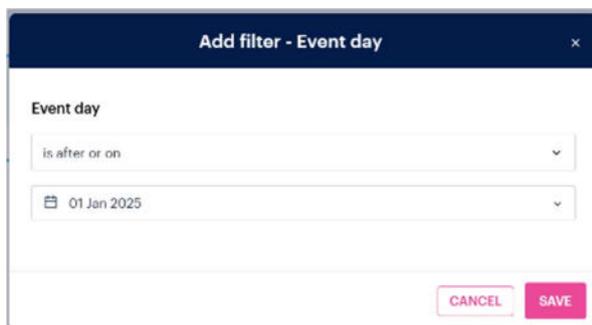Click on **Add New** and select **Report** from the drop-down menu

Give the report the name **Benchmarks 2025** and a description, choose the folder where you want to save it and select the Report Type **Line Item Facts.** Now click on **Save** in the bottom right hand corner of the screen.

Add a filter by clicking on **ADD NEW** and selecting **event day**

In the pop up box, select **is after or on** from the drop down menu then click on the calendar icon and select **01 January 2025**. Click on **Save**

Add another filter by clicking on **ADD NEW** and selecting **event day** again.

In the pop up box, select **is before or on** from the drop down menu then click on the calendar icon and select **31 December 2025**. Click on **Save**
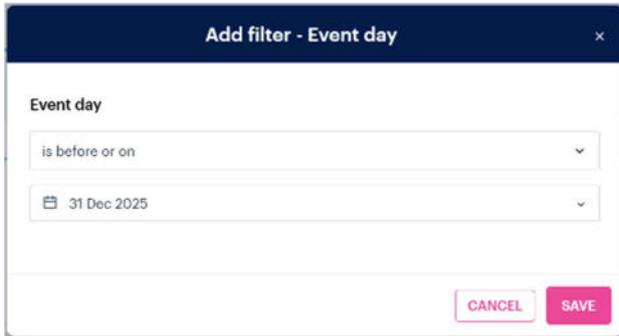
We want to exclude complimentary tickets so add another filter. Click on **Add New**. This time select **ticket price**
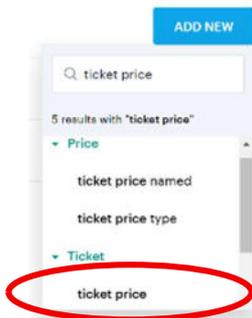
In the pop up box, select **that is greater than or equal to** and then underneath enter **1**. Click on **Save.** This means we will only include customers who have spent at least €1 on at least one ticket.

If you decided in Step 2 that you needed to exclude some events, click on **ADD NEW** and select whichever of the following filters you chose to use in Step 3:
- Events in program for
- Events of category
- Saw show

Now tick in the red boxes to **exclude** the shows, program or category you don't want. Click on **Save.**

Step 5: Getting the answers: how are we doing?

Click on the Reporting view **Summaries**
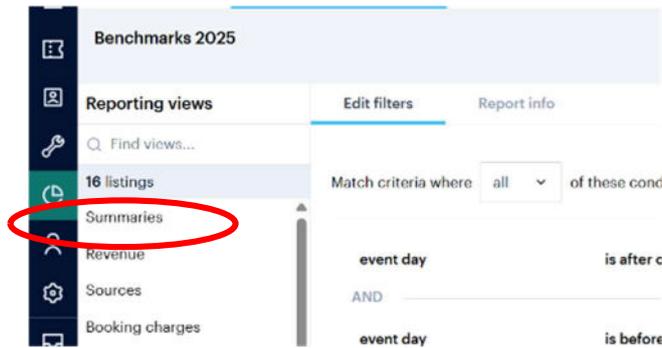
Enter the following figures from the data table into the spreadsheet:

- Total revenue (€)
- Total quantity of tickets sold
- Total unique customers
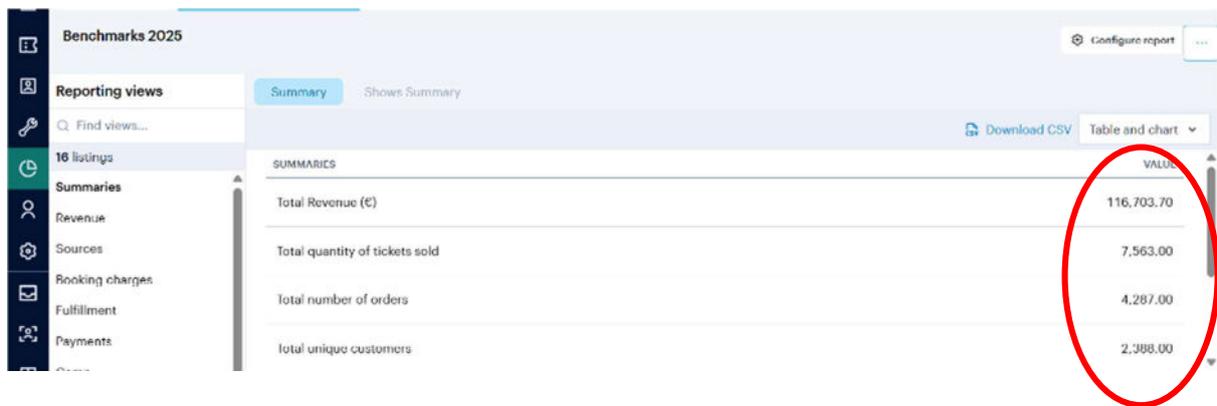
Now click on the Reporting view **Capacity** and then click on the tab **By event**.

Click on **Download CSV** and save it, naming the file **Capacity2025_[your organisation name]**
Make sure you save it on a drive you can access as you'll need to send it to me.

Now tidy up the data in the report to remove cancelled shows. Here's how.

Open the report you saved in Excel. (Don't log out of Ticketsolve because you'll need your 2025 report again in a few minutes). Click in a cell in the table and sort it smallest to largest by the **Booked** column (column H). You'll find the Sort button under the Data tab.

The events at the top of the report will now be those with very low or no ticket sales. For each cancelled show, delete the figure in the **Size** column (column F). You may also want to exclude livestreamed events with very low ticket sales completely so delete the figures in both the **Booked** and the **Size** columns. (You'll see your show names and venue layouts but I've blanked them out in the screenshots below)

Please also check the **Size** figure for any events, like workshops or livestreams, where you only intended to sell a certain number of tickets but the **Size** remains at maximum capacity. Change the **Size** figure to the capacity intended.

Add up the remaining figures in the **Size** column. Go down to the bottom row of the report and delete the total in column F. Enter **=SUM(F2:F[whatever the bottom row is]** and hit Enter. Add the resulting total to your Audience Benchmarks Results spreadsheet in the **2025 Size** row.

Now all you need to do is count the number of events. Go down to the bottom row of the report and delete the total you just entered in column F. Enter **=COUNT(F2:F[whatever the bottom row is]** and hit Enter. Add the resulting count to your Audience Benchmarks Results spreadsheet in the **2025 Total events** row.

Step 6: Getting the answers - how engaged are they?

Now click on the Reporting view **Visit count** and then check the **by Events number** tab is highlighted. Look at the **Occurrences** column and enter the figure for **1 visit** in the spreadsheet.

Step 7: Getting the answers - how many are new customers?

Click on the **three turquoise dots** towards the top right of your screen and select **Duplicate to.**

In the pop up box, select the folder where you are saving these reports and give the report the title **Benchmarks 2025 New**. Click on **Duplicate**.
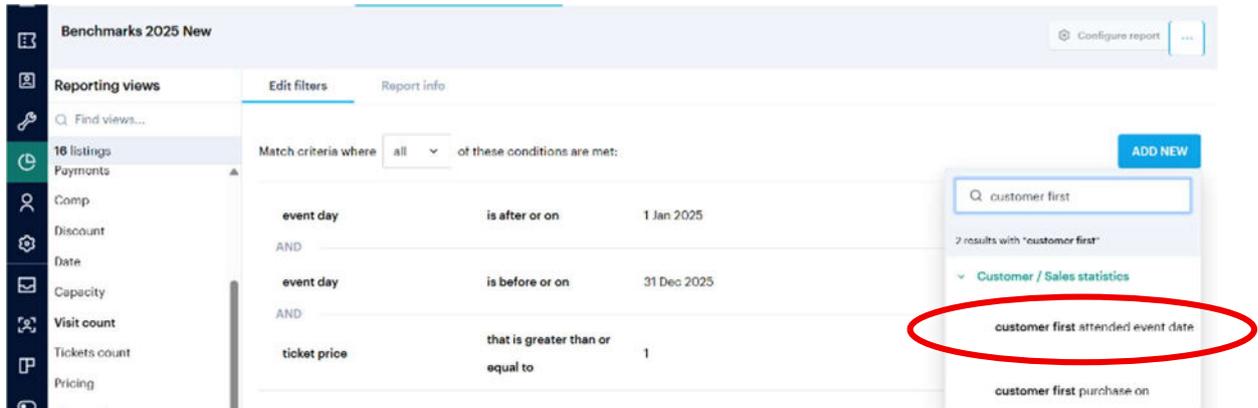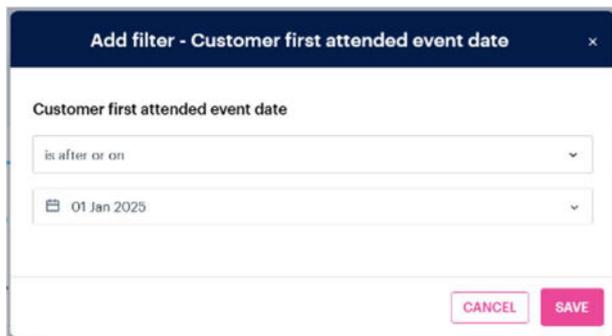
We need to add two more filters so click on **ADD NEW** and select **customer first attended event date**
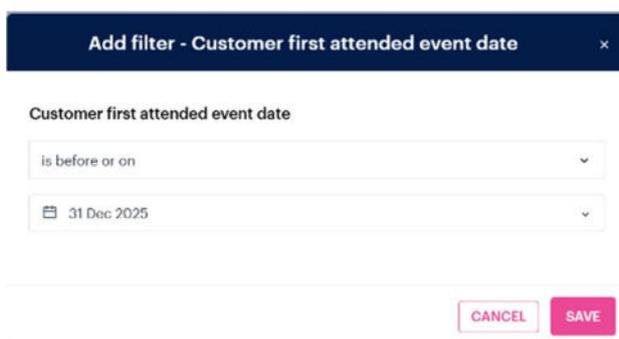

In the pop up box, select **is after or on** from the drop down menu then click on the calendar icon and select **01 January 2025**. Click on **Save**
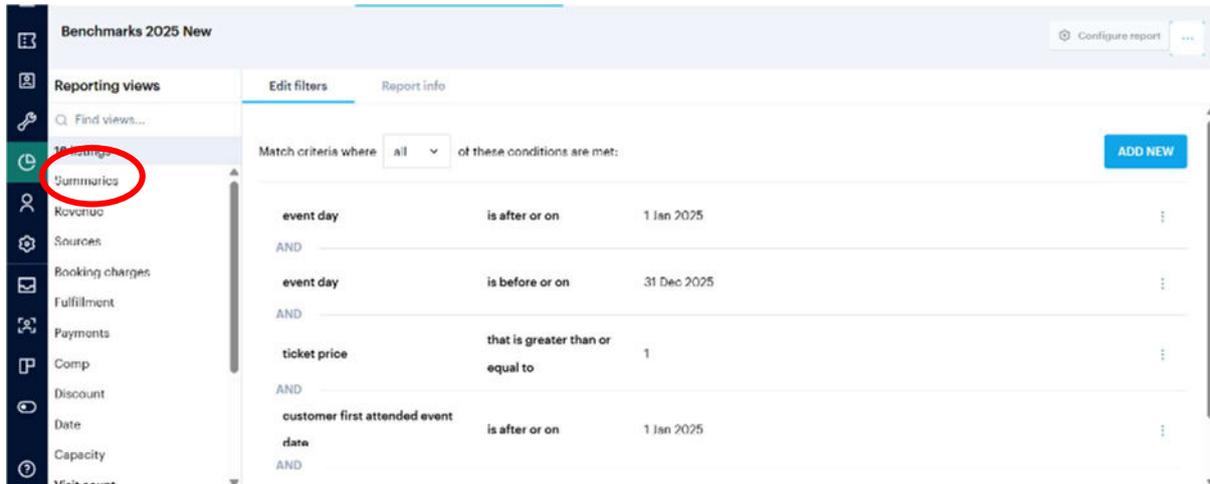

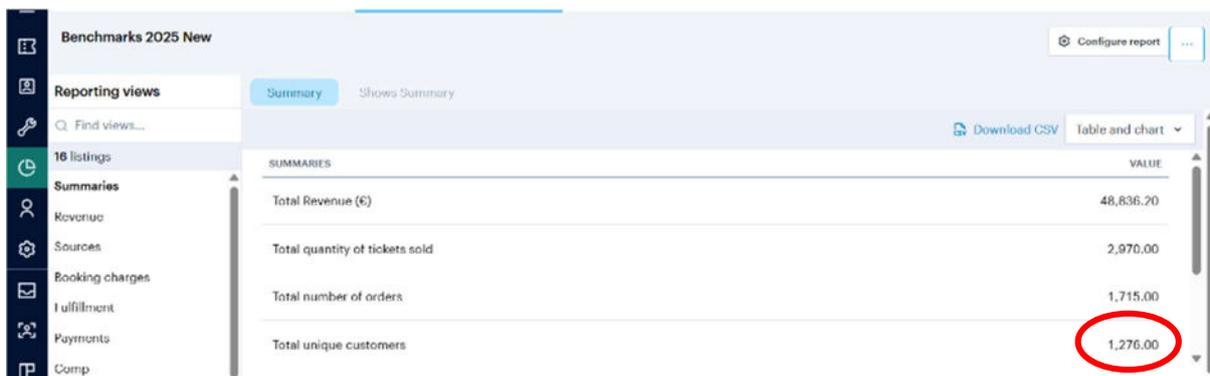Click on **ADD NEW** and again select **customer first attended event date**

In the pop up box, select **is before or on** from the drop down menu then click on the calendar icon and select **31 December 2025**. Click on **Save**

Click on the Reporting view **Summaries**

Enter the figure for **Total unique customers** in the spreadsheet


Step 8: Getting the answers – how many can we communicate with?

Close the **Benchmarks 2025 New** report. Reopen your **Benchmarks 2025** report.

Click on the **three turquoise dots** towards the top right of your screen and select **Duplicate to.**

In the pop up box, select the folder where you are saving these reports and give the report the title **Benchmarks 2025 Permission**. Click on **Duplicate**.
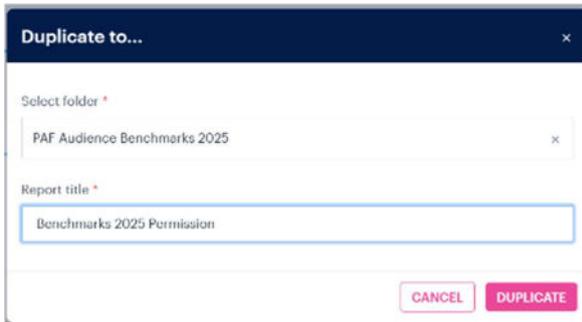
Add another filter by clicking on **ADD NEW** and selecting **Opted in for email**. Slide the **that is set to** button to the right so it turns turquoise and click on **Save**.
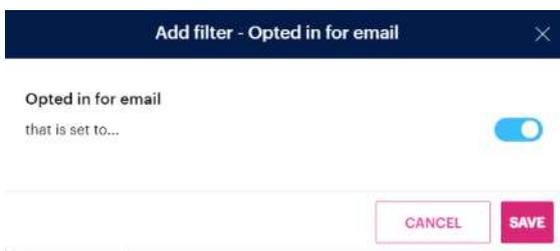
Hover the cursor over the three blue circle icon to the right of the **Opted in for email** filter you have just added. Click on the plus icon.

Select **Opted in for mail**. Slide the **that is set to** button to the right so it turns turquoise and click on **Save**. Note that there is an OR in between your two "Opted in for" filters. That means that the filters will select people who have opted in for email OR opted in for mail OR opted in for both.

Click on the Reporting view **Summaries.**

Enter the figure for **Total unique customers** in the spreadsheet


Step 9: Getting the answers – how many have we kept?

We need to see how many of the customers buying tickets in 2024 also bought tickets in 2025. We'll start by extracting 2024 ticket buyers.

Close your **Benchmarks 2025 Permission** report and your **Benchmarks 2025** report.

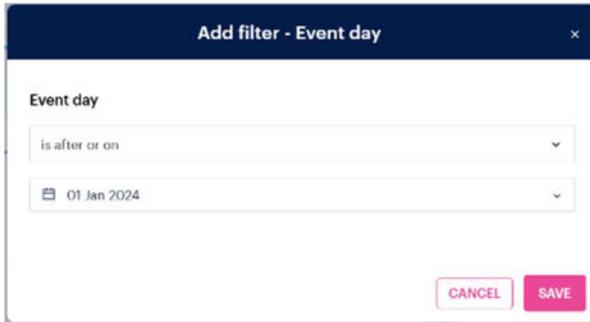Click on **Add New** and select **Report** from the drop down menu.

Give the report the name **Benchmarks 2025 Kept** and a description, choose the folder where you want to save it and select the Report Type **Line Item Facts.** Now click on **Save** in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen.
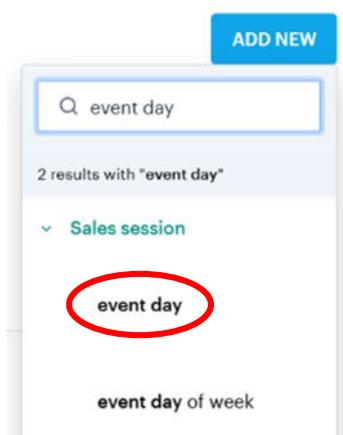

Just as you did before, add a filter by clicking on **ADD NEW** and selecting **event day.**

In the pop up box, select **is after or on** from the drop down menu then click on the calendar icon and select **01 January 2024.** Click on **Save**
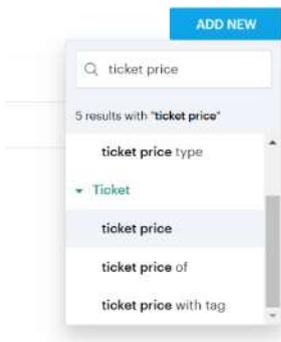
Add another filter by clicking on **ADD NEW** and selecting **event day** again.

In the pop up box, select **is before or on** from the drop down menu then click on the calendar icon and select **31 December 2024**. Click on **Save**
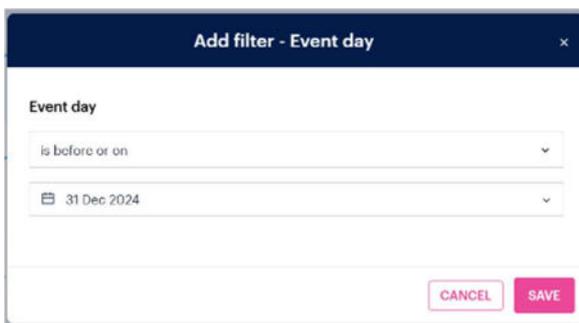
We want to exclude people who only got complimentary tickets so add another filter. Click on **Add New**. Select **ticket price**

In the pop up box, select **that is greater than or equal to** and then underneath enter **1**. Click on **Save**. This means we will only include customers who have spent at least €1 on at least one ticket.
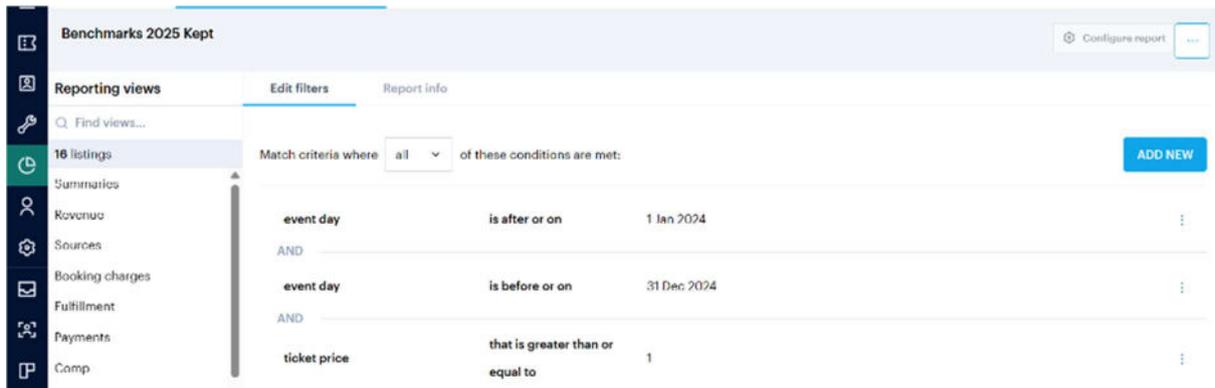
If you decided in Step 2 that you needed to exclude some events, click on **ADD NEW** and select whichever of the following filters you chose to use in Step 3:

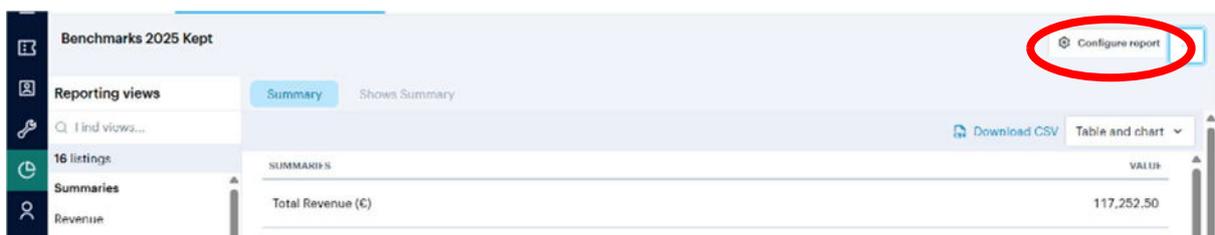- Events in program for
- Events of category
- Saw show

Now tick in the red boxes to **exclude** the shows, program or category you don't want. Click on **Save.**

Click on Reporting view **Summaries**

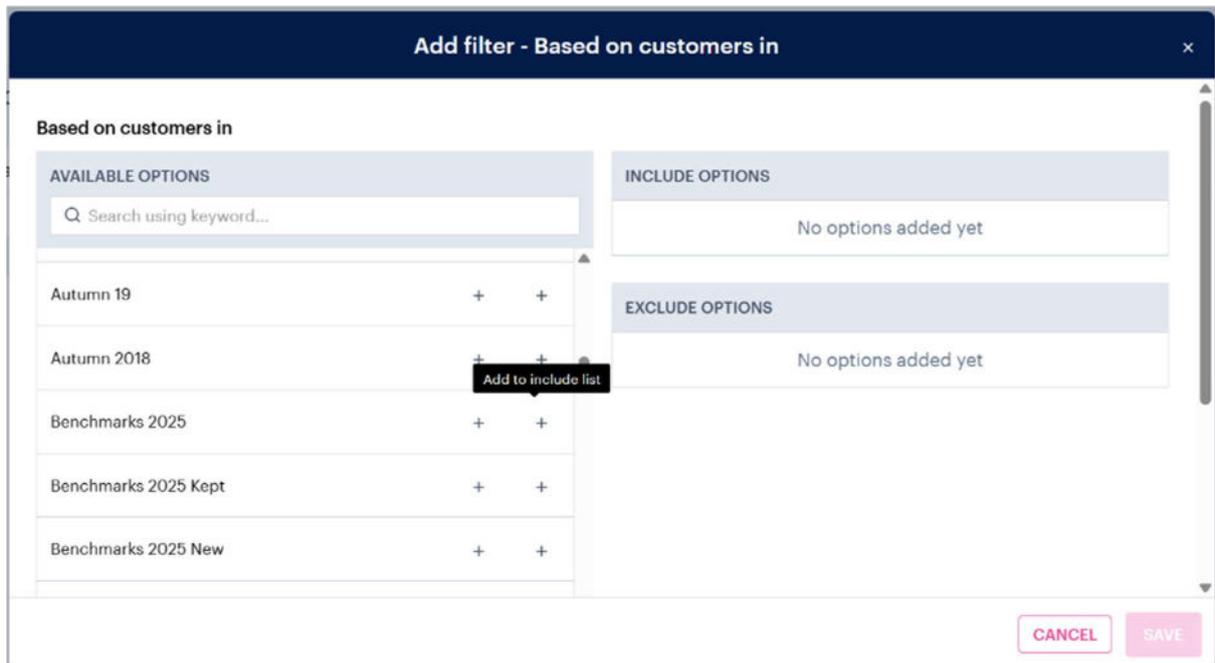Enter the figure for **Total unique customers** in your spreadsheet.
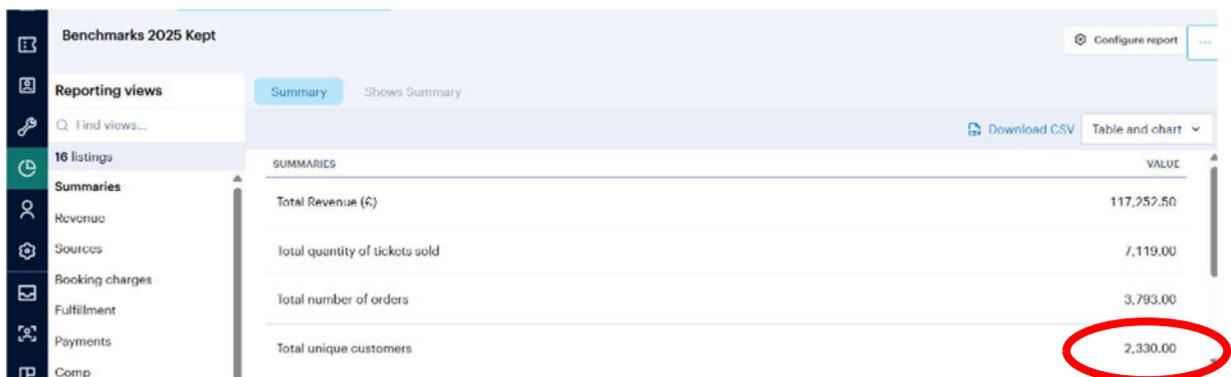
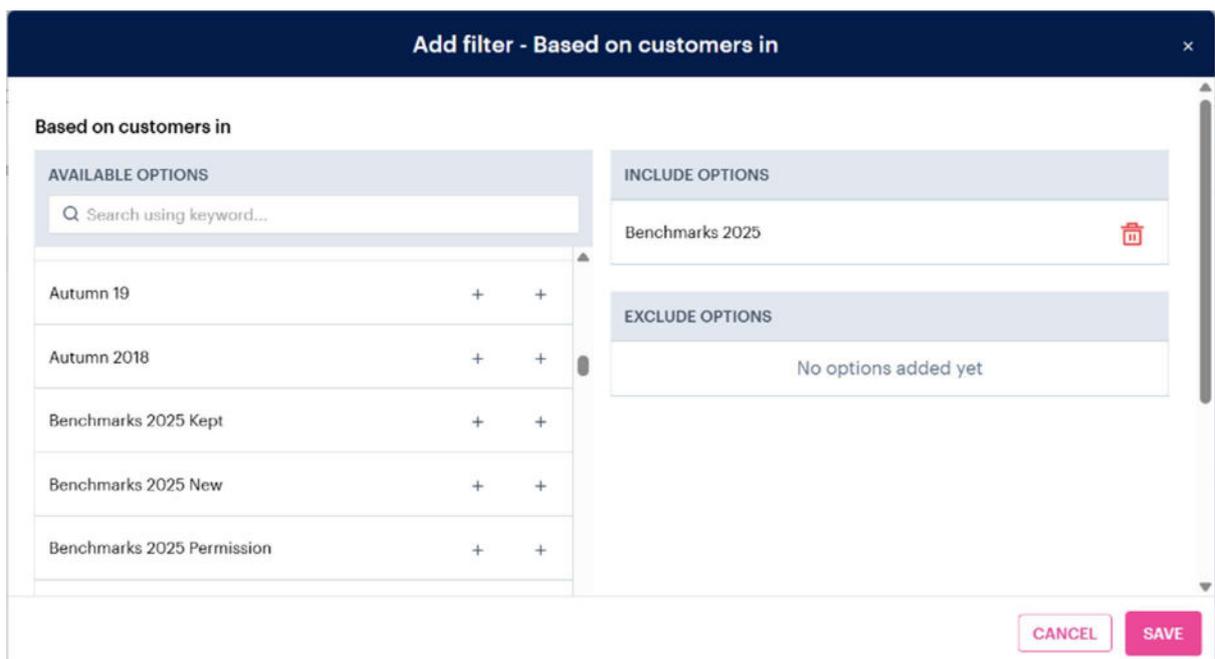Now we need to find out how many of them also bought tickets in 2025. Click on Configure report.

Click on **ADD NEW** and select **based on customers in.**

Scroll to find your **Benchmarks 2025** report. Click on the **+ symbol** in the second column to add it to the Include list.

You should see your **Benchmarks 2025 report** appear under **INCLUDE OPTIONS.** Click on **Save**.

Click on **Summaries** and enter the figure for **Total unique customers** into the spreadsheet.

Check that it looks sensible. It should be smaller than the figure for **2024 Total unique customers**.

Close your **Benchmarks 2025 Kept** report and log out of Ticketsolve.

Step 10: How effective is our social media?

Please pick the two social media channels on which you spend most time and money.

Ideally, we would like a year's worth of data but, depending on the channel, if you haven't already collected it you may be restricted to the last 90 days. That's ok, too – just say which you are giving me. All the benchmarks use analytics that are easy to find on most platforms:

- **Reach:** the number of unique individuals who saw your content on this channel in the past year/90 days (e.g. Viewers on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok etc. and Members on LinkedIn) This is <u>not</u> the same as views or impressions.
- **Engagement:** the total number of interactions with your content on each of the two channels (e.g. likes, comments, shares, saves, clicks, retweets, bookmarks, forwards etc.)
- Number of **Followers** on each of the two channels
- **Spend** on paid-for social media in 2025 including the cost of content creation if applicable.

I will calculate the engagement rate and benchmark that, too.

And that's it!

Please send me the following at heather@heathermaitland.co.uk

- your spreadsheet **PAFBenchmarks[your organisation name].xlsx**
- your Capacity report for 2025

A huge thank you

Best wishes
Heather