VenturEd Solutions™

CASE STUDY

How Chelmer Valley High School generated over £200,000 a year with Smart-Booker

Explore how Smart-Booker is used by schools for revenue generation



Introduction

Chelmer Valley High School in Chelmsford caters to students aged 11 to 18, and offers a comprehensive curriculum with a strong emphasis on engineering and technology.

The school has maximised the use of its extensive facilities and resources by hiring out over a dozen spaces, including a 3G pitch, sports hall, dance studio, and multiple classrooms, to generate additional income.

Initially managed through manual spreadsheets, the lettings process quickly became resource-intensive as bookings increased. What began as a 10-hour-per-week responsibility for the school's Lettings Manager, Caroline Risk, soon evolved into a near full-time role.

Faced with rising administrative pressure and inefficient invoicing workflows, the school required a streamlined, scalable solution to manage bookings, track income, and support financial reporting.

This case study highlights how Chelmer Valley High School was able to scale their facilities rental process with the adoption of Smart-Booker, eliminating manual processes, improving visibility, and enabling sustainable income generation without increasing staff workload.

Chelmer Valley High School

ABOUT

Chelmsford, Essex

1,140 pupils on roll

Using WisePay since 2014

PRODUCTS

WisePay

Smart-Booker

TEAM



Caroline Risk
Lettings Manager

> **"Smart-Booker is definitely a time saver, and it makes life a lot easier. It's hugely beneficial compared to taking bookings manually. "**

The challenge

Spreadsheets were just not enough!

Prior to adopting Smart-Booker, Chelmer Valley High School managed all lettings through a manual process based entirely on spreadsheets. Bookings were entered manually and updated monthly on the spreadsheet.

This system quickly proved inefficient as the volume of bookings increased, particularly following the installation of the school's 3G pitch, which significantly expanded demand and lettings activity.

> **"We needed a system that could handle the calendar and make invoicing easier for us. It wasn't possible to continue the way we were, with spreadsheets copied and pasted from one month to the next and filled in manually... it would have been horrendous!"**

Lettings Manager Caroline saw her workload expand to nearly 30 hours per week on handling bookings alone, which was three times what she had initially planned for. Much of that time spent on repetitive, administrative tasks.



> **“At the end of each month, I'd have to manually total up all the income we generated through bookings, check everything, and send it off to our finance department. It was very, very time consuming in that respect.”**

Caroline had to manually calculate revenue from all bookings and submit them to the finance team, who then generated paper invoices. The invoices were physically posted to customers, which added another layer of time-consuming work and expenses for the school.

The school needed to eliminate...



Manual and repetitive processes

Staff needed to manually process total booking incomes, check figures, send them to the finance team, post invoices... and repeat the same steps every month.



Time-intensive invoicing

Invoicing was a time-consuming task taking up hours of time every week, with a potential risk of mistakes due to the manual calculations required.



Lack of visibility

The manual, paper-based process made it difficult to gain realtime visibility into finances or track lettings efficiently, making Caroline’s job more difficult.



Limited scalability

With such manual processes, it was only possible to process a limited number of bookings. This restricted the potential of the school to generate additional revenue.

The positive impact of Smart-Booker

Adopting Smart-Booker was a seamless process, as the school was already using WisePay as their payment solution. This meant they could manage their bookings on a familiar system. Smart-Booker was also beneficial from a financial point of view compared to other products in the market.

> **“We already had WisePay, so the logical thing to do was to keep it all in-house within a familiar system.”**

Since implementing Smart-Booker, Chelmer Valley High School has transformed its lettings operations, streamlining processes, reducing administrative workload, and enabling sustained revenue growth without overloading staff.

Smart-Booker has significantly cut down the time spent on manual tasks such as calculating income, issuing invoices, and communicating with clients. Customers now receive digital invoices, and the finance department is better equipped to manage and publish monthly billing.

The time saved has also allowed Caroline to focus on identifying new income streams and pursuing additional lettings opportunities, something that would have been impossible under the old system.

“The main goal was to save time, record bookings, run the invoices and keep the job to one person, rather than having to employ someone else,” says Caroline.

“We've definitely achieved those goals. It’s given me more time to investigate other revenue streams, which I previously wouldn’t have had time to.

“Before, I would have spent hours and hours totalling up all the bookings. Smart-Booker has made a huge difference – I can’t say that strongly enough!”



One of the biggest benefits the school has seen has been the ability to generate detailed reports and track outstanding payments through Smart-Booker's reporting features. This has improved financial oversight and made it easier to follow up with customers directly.

The school also makes use of built-in messaging tools, replacing the old method of sending communications via post with a much more cost-effective solution.

> **"We can see straight away what invoices are outstanding, and we can chase payments very easily through the system."**

The results and benefits

- **Administrative efficiency**: Drastically reduced time spent on bookings, invoicing, and customer updates.
- **Sustained scalability**: Despite a quadrupling in lettings volume, no additional staff have been required.
- **Enhanced financial oversight**: Improved tracking of debtors and access to detailed reports
- **Better communication**: Built-in tools for messaging groups and individuals simplify day-to-day interactions.
- **Increased capacity for strategic growth**: Freed-up time has enabled staff to focus on proactive revenue planning.

Key stats for Chelmer Valley High School

14 school facilities available to hire via Smart-Booker

4x more bookings with the efficient new system

£200,000+ in revenue generated in total over 2 years

Generating more school income

Schools should actively explore generating additional income, but time constraints and admin-heavy processes can get in the way. Now that Chelmer Valley High School has successfully tackled this problem and is achieving great results, Caroline advises other schools to consider using Smart-Booker to handle their facility hire in a similar way.

“Then you can concentrate on finding new ways of generating income, as opposed to just managing the income you’re already getting,” Caroline says.

> **“Schools have got to find extra money, as there's very little in the pot. Smart-Booker is definitely a time saver, and it makes life a lot easier. I would definitely highly recommend it.”**

To find out more, visit venturedsolutions.co.uk or get in touch with our friendly team to discuss how Smart-Booker could work for your school.

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