

# Ibexa reels in digital customers for Cine Colombia



Cine Colombia was founded in the era of silent movies in 1927 in Medellín, the country's second largest city. The chain is now owned by Grupo Santo Domingo, one of the largest conglomerates in the Americas. Cine Colombia is present in 13 cities and has 46 multiplexes, 313 screens and around 60,000 seats. In 2019, before the pandemic struck, Cine Colombia reached a record spectator total of 30 million. Visitors could buy tickets online through a web portal and a white label third-party mobile app. The group decided to merge the two channels into one site run on Ibexa DXP.

Cine Colombia's rapid growth and future plans prompted the company to build a modern, scalable digital sales channel. In April 2021, after a build that took less than a year, it merged two key sales channels on Ibexa DXP: a mobile app and a web portal.

The project leverages Ibexa's resiliency as a lean CMS as well as its interoperability with other systems and software. The launch of the new site coincided with the gradual reopening of movie theatres in Colombia after COVID19. Online ticket sales reached the 1 million mark in three months and digital sales as a share of the total have doubled.

In 2019, Cine Colombia sold 30 million tickets but less than 15% were purchased online. Ibexa DXP was selected as the platform to support a new responsive site and Aplyca, a Bogotá-based agency and Ibexa Platinum Partner was selected to build it. The result is a new streamlined customer experience, a doubling of digital sales share and 100% uptime even under heavy loads.

The move to Ibexa has helped us double our digital sales share, and compared with the previous website, our performance has improved eightfold. Management is delighted with these very quantifiable wins.

**Felipe Zea**  
Director of Digital Products, Cine Colombia



## Challenges

- Improve the digital experience with an optimized purchasing process.
- Replace a white-label mobile app with a responsive web application.
- Automate showtime synchronization with internal systems across 46 theatres.
- Reduce editorial efforts and speed up turnaround times to effectively manage web content.
- Increase the digital sales channel share of ticket transactions.



## Project Summary

- Decision is made to merge two channels and create one site on Ibexa DXP.
- A new user experience is created by reimagining the user interactions through a single, user-friendly platform.
- Multiple mission-critical systems were integrated in Ibexa DXP such as scheduling, identity management, seating, ticket validation, multiple payment engines, reporting, and invoicing services.
- The system was designed to ensure resilience across all service integrations.
- Food purchases were added to ticket sales for the first time.



## Business Benefits

- Huge increase in digital sales, rising from 15% to 30% as a share of total sales
- New site is stable, even in traffic spikes for popular releases
- Content can be managed by a single person
- Cinemas can amend their schedules which are synchronized automatically with the showtime engine
- Site is showing great customer satisfaction and has processed over 1 million tickets in the first three months since launch.



## Why Ibexa?

The technical collaborator on this project, Aplyca, is one of Ibexa's most experienced partners, and one of most active in the Americas. Cine Colombia needed a platform that was resilient and robust, yet able to transparently consume a great number of microservices via API calls and without putting undue stress on its systems.

Ibexa DXP functions as a lean core platform that orchestrates the interplay of third-party software for payments, ticket validation, food orders, invoicing, reporting, seating reservations and more. Content workflows have been automated to such an extent that a single person can manage the entire site for 46 cinema complexes. The Cine Colombia web manager had no previous CMS experience; today, he oversees content for a rich, multi-faceted and intuitive site.

## One million tickets sold in first three months

Founded in 1927 in Medellín, the movie theatre chain Cine Colombia is now present in 13 cities across Colombia, and the largest in the country with a 40% market share. The chain is owned by the Grupo Santo Domingo, one of the largest conglomerates in the Americas, and part-owner of TV channels, newspapers and retail businesses.

In 2019, before the outbreak of the pandemic, Cine Colombia had a record year with 30 million tickets sold. However, digital sales accounted for just 15% of that total. Its digital footprint was fragmented across a portal run on an outdated and highly customized installation of a popular CMS; it was time-consuming to maintain and manage. Just 4% tickets sales were transacted on the portal and the other digital channel was a turnkey app run by a third party with 11% of total sales.

Cine Colombia decided to replace both with a single channel, built on Ibexa DXP by Aplyca, the Bogotá-based agency and Ibexa Partner. The project took a year to complete, and the new site went live in April 2021, just as Colombian cinemas were beginning – slowly – to recover from the disruptions of Covid.

We are currently at 75% capacity and it's getting better. In the first three months we sold one million tickets on the new site.

**Felipe Zea**  
Director of Digital Products,  
Cine Colombia



## Digital transactions up, impressive performance

“It’s been a slow process. We opened a few open-air cinemas and sold 100 tickets a day,” says Felipe Zea, Cine Colombia’s Digital Channel Manager. “Then we opened across the chain but at 30% capacity. We are currently at 75% and it’s getting better. In the first three months we sold one million tickets on the new site.”

Digital transactions now account for 30% of the total, doubling the pre-Ibexa and pre-pandemic number. “Both have played a role,” Zea believes. “Covid forced everyone to switch to digital although of course they couldn’t do that for cinema bookings at the height of the crisis. But with the new site we were more than prepared to meet this surge in digital demand. It is completely stable and resilient, even when there are sharp peaks in traffic as happened during a blockbuster pre-sales period!”

Compared with the previous installation, the Ibexa-based site has significantly boosted performance.

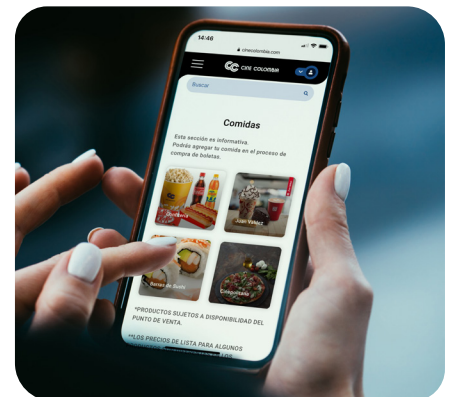
“These figures speak for themselves; management is delighted with these very quantifiable wins,” says Zea.

For Zea himself, the most impactful change has been the user-friendliness of the new platform and the automation implemented across Ibexa DXP. “The biggest compliment I can give to Ibexa is the fact that I manage the content of this very rich site by myself – it was impossible before. I went from zero CMS experience to managing the entire website!”

A completely new online offering is food sales where Cine Colombia multiplexes offer different food products including classic popcorn, hotdogs and beverages as part of the digital menu. “At the moment you can only order food when you get a ticket, but we would like to see that decoupled in a future iteration of the site.”

We built a platform responding to current challenges while imagining many avenues of future growth. The experience is smooth, and the site is robust.

**Felipe Jaramillo**  
CEO, Aplyca





## Future proof, robust platform

“We built a platform responding to current challenges while imagining many avenues of future growth,” Felipe Jaramillo, the CEO of Aplyca, explains. “What you see on the frontend is Ibexa as a platform enhanced with lean and optimized microservices. This is the promise of a modern Digital Experience Platform where multiple enterprise systems interact via a consolidated and user-friendly experience.

“As you go through the films and showings in any city there are five or six different systems interacting seamlessly in the background. We needed to make sure that every component is as resilient and reliable as possible. The experience is smooth, and the site is robust.” concludes Jaramillo.

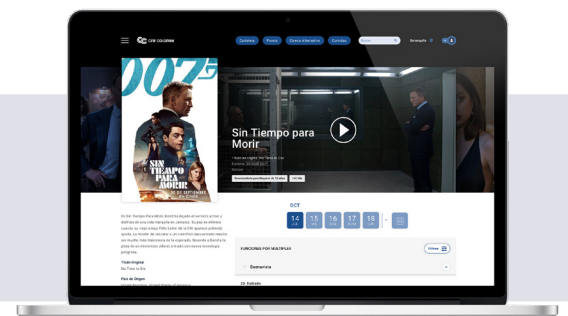
Payment services were a complex and sophisticated solution to integrate. In addition to credit and debit card payments, the solution also had to integrate with Cine Colombia’s own payment engines where loyal visitors hold prepaid and loyalty cards at volumes comparable to many banks.

The built solution merges the physical and digital with hundreds of theatre attendants using a custom ticket validation service by scanning thousands of QR codes daily to control entrances.

Cine Colombia’s editorial team is enjoying new freedom and autonomy in orchestrating the customer experience. “One good example is the showtime engine,” Felipe Zea explains. “Making a change to the scheduling involved manual synchronization processes which could take time and effort. There was not only the difficulty of editing the content, but of maintaining it in a consistent manner.

A great reception to our new portal which is faster, safer, much easier to use and with many more services than before.

**Munir Falah**  
CEO, Cine Colombia





## A Happy Ending

Munir Falah, Cine Colombia's CEO has shared his satisfaction with the project to his wide audience tweeting: "A great reception to our new portal," as well as highlighting the portal as: "faster, safer, much easier to use and with many more services than before."

The project is a showcase for innovative companies leveraging the Ibexa DXP through a skilled partner such as Aplyca for effective digital transformation initiatives. The improved user experience, increase in transactional share and a stellar stability record mean the company has a new platform for years to come, promising further automation and workflow optimizations for business development in the near future.

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**Felipe Zea**  
Director of Digital Products,  
Cine Colombia



Aplyca specializes in providing digital agencies and development partners with expert DXP talent for client projects. Working with Aplyca enables agencies to streamline their development and operations capabilities and allows agencies to add value with Ibexa DXP through an expert nearshore DXP partner.

Aplyca has deep experience in sophisticated, multi-site and high-traffic solutions and has implemented dozens of projects for publicly traded companies, international business groups, media and retail giants.

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