

Marketing leverages automation to create more campaigns — and more effective campaigns — in less time and at a lower cost.

Seattle Storm marketers boost single-game ticket sales and season ticket subscriptions by reaching out to WNBA fans with personalized interactions and compelling, relevant offers.

Seattle Storm, Seattle, Washington's Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) team has created a family-friendly environment that offers fans an action-packed evening of exciting basketball featuring world-class athletes. According to Kris Kolehmain, the Storm's Director of Research and Direct Marketing, marketers have stepped up their game in the past year to reach fans more effectively. With Marketo on the team, the Storm is replacing many paid media advertising approaches with more economical and effective digital campaigns that reach fans through email, social media, and display ads. By integrating Marketo with Microsoft Dynamics® CRM and Ticketmaster® Archtics® ticketing software, the Storm is keeping fans engaged year-round with one-on-one digital interactions while driving efficiencies that maximize marketing spend.

Objectives

- Use automation to enable the lean marketing team to increase campaign effectiveness
- Reduce reliance on paid advertising and reach fans via email, social media, and display ads
- Engage fans with personalized interactions that boost single-game ticket sales and season-ticket subscriptions

Single-game ticket sales

↑ **20%**

Season-ticket renewal rate

86%

Increase in database size

↑ **25%**

“ Our investment in Marketo is paying off by helping us do a better job of driving subscription renewals and single-game ticket sales.”



Kris Kolehmain
Director, Research and
Direct Marketing
Seattle Storm



Hatching a new game plan

Last year, the Storm's marketing team took a serious look at the marketing strategy: Budget dollars were limited and traditional advertising was getting more expensive. What's more, sports fans are increasingly turning to digital channels for information and interactions. So the marketers implemented Marketo to make campaign creation faster and easier, and to allow them to segment fans and reach them with personalized content and relevant offers. At the same time, they implemented Microsoft Dynamics CRM to help sales reps manage customer interactions more effectively. Marketo integrates tightly with Microsoft Dynamics as well as with Ticketmaster Archtics, which enables fans to effortlessly link to ticket ordering from the Storm website, email messages, and display ads.

Marketo provides visibility into key segments such as season ticket holders and legacy ticket holders — people who have been fans for 10+ years. Scheduling and managing events for specific groups — for example, post-game photo/autograph events for legacy ticket holders — is much easier now. Marketo handles invitations, RSVPs, and email reminders, and provides the event manager with all the details needed to run events effectively.

“We’ve seen a huge improvement in our workflows and the quality of the content we send out. We’re able to create more campaigns and get them out at a faster pace. Whether we’re sending out our weekly StormWatch newsletter or we have a special promotion we want to publicize, we can build the email content, get everything approved, and get it to the right audience — often in just a day.”

Putting more points on the board

With the current season winding down, marketing is evaluating the results of the new strategy. According to Kris, the numbers clearly demonstrate that marketing's new strategy is hitting the mark.

“In the first six months after transitioning to Marketo, we grew our database by more than 25%. In addition, single-game ticket sales jumped by more than 20% this season and they are the highest they’ve been since the year after we won our last WNBA championship. Our season ticket renewal rate is 86% — the highest in five years. We’re excited about the positive results we’ve achieved and we’re expecting even more successes next year as we build a fully automated digital campaign targeted to our season ticket holders.”

