

CUSTOMER STORY

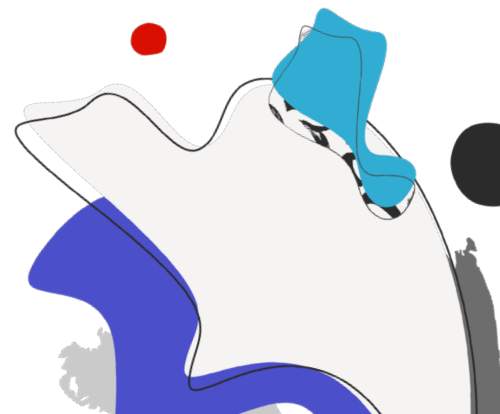
Milwaukee Bucks drive over 300% revenue growth using Marketo Engage and Microsoft Dynamics

Professional sports teams work year-round to play at the top of their game and win championships, but success is often worth little without the support of fans. Sales from tickets, merchandise, events, and concessions all contribute to building a financially stable franchise that can entertain fans for generations.

The Milwaukee Bucks has played for NBA fans in Milwaukee since 1968. Over the team's history, the way fans interact with the game has changed dramatically. Today, fans expect to buy tickets online, browse through merchandise in digital stores, and check scores and other team details on their mobile app. The growing digital landscape presented new opportunities for Bucks' marketing and sales teams to use digital channels to effectively reach fans, nurture leads, and grow revenue.

Objectives:

- Increase the number of full and partial season ticket sales
- Boost revenue with diversified concessions and merchandise sales
- Build a strong sales lead pipeline by better understanding and targeting basketball fans



The automation in Marketo Engage gives us more time to create unique content that turns fans into loyal ticketholders. In just two years, we increased digital leads by 80% and revenue growth by 315%."



Ben Conrad
Senior Director of
Database Marketing,
Milwaukee Bucks

315%

revenue growth
in 2 years

More than 2x

number of full season
tickets sold

3x

higher sales rate with
targeted emails

Ben Conrad, senior director of database marketing, witnessed the digital changes firsthand. "When I first started with the Bucks 22 years ago, email marketing was in its infancy. Now it's a critical part of our sales pipeline. We need to look at how we use forms, web automation, customer databases, and other technologies to build a strong lead pipeline. Marketo Engage empowers us to engage fans with unique experiences at scale."

Winning over fans with digital campaigns

One critical part of the Bucks' marketing strategy is creating engaging customer journeys to find and develop qualified leads. Using Marketo Engage, Conrad and his small team can quickly create tailored forms that allow fans to sign up for newsletters, enter contests, or request more information about season tickets. The custom forms are much more dynamic than generic ones, resulting in higher completion rates and more information for the customer database. When coupled with web automation and intuitive segmentation tools, Marketo Engage quickly became the backbone of marketing operations.

Integration between Marketo Engage and Microsoft Dynamics 365 further supports marketing efforts. Any interactions that the customer has with a Marketo Engage campaign are pushed into Microsoft Dynamics 365, allowing both marketers and sales reps to quickly build a clearer understanding of each individual customer. Marketers can use this information in Microsoft Dynamics 365 to automatically trigger email campaigns that guide fans down the sales funnel.

The Bucks used this tight integration between solutions to power the highly successful Hot Leads program. If a fan visits a page about season tickets but does not complete the form to request more information, an opportunity is created in Microsoft Dynamics 365. This triggers an alert for an immediate follow-up from a sales rep.



Using the integration between Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Marketo Engage, the Hot Leads program allows us to actively reach out to fans during a critical window of interest. We turned many of these fans into solid leads that accounted for 10% of full season ticket revenue."

Ben Conrad

Senior Director of
Database Marketing,
Milwaukee Bucks

Fueling the sales pipeline

Full and partial season ticket sales represent a critical, steady stream of revenue for a team. Due to the amount of time and money that fans need to invest in becoming season ticket holders, season tickets also tend to have a long sales cycles across multiple touchpoints and channels along with personal interactions with sales reps.

The Bucks typically sold about 4,000 to 5,000 full season tickets every year. But with an electrifying team and exciting new arena, the Bucks decided to dramatically up its game with a goal of 10,000 tickets for the 2018-2019 season.

The organization developed many different lead generation campaigns to support its season ticket goal, but the number of leads soon started to overwhelm the sales team. Conrad and his team developed a new integrated campaign called the Stage campaign to support sales and move fans through the pipeline more efficiently. Using the integration with Microsoft Dynamics 365, Marketo Engage automatically identifies fans who reach a new stage in the sales funnel and sends targeted emails that encourage fans to proceed to the next stage of the sales pipeline.

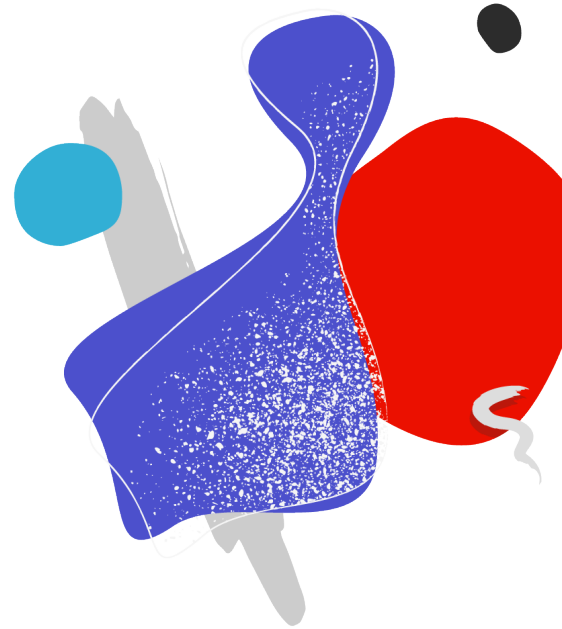
After initial outreach from a sales rep, fans receive a series of targeted emails aimed at increasing their excitement about becoming a season ticket holder. The targeted messaging is highly engaging, with a 300% higher click-through-rate compared to typical emails. Fans who open the email are also 29.5% more likely to advance to the next stage in the sales funnel. The campaign is entirely automated, also sending targeted emails after fans schedule an appointment with a sales rep and after fans receive a proposal for full season tickets. Fans who receive the targeted email after the proposal are three times more likely to complete the purchase.

The Stage campaign proved to be a resounding success, and it is now considered to be best practice in the NBA. The Bucks beat their goal, selling out 11,300 full season tickets—making waves across the NBA as the Bucks added the most full season tickets of any team for the 2018-2019 season.

Expanding the digital brand

In recent years, the digital marketing team has expanded its activities to interact with fans through more channels and businesses. The team now oversees marketing for the Bucks Pro Shop; the Bucks restaurant, Mecca Bar & Grill; the Wisconsin Herd G-League team; and events at the team's arena, Fiserv Forum.

"Over the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 seasons, we've seen remarkable results with support from Marketo Engage," says Conrad. "The automation in Marketo Engage gives us more time to create unique content that turns fans into loyal ticketholders. In just two years, we increased digital leads by 80% and revenue growth by 315%."

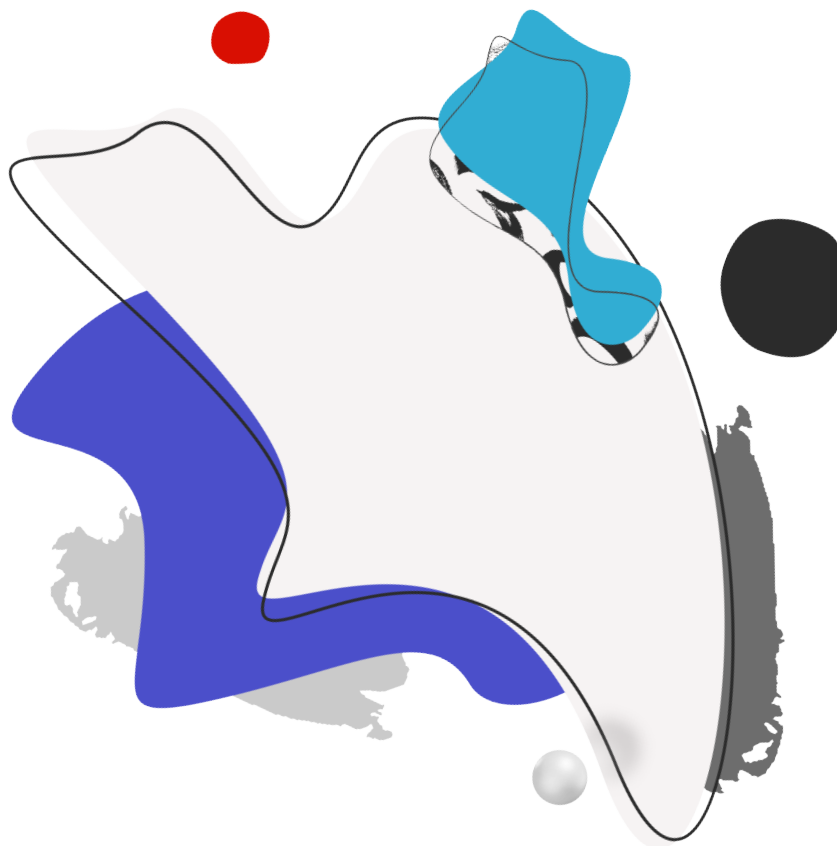


Conrad was an early adopter of the Facebook Lead Ad integration with Marketo Engage and Dynamics 365, which gets Facebook sales leads into sales reps' hands in minutes. This integration proved to be very effective, allowing sales reps to capitalize on customers' interest and resulting in a 1,000% return on investment.

The team is also expanding into mobile. Using the Marketo Engage SDK, Conrad added push notifications and new functionality to the mobile app. The "Beer Button", for example, allows fans to order a beer with a single click. The result: beer sales in the stadium increased by 142%.

Another advantage that the Bucks enjoy by standardizing on Marketo Engage is the ability to shift priorities on the fly. With a pause on the NBA season, the Bucks needed to come up with new ways of generating revenue and connecting with fans. With the application, marketers quickly pivoted to promotions, campaigns, and giveaways focused on merchandise sales. One campaign invited fans to sign up for a free signed jersey. Fans who opted in for communications received a free shipping code for the pro shop, which helped create additional revenue from merchandise purchases.

"Marketo Engage has changed the way that we handle marketing, sales, and lead generation across the organization," says Conrad. "By segmenting audiences and using smart lists, we can be much more effective and deliver messages that fans want to hear. We're staying connected and generating revenue, no matter what the season looks like."



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