

The Six Best Program Ideas that You Should be Doing Right NOW

In sports we are continuously looking for the next best idea to enhance fan engagement, increase ticket sales, and gain sponsorship partners. At the National Sports Forum we are always learning about the latest ways teams and organizations put creative ideas into results-driven action. Now, we are able to share those strategies with you. These six programs were recognized as the best ideas of 2011!

1. The Portland Timbers create sales with fan-based marketing

Objective: Sell full-season tickets

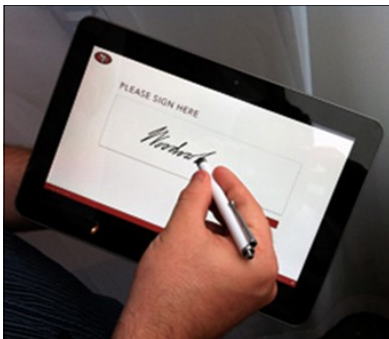
The Portland Timbers built their 2011 message around the authentic experience of Portland soccer. The creative team developed 21 name-less billboards with photographs of real Timbers fans holding axes and saws, the team's icons. They also hosted a fan photo shoot at the team store. Over 1,500 fans

attended the event, increasing merchandise sales over 400%. A contest ran shortly after on the Timber's Facebook page. The four pictures that received the most "likes" were featured on their own Timber's billboard. The images from the photo shoot were also used to develop signs, banners and other team collateral such as downloadable wallpaper from the team's website.



Results: All 2011 regular season games sold out, 12,500+ season tickets sold with over 5,000 people on the season ticket waiting list, and the Timber's had a 97% season ticket renewal rate.

2. Channel 1 Media develops iPad sales tool for the San Francisco 49ers



Objective: Develop a digital sales tool to promote suites and club seats for the new 49ers stadium

In 2011, Channel 1 Media, a digital marketing agency, helped the San Francisco 49ers promote the suites and club seats by utilizing new technology, the iPad. They created a program that contained features such as an interactive map of the new stadium. The program was designed to reside on the iPad itself, so Wi-Fi is not necessary. Most importantly, a fill-able contract was included, making it easier than ever to do quick and effective business.

Results: Channel 1's iPad program became the first paperless contracting system used in sports. With a ROI of 130 to one for the San Francisco 49ers, Channel 1 gained Interest from other organizations to develop a similar program.



3. USA Water Polo ignites recognition with “I AM WATERPOLO” campaign

Objective: Create greater awareness of water polo outside of the water polo community as well as generate excitement within the water polo community

USA Water Polo used images of recognizable people wearing normal clothes and the iconic water polo cap. They placed these images on their website, in print ads and online banner ads, as well as on Facebook and in the form of printable posters. The message urged viewers to “Join the Cap Campaign” by taking pictures of themselves wearing their caps in unexpected places.

Results: USA Water Polo saw an incredible rise in sport awareness through views, “likes”, and interaction on their Facebook page and wall.

4. IMG develops partnership with Kia Motors and Blake Griffin

Objective: Enhance Kia Motor’s brand image by communicating with target consumers, providing an opportunity for vehicle exposure, and increasing market share by generating mass brand awareness.

IMG negotiated for Blake Griffin to use a Kia Optima as a prop during the All Star Week Slam Dunk Competition. Along with Kia’s credibility as the “Official Vehicle of the NBA”, teaming up with Blake placed this car brand at viewers’ front-of-mind.

Results: Bill Simmons called the program, “The greatest commercial integration of all-time!” The day after the Slam Dunk contest, buyers were 20% more likely to consider a Kia brand car, and twice as likely to consider purchasing an Optima. Kia had all-time record sales in the month of March 2012. It created one of the highest moments of social media buzz for the year, according to Nielson’s Year in Sports.



5. GaGa Sports & Entertainment utilizes Houston Dynamo Insider



Objective: Build a robust database, develop a cohesive CRM strategy, and generate qualified ticket leads

In order to capture data and engage fans, GaGa Sports & Entertainment developed the first online fan interaction site in Major League Soccer. The “Dynamo Insider” provided users premium access to player insights and content through interactive applications. Registration was free and offered the front office extensive data capturing opportunities as well as gave Dynamo fans insider access to their team.

Results: The Houston Dynamo was able to use the Insider as a hub for data collection, which attributed to \$300,000 in new ticket sales. Content created specifically for the Insider also brought in additional sponsorship marketing opportunities.

6. New Jersey Devils launch online growth with “Mission Control”

Objective: Gain the ability to interact appropriately and efficiently to ideas and questions of Devils fans, as well as creatively reward their loyal fan base of 30 years.

In 2011, the New Jersey Devils launched “Mission Control”, an in-arena social media hub controlled by 25 passionate and technology savvy Devils fans. After being nominated via Facebook and Twitter, the “Devils Army Generals” spent home games in the arena answering questions on Twitter or creating game-related polls to increase fan interaction. A “Song of the Day” contest was created on Twitter to allow fans to choose music at the first home game of the season. The interaction allowed the team to connect directly with their fan base as well as greatly expand the Devils’ presence on social media.



Results: Immediately after Mission Control launched, the Devils saw a major growth in their Facebook fans. Throughout the season the team’s Facebook page grew nearly 250% and the Devils moved up four spots to the 14th most “liked” Facebook team page in the NHL. Moreover, the Devils can account over \$17,000 in direct ticket sales due to online promotions through their Facebook and Twitter accounts.
