



“23 Teams Visited. 27 Zooms Completed.”

2021 Ticketing Playbook

Innovations and recommendations from our 2021 Sports Ticketing Research Tour

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Proprietary and Confidential

Introduction

The report you're about to read was researched and written during a global pandemic the impact of which is still being determined. Special thanks to Madison Square Gardens' **Dave Hopkinson** for supporting this project, 23 teams we visited and the 27 different team Zoom meetings input.

Sell your customers what they want

Build “neighbourhoods” to serve different audiences. **Stadium evolution helps sell tickets.**

- Former seating areas replaced with open tables
- High Top Tables and Bar Seats overlooking the field.
- Expanded Standing Room options
- Party Decks and Picnic Areas: All Inclusive or not with or without Alcohol.
- Kids play areas (Our favourite is a kid’s baseball park in the outfield)
- Loge Seating replacing less desired seating areas
- Tables and/or TVs integrated into the seating area.
- Tiered levels of premium clubs, an all-inclusive F&B option for any ticket.

Meaningful promotions to drive game day and midweek tickets/packages:

- Jerseys auctions connected to charities or associations -who become a de facto sales arm
- Themed Ticket Packages attached to a cause, interest or demographic
- “Freeze the Fees” games
- BOGO Games: Buy a 2nd tier premium and get an assigned value game for free.
- Valentine’s, M& F’s Day, or Holiday tickets connected to flowers, grocery or treats.
- Midweek sponsored Ticket/Mug package or membership (add-on option for STHs)
- Midweek concessions ticket package or membership
- Blended ticket offers that are sponsored and sold thru corporate partner.

Dealing with the Reality of Skeleton Staff? Think Technology

At least for the short term, this might be the most pressing need as 95% of teams are feeling short-handed in the front office and beyond.

Using “AI” to Uncover Customers: To monetize data from your digital tickets, **Cogeco, Conversaca, Sales Whale and Drift** and from outside ticketing, **Stellar Algo and KAGR** are the names we’ve interviewed and/or hear often.

The Value of Variable & Dynamic Pricing. At the major league level this is standard with growing adoption at the minor league level. Many teams also have business intelligence (BI) teams that may or may not work with one of the following third-party partners. **QQ, PriceMaster (Ticketmaster) and Digonex.**

Consider Ticketing Partners: Eventellect, Valhalla and Ace Tickets offer capacity support, secondary representation, floor protection, pricing intel and revenue. **QQ** from above has entered this space, Pat Ryan **Eventellect** knows as much about how to reconfigure stadium space for profit as anyone.

Event Dynamics: Ticketing Support Service in a Revenue Share model.

Event Dynamics will price and promote to the secondary and have 3 products 1) Single Events 2) STHs and 3) Stadium Configuration. They support your floor by limiting your primary inventory.

Other great technology partners to engage your audience and reduce your workload.

Fevo and Spinzo specializes in sales for groups, theme nights, parking, game day Suite and non-game day events. They also grow your database by inviting your team prospects friends to join.

ZipWhip and **Alive5** are texting partners who generate higher open rates.

Channel1Media creates interactive websites to attract and retain ticket holders in and out of season.

Sports Digita creates a Master Deck in the cloud which allows your reps to be consistent, efficient and effective. Decks can be built in 5 minutes and the customer interaction with the deck is tracked.

In summary, technology's ability to uncover prospects from suspects will allow your sales teams to work smarter not harder.

Ticket Flexibility is the new expectation

One of our key conclusions is that without flexibility, the attraction of buying on a “needs basis” given the immediate uncertainty is the new default. Season Packages, assigned members, Box Office

Season Ticket Package Flexibility: Three Tiers

- **Basic** - Allow Season Ticket Holders the ability to exchange tickets they can't use to acquire tickets they can. Tier exchanges, blackout dates, a fee for a premium swap are fair.
- **Medium** - Offer a Flex ticket product. Basically, a financial commitment to spend how you'd like for any ticket product available. Allows team to expand ticket base beyond capacity.
- **Premium** - Allow full Season Ticket Holders the ability (when available) to transfer games and seat locations to best meet their interests plus allowing them to exchange for experiences, F&B or team gift cards.

Assigned Membership: A non-transferrable monthly or yearly subscription. Restrictions or not, black out games and reservation restrictions are all options. Great way to expand membership beyond your seating capacity, attract the secondary market buyer and build your F/S pipeline. See **FanRally**

Game Day Flexibility- Ticket assurance fee option applied to a game day ticket sale. This is an insurance fee on top of the ticket price that allows fans to transfer to a different game.

Other Fan Friendly ideas to sell Ticket Packages.

- Start the renewal period during your season's peak period. i.e. July 4th for baseball and soccer, early Feb for hockey and basketball and Thanksgiving for Football.
- Eliminate the only option being to prepay for the season before the first game.
- Build Season Ticket holder scarcity. If not a cap on season tickets, build neighborhoods within the venue with limited capacity that you sell out.
- Constantly be thinking of new seating options to help move less locations and features to increase the ticket value of your preferred areas.
- Give your market merchandise before they know they're fans. Years ago, an NBA team gave every taxi driver a hat, an AHL team puts newborns in a Logo onesie, and a North America leader in group ticket sales invites every school child in the region to the park in some capacity (subsidized game, tour or on field event) and sends them home with a team item.

Season ticket holder events that stood out:

- In stadium contests exclusive to STHs
- Q&As with Assistant coaches in pre-game (pandemic friendly on Zoom or in person)
- Lanyards (yes that simple)
- Anything on the field, court or near the ice that they can't buy.
- Business Networking events
- VIP yearly membership (extra \$) exclusive to your F/S. Yearly jersey, Q&A access, Pregame invites, Surprise and Delights, Partner gift cards etc. The key, exceed the perceived value.

Best Retention Ideas:

- Comping 4 tickets to 720 Group Leaders in '21
- Customize Benefit plans for Season Ticket Holders
- For every '21 F/S, the team donating a pair of Season Tickets to front line healthcare heroes.
- Season Seat holder rate for additional tickets (includes playoffs)
- Share the secondary fees with to your Season Ticket holder account.

Membership programs: Assigning game days seats to a user that aren't transferable. Sold monthly or yearly, different sections and tiers, may or may not black out games. **FanRally** appears to be strong in this space.

The Healthy Safety Message Matters more than ever.

Without marketing your additional safety measures: Excessive Sanitization stations, more cleaning staff and improved Ventilation/Air Purification, many fans won't return. Fortunately, they all provide new corporate partnership inventory as they can be wrapped with a logo. **Octopus Displays, Virapel, Surgically Clean Air, Delos, Molekule or Austin Air** are all optional vendor providers.

What do I do with this information?

Start by sharing the content with the different departments in your organization (BI, game day operations, marketing and HR/Executive Search partner) and challenge them to figure out how they can help you sell tickets. If you uncover that you'd like to address something and don't have the body count, expertise, or time, we can help. On a project basis or as a short-term resource we can cater to either need.

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