

Customer Profile



- Club: Philadelphia Union
- Country: USA, MLS Eastern Conference
- Stadium: PPL Park
- Capacity: 18,500

Benefits

- Combats impact of secondary market on season ticket sales
- Builds long term loyalty for the brand

Marketing metrics

- Metrics that support the effectiveness of Green 4 Loyalty include
 - 12% season ticket renewal uplift after loyalty program introduced
 - 85% of season ticket holders preferred smartcard loyalty program to paper ticket system
 - 31% of season ticket holders participated in at least one Loyalty Point Auction

Enthusiasm and passion before kick-off

The most difficult economic period in US history since the 1930s may not seem a particularly favourable time to launch a major sporting enterprise. However, that didn't hold back the arrival of Philadelphia Union as the sixteenth Major League Soccer team.

The ambition to expand the professional game in North America by bringing MLS to the Delaware Valley can be traced back to 2001. January 2007 saw the formation of the Sons of Ben, a fan club for a team that did not yet exist. Demonstrating the passion and enthusiasm for the game, this supporters group proved the potential for soccer in the region, a factor that was pivotal in award of the expansion team franchise in early 2008.

Uniquely, MLS teams are owned by the league and operated by investors; once up and running, commercial drivers as well as fan expectations are geared to league competition which began at kick-off of the 2010 inaugural season.



Adding value and creating loyalty

Season ticket sales are a vital sign of the health of sporting enterprises. "To fully understand how to maximise season ticket sales at Philadelphia Union we researched the issues around the renewal rate fall off seen in the NFL and NBA," says Mike Quarino, Vice President, Ticket Sales & Fan Services.

He continues: "The secondary ticket market is very popular, with some season holders re-selling tickets for games they cannot attend. But selling tickets on for individual games can be a headache. Often, they don't buy a ticket for next season and go to the secondary market to get the games they want. Philadelphia Union wanted to add value to being a season ticket holder and give fans more of a reason to purchase a full plan instead of picking just the marquee games."

"In the context of today's economics, we're competing for a slice of fans shrinking sports and entertainment budget. Essentially there is a need to create loyalty to the team and the brand," Mike Quarino says.



Long term brand building with Green 4 Loyalty



Green 4 Loyalty overview

- Green 4 Loyalty
 - Data integration across loyalty system for each account
 - Manages supporter loyalty accounts
 - Account holders view transactions through online portal
- Green 4 Communication
 - E-marketing campaigns to auction 'money can't buy' prizes and experiences
- SKIDATA access control
 - RFID technology embedded in smartcard with readers at gates
 - Magnetic swipe strip for merchandise and F&B sales
- MS Dynamics CRM
 - CRM platform and integrated database

Green 4 value

- Expertise in Microsoft Dynamics CRM for sports and entertainment
 - Custom development, systems integration and technical implementation
- Expertise in designing and delivering sports loyalty programs
 - Custom templates, personalised e-marketing campaigns

"Green 4 Loyalty lets us deliver a reward program to season holders," says Mike Quarino. "We wanted to incentivise fans, give them something they cannot get from buying a ticket on the secondary market."

"Season holders accumulate points in a loyalty account. On a sliding points scale, mid-week games offer the highest points incentive, big marquee games the lowest with regular games in the middle. Merchandise purchase and arriving early gains points, with bonuses given for team wins. Promo codes also reward fans watching games on TV," Mike Quarino says.

A 'money can't buy' loyalty point prize structure includes pre-game 'chalk talks' with coaches, team worn gear and attending open practice sessions. Moving up the scale, fans can meet and greet with the team, take stadium tours or upgrade renewals for next season. At the top end fans get to play on the pitch, with the overall point leader recognised as 'Fan of the Year' getting two room nights at an Atlantic City resort.

Mike Quarino continues: "It's not just the fans that win. The loyalty program provides us with logistical and commercial advantages. Logistically, this eases road traffic and pressure on the gates as kick-off approaches by encouraging early arrival. Commercially, this drives more attendance at mid-week games and early arrival provides a larger window for purchase of merchandise, food and beverage."

Green 4 Loyalty is built on Microsoft Dynamics CRM. Smartcard season tickets log entrance to the stadium, crediting points to fans' loyalty accounts. Green 4 Communication is plugged in enabling in-house marketers to run e-marketing campaigns to auction 'money can't buy' prizes and experiences.

“Green 4 Loyalty is rewarding our fans and providing commercial advantage while building the Philadelphia Union brand.”

Mike Quarino
Vice President, Ticket Sales & Fan Services

Connected and part of the team

Mike Quarino notes: "On the field, off the field, without the fans, we're not as strong. The loyalty point system with 'money can't buy' prizes and experiences maximises the involvement of fans by keeping them connected and feeling like part of the team."

To build a loyal core of fans over the long term it is essential to engage and stay connected with both older and younger supporters. Campaigns, surveys and online behaviour is driving data enrichment, giving a better understanding of fans' needs and wants. In the competition for a slice of fans' sports and entertainment budget, Philadelphia Union is winning by building a committed fan base through the loyalty program.