

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



Buffalo Sabres Fire Up Fans With SageCRM

“The future starts now,” says the marketing slogan of the Buffalo Sabres, finishing one of the best seasons in the NHL team’s history. SageCRM has brought the team success off the ice—as well by bringing their database systems into the future—by integrating numerous departments.

“We had a combination of proprietary systems, custom database applications and third party products throughout the organization,” says Tom Matheny, database marketing manager. “The lack of integration and functionality limited our ability to effectively grow and service our customer base.”

SageCRM Ties It Together

In 2004, the Buffalo Sabres implemented SageCRM, an easy-to-use, feature-rich solution providing enterprise-wide access to vital customer information. The software has automated all aspects of customer relations management, from account services and season-ticket information, to ticket sales and processing.

“The greatest thing about SageCRM is the way it ties everything together for us,” Matheny says. “Sales, marketing, and our account services department all use the same information. Often our customers have requests that need to be handled by other departments. With SageCRM, information can immediately be sent to a season ticket holder who is interested in sponsorship opportunities. We can then schedule the proper response, and attach a detailed history to the patron’s account. This has significantly streamlined our administration—and made our fans much happier.”

Fantastic Follow-Up

The Sabres use SageCRM to record all communications with fans. “With the software, we create a viable community with our followers, including ongoing outreach efforts and follow-up programs after anyone attends an event. This strengthens cross-sell activities,” Matheny explains.

“For instance, members with club-level seating have the opportunity to purchase tickets to other HSBC Arena events before they are offered to the general public. Members can choose to receive this information by fax or email, and their preference is stored in SageCRM. This makes it easy to communicate with them quickly whenever we have a special offer.”

Customer:

Buffalo Sabres

Industry:

NHL Team

Location:

Buffalo, New York

Number of Locations

One

Number of Employees

100

System:

SageCRM

CHALLENGE

Combination of customer databases required multiple data entry, prevented strategic sales efforts, and produced errors.

SOLUTION

SageCRM for a totally integrated customer service, ticket sales, information and management system.

RESULTS

Customer service administration time reduced by 20 percent; detailed activity and demographic reports boosted sales significantly.

Marketing Campaigns

With SageCRM, the Sabres create their own outbound marketing campaigns. The software generates targeted lists, such as former season ticket holders or concert patrons, and then tracks wave activity for different variations on the list and program contents. "SageCRM adds a new level of professionalism to our direct mail, telemarketing and email campaigns," Matheny notes. "The detailed reports we generate with the software give us immediate results, so we can tweak a campaign for greater effectiveness. Our campaigns are at least 20 percent more successful due to SageCRM."

Insider News

The Sabres Insider club has grown to over 45,000 members this season. Insider members receive news, special offers and advanced information via email as well as exclusive content on the Sabres' webpage, www.sabres.com. For example, Sabres Insiders were able to purchase tickets to the first round of the NHL playoffs before they went on sale to the general public. The list is managed in SageCRM and gives the Sabres an effective way to get information into the hands of its fans quickly.

Smarter Strategies

A customization of SageCRM allows seamless integration with Tickets.com. Tickets.com processes orders and generates invoices for Sabres tickets, while SageCRM handles all day-to-day operations and communications. Data on the specific transaction, account, and sales history is all downloaded directly from Tickets.com, then merged to avoid duplication, and stored in SageCRM.

Diverse reports in SageCRM help the Sabres strategize for the future. "We calculate demographics for each type of customer," Matheny says. "Our opportunity reports show exactly what percentage of returns each of our sales campaigns provide."

Special Capabilities

The Sabres are very active in the community and always expanding the role that SageCRM plays in those activities. The Key Attribute functionality offered in the software provides the functionality needed to manage attendees for special events, such as the Sabres Foundation's Aces and Blades annual fundraiser or their Street Hockey Festival. Similarly, the Sabres use SageCRM to organize their SabreKidz Club for children under 12.

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The Buffalo Sabres are unique, in that they have a large base of loyal fans across the border in Canada. "SageCRM is flexible enough for dual-nationality programs," explains Matheny. "It helps us presort mailings to save on postage, and also meet Canadian postage requirements, which are different than those in the United States."

Matheny says SageCRM is now an integral part of our business and we rely on the information it provides. "Our fans deserve the very best in customer service," he says, "and SageCRM helps us give it to them."

ABOUT SAGE SOFTWARE

Sage Software supports the needs, challenges, and dreams of more than 2.7 million small and mid-sized business customers in North America through easy-to-use, scalable, and customizable software and services. Our products help manage a complete range of business functions including: accounting, operations, customer relationship management, human resources, time tracking, merchant services and the specialized needs of the construction, distribution, healthcare, manufacturing, nonprofit, and real estate industries.

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