



A Case Study by EngageMint



Becoming more Fan-Centric

Before the 2019 - 2020 school year, Penn State Athletics and EngageMint began working together to create the best fan experience and best employee experience in college athletics.

While the overarching success metrics are in the subject matters of fan experience and employee experience, the strategies to achieve those goals were in three buckets. Get smarter about decision making driven by more detailed insights and data; improve work flow and find efficiencies in the operation, and elevate team member behaviors and make working a more rewarding experience for everyone involved.

Any type of experience transformation with ambitious goals like these cannot be achieved overnight. At the time of the writing of this document, we are wrapping up the end of the first year of a three-year relationship. Working together, we have a EngageMint team member dedicated full-time to working with Penn State, and three of the members on our team have Penn State emails. Penn State knew that to achieve the results they were looking for, it could not be a lukewarm attempt.

In an advisory relationship like this one, we set out with a specific roadmap for working together over the course of three years. But with COVID-19 interrupting college athletics 6 months into our relationship, we rolled up our sleeves and began executing different strategies together. Before COVID-19, experience was all about "surprise and delight." With COVID-19 in play, we had to shift our focus to "safe & comfortable."

On the following page, we'll list some of the strategies, tactics and results from the relationship so far.

STRATEGIC PLAN

INSIGHTS

OPERATIONS

CULTURE



INSIGHTS

- Created post-game FB survey strategy and analysis of data.
- Installed and led data analysis from 40 Happy-or-Not data terminals to collect real-time feedback during gamedays from fans.
- Hosted focus groups and built relationships with leaders and staff from across the department to better understand the culture and current state.
- Co-facilitated Fan Council meetings with select groups of fans to better understand their needs, wants, stereotypes and emotions on different topics.
- To prepare for a return from COVID-19, created and ran two surveys to the Penn State fan base, with 30k+ participants.

OPERATIONS

With more insights to build from, we knew that to create better experiences for fans and employees, we had to improve the systems and processes that determined how work was done.

After creating a "fan experience" cross-functional work team, we created fan personas. Rather than viewing our fans by differences in buying history, we wanted to understand them based on their individual goals and motivations. That way, we could create new services and products truly built for our unique fans.

We then applied those personas to the customer journey maps, we used our insights and data to paint the visual picture of the peaks and pits in an individual fan's journey on gameday.

When COVID19 hit, we shifted our focus to training and consistency. Working across the department, campus and partners, we collaborated with process owners to create centrally stored Standard Operating Guidelines.

To train gameday staff, PSU traditionally gathered 250+ employees together for a full-day, in-person training. To adjust, we built a digital learning platform incorporating all trainings from all partners, tying training completion and comprehension to credential access.



CULTURE

After we created the fan experience work team, we created an "employee experience" work team to tackle a number of identified priorities.

With leaders from all areas of the athletics department, we crafted a "common purpose" to guide service actions and decisions. We then created a set of actionable behaviors for following initiatives.

We built an organization-wide training focused on those behaviors, calling it Happy Valley Hospitality. We incorporated those behaviors into hiring practices, and built a rewards and recognition program around said behaviors.

When COVID19 hit, we focused on communication, leading the team's training and move towards using Microsoft Teams, helping to increase productivity.