



About the Sacramento Kings

Among the oldest and most beloved franchises in the NBA, the Sacramento Kings can trace their origins to Rochester, New York nearly a century ago. Since the team's move to Sacramento in 1985, the Kings have become the pride of the region. In recent years, city leaders, the Kings passionate local fans and a new ownership group led by Chairman Vivek Ranadivé all stepped in as a major force against the team's potential relocation away from the capital city.

That dedication has been matched by the franchise's growing sales force, which is now in a key position at the center of a revitalization effort for both the team and the city. With building underway on the Kings new downtown arena, the [Golden 1 Center](#), the sales team is charged with selling season tickets and experiences for a sports complex that is still under construction while maintaining excellent sales results for the existing arena.

Who is the Target Customer?

The Kings play in the country's 20th largest media market, in a metropolitan area of 2.2 million. The team's target corporate audience is primarily small and medium-sized businesses looking to buy tickets to engage prospects, clients and vendors, as well as an entertainment reward for employees.

The solid support of the Kings fan base, along with renewed excitement around the new arena, has provided fresh opportunities to target even more new customers, from commercial businesses to law firms to non-profits.

What was the Sales Challenge?

With the opening of the new arena just two years away, the Kings Ticket Sales Team needed a capacity strategy in both the current and future facilities. But with a large portion of the sales team made up of new, less experienced reps, the franchise's sales leadership needed to invest in their training to ensure they could keep up with the more senior reps. And the franchise's traditional cold-calling tactics weren't a great fit for the tech-savvy millennials that made up a significant portion of the sales team.

After providing the sales team with Sales Navigator licenses, sales leadership saw a major shift in confidence, especially among its newer reps.

"All of a sudden they have the power and the same skill set as anybody else to reach out to C-level contacts or business owners and engage with them," says Phil Horn, Vice President of Ticket Sales and Service. "One new rep was able to get in touch with a decision maker at a powerful law firm in town using Sales Navigator on her first try. The deal came together about 10 times faster than it would have using a cold calling approach. There's also an excitement for the team around having access to the newest, best-in-class tools, and when the sales team knows that you're investing in them, you start to get a whole other level of effort."

What did the Kings do to achieve success?

Vital to the sales team's success with social selling and Sales Navigator was the solid support and buy-in from the franchise ownership, sales team leaders and the sales reps themselves. The team's LinkedIn account manager first provided Horn with initial training on LinkedIn fundamentals, such as building a solid profile before moving on to Sales Navigator training.

Horn then ensured the team's social selling efforts got off on the right foot by leading LinkedIn training for a core group of tech-savvy reps. From there, the rest of the sales team received training both for LinkedIn and Sales Navigator. With the sales team's proactive leadership at the helm and several highly enthusiastic reps, the Kings sales force has hit the ground running, following a philosophy they call "Sales 3.0": a three-pronged approach that matches social selling with team collaboration and accelerated technology. The addition of Sales Navigator fit in perfectly.

During daily sales huddles, the team shares their Sales Navigator success stories with one another along with tips for how best to leverage the tool.

"Somebody will share, 'Hey, I found this person through LinkedIn,' and we'll dig in - tell us more, how did you find them? What insight did you use to start the conversation?" Horn says. "That's great learning for the rest of the team, too."

What about the Results?

Horn collaborated closely with the sales team to provide LinkedIn and Sales Navigator trainings and to generate enthusiasm for social selling across the sales force. That investment has yielded major results.

Since implementing Sales Navigator, the team's ticket sales have soared - particularly those where face to face appointments were the result of initial contact - the Kings beat their own goal for in-game ticket sales by 50 percent, more than tripling the team's previous high and ranking them among the top teams in the NBA.

These engagement efforts with fans and local businesses have led to more than a 20 percent increase in attendance since new ownership took over.

In recent months, the sales team has seen roughly six percent of its overall new business come from deals sourced from LinkedIn or Sales Navigator.

Using information from Sales Navigator and reaching out with InMail, the sales team has also connected with more existing leads that were already in their CRM system. Sales Navigator proved to be similarly valuable in supporting stronger relationships with existing customers, helping the team bring in a higher-than-usual rate of season ticket membership renewals.

"We found that by sending our customers an InMail we got a higher rate of response, when we weren't getting a response through other methods," Horn said.

- Starting with just 18 seats across the sales team in 2014, the Kings have since rolled out more than 40 Sales Navigator licenses.
- The team's new reps using Sales Navigator have increased the size of their deals by 42 percent compared to the previous class of reps, who were not using the tool.
- The Kings' deals sourced through LinkedIn are 3.2x larger than others.
- Reps who use Sales Navigator have higher Social Selling Index (SSI) scores than those who don't.

In Their Own Words: The Value Delivered by Sales Navigator for the Sacramento Kings Sales Team

"My entry-level rep was able to get into a very powerful law firm in town and get to a decision maker 10 times faster than they would have had they gone the traditional cold call route. With LinkedIn, they were able to locate and get the ear of the decision maker on the first attempt."



Phil Horn
VP of Ticket Sales and Service

"I came across a potential lead profile on LinkedIn... He hadn't ever considered using Kings tickets for his clients and employees, but two days after our meeting, he purchased seats worth more than 10% of my annual goal. Yet again, LinkedIn proved to be a valuable resource for locating brand new business."



Trevor Derrett
Account Manager

Check out lnkd.in/sales-navigator to learn more about Sales Navigator