Are You in It to Win It?
How Collegiate Athletics Programs Tackle Data Integration & Score Big Value

The competitive world of collegiate athletics centers on three primary objectives: 1) recruit and develop exceptional student athletes, 2) win championships, and 3) engage and cultivate fans and donors both on and off campus.

This sounds straightforward—but these objectives are actually bound together in a continuous cycle. Stakeholders and fans want to win championships, but you can't win those without great athletes. Athletes come when your program incorporates seasoned coaches and top-notch facilities, but you can't afford those without driving revenue…and that often depends on the donors and fans. At the end of the day, navigating this cycle successfully requires resources.

The more revenue you can bring in, and the more efficiently you can run your operations, the more resources you can put toward your goals. That means you need access to information, the kind that can help you better understand your constituents—the whole entangled lot of fans, students, alumni and donors. More importantly, you need actionable insights based on this data, the kind that help you improve engagement, pinpoint ways to save money or seize new opportunities.

Unfortunately, if your program still uses disparate technology systems, which most do, across ticketing, donor management, concessions, marketing and email communications, merchandise and beyond, you have no way of integrating the massive amounts of data these systems capture. You also can't align your own data with that of other campus department systems—such as University development, Alumni Association, and admissions—that regularly interact with the same people. As such, you have no mechanism with which to create accurate, real-time pictures of your constituents and better understand their needs, experiences and behaviors. This is a huge problem. If you can't understand constituents' needs, you certainly can't meet them—which you absolutely must do if you want to maximize their engagement. Even worse, without complete understanding of your stakeholders, you have no way to develop the necessary insights to predict trends and elevate your revenue streams and efficiency on a broader scale.

But don't panic. This eBook will help you get on track. Here's how:

- First, we'll explore the nature of the unique challenges you face, both within collegiate athletics and as they relate to your institution. It's critical that you understand exactly which obstacles you need to clear.

- We'll also discuss the key elements to look for in a successful data integration solution, so you're prepared to evaluate potential platforms.

- Finally, we'll look at the importance of tying your efforts together with a best-of-breed partner like SSB. We'll explain why vertical expertise matters, how the right insights can impact your results, and what some universities are already achieving with SSB's comprehensive approach.

Let's get started.

What's holding you back?

Like many businesses, including professional sports organizations, you struggle with disparate technology systems that captuZ re valuable information about your constituents and then essentially hold it captive. However, unlike traditional businesses, you don't have "customers," per se. They are stakeholders in your institution and have emotional connections. And unlike pro sports teams, you don't just deal with fans in the community. Your fans are also students, who become alumni, who become donors—and not only are all of them potential or existing ticketholders, but they all also regularly interact with other departments outside of Athletics, all across campus.

On the technology side, this complex ecosystem is challenging because:

- **Practically every revenue-driven department has its own systems.** That's not surprising, considering your institution has probably been piecemealing heterogenous technology components for decades. Try to count the number of email systems, CRMs, databases, point-of-sale systems, and other proprietary applications in play, and you'll be busy for quite some time.

- **While constituents' transactions extend all across the campus, their data doesn't always travel with them.** You're well aware that the same individual can be a student, a fan, an alum, a donor, a season ticketholder, and a purchaser of merchandise. But the disparate technology in use at every interaction makes it impossible to track and understand how people fit into these groups and the associated pattern of interaction.

- **The data you can see isn't current, complete, or accurate.** In fact, you likely have countless partial and duplicate records, each containing different versions of the same truth. But which truth is right? And how will you know when a record is complete?

- **In other words, all that data is trapped in disconnected siloes.** The worst part? You know it's there, but you can't access it or piece it together without help.

On the business and marketing side, you face additional challenges:

- Because you can't adequately access your own data—let alone the data of other departments—you don't have the necessary insights to understand your constituents completely. As a result, you struggle to make the most effective connections in your outreach communications and marketing campaigns.

- Even when you try to take a more strategic approach, the nature of the data you're working with limits your available insights. Instead of analyzing comprehensive, real-time pictures of constituents, you routinely waste time and effort manually removing duplicate profiles or standardizing formats. Consequently, you're only able to generate basic reports, leaving so much potential untapped. Aren't you tired of working harder—and not smarter?

- Without full visibility into how your constituents fit into other campus programs and associations, you're left competing for their attention (and dollars). What happens when you send a season ticket renewal email on the same day the Development office launches its major donor campaign? Will one side lose—or will the competing messages drown each other out?

Needless to say, these comprehensive challenges can translate to serious loss of constituent engagement, not to mention potential revenue, for the Athletics program and across the entire institution. Without accurate, complete, and real-time profiles of constituents, and without the insight into how these groups of people evolve and transact across the

institution as a whole, you can't understand how to market to them personally and effectively from any department. You don't know what's driving them. You don't know what they like or dislike. You can't see the missed incentive and sales opportunities. You can't pinpoint trends or behavior patterns. And these are the things you must know in order to speak sincerely to your constituents' needs, build trust, and ultimately generate the resources that help you reach your goals.

Your technology must-haves for success

As you work to resolve these issues for your organization, it's important that you look for a platform designed to serve the higher education market—and specifically the complex needs of collegiate athletics organizations.

Ideally, you want to seek out a solution that can deliver:

Data integration

Considering all the different systems your organization (not to mention the entire institution) has in use, you're probably dealing with a large assortment of data formats, along with partial and duplicate listings. You need a way to consolidate, clean, and integrate this data so it's accessible in a single, standard format. Look for a solution that can pull in data from all of your ticketing programs, donor systems, merchandising systems, point-of-sale terminals, customer databases, and any related University systems as well. The company behind the solution should have deep experience in performing those integrations.

Data management

Integrated data doesn't necessarily equal accurate or complete data. You need a solution that also focuses on improving quality and reliability of your data. Look for technology that's intuitive and powerful enough to sift through high volumes of records and identify matches, while simultaneously filling in blanks, weeding out errors, and ultimately distilling functional, accurate, and real-time customer profiles. Sophisticated data hygiene is a must.

Data visualization

Next, you need a way to access the data you're integrating—and that means rendering it accessible to all the relevant departments within your institution through visually understandable reports, dashboards, or other third-party analytics tools that make it simple to spot key trends and behavior patterns.

Constituent Insight

All the good data in the world is meaningless if you can't understand what it's telling you and how you should respond. Look for a solution vendor that's capable of translating your reports and analytics into actionable insights. For example, once you understand where fans are coming from and what they're buying at sporting events, you might want to move your merchandise displays to different stadium gates, or send different ticket incentives to segmented groups of donor, fans, alumni, and students. In other words, keep in mind that effective data integration initiatives don't stop with data integration. What you're really after are results.

SSB: The right partner for collegiate athletics and higher education

Of course, technology is only part of the equation. Plenty of data integration providers these days will claim to have the most advanced platforms—but to get the insights and results you're after, you need more than just a tech vendor. You need an experienced partner, and that's where SSB comes in.

Why does vertical experience matter?

Think of it this way: You wouldn't start a rookie pitcher in Game 7 of the World Series, right? Experience not only equates to understanding—it's the only path to excellence.

This is what SSB brings to the table:

- Unlike competitive solution providers, SSB has the proven expertise not only in data integration technology but also in the practice of data integration specifically for both professional and collegiate sports organizations.
- Moreover, SSB professionals have more than 50 years' combined experience in collegiate work and the higher education industry as a whole, and therefore have a unique understanding of your constituents' complex relationships throughout the institution.

We also have in-depth understanding of how data is formatted by and flows through the systems you use for ticketing, donations, merchandise, concessions, marketing and more—and we know the systems used in admissions offices, alumni associations, bookstores, recruitment campaigns, and sponsor endeavors, where your constituents also interact.

We know and understand how your constituents, donors, fans, students, and customers affect your bottom line. We also understand your operational models and where you're probably wasting resources.
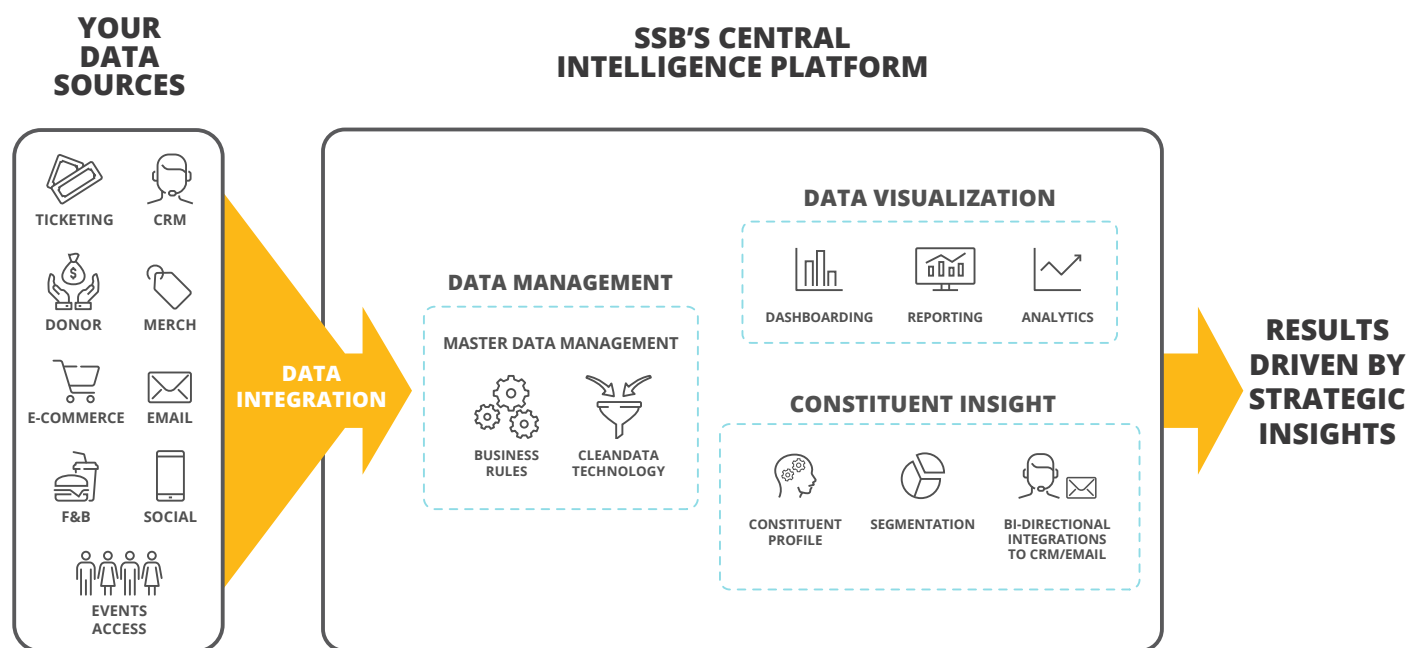
More importantly, we've helped clients like you eliminate that waste, while also boosting ticket sales, annual fund contributions, capital campaign donations, and merchandise transactions—ultimately saving hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in improved efficiency across the entire institution.

Finally, we're happy to connect you with our powerful client network of 60+ sports organizations, all willing to share their best practices and help you maximize the value of your data.

In other words, when we say that we understand how important it is for you to solve your data challenges and seize your value potential, we mean it. And when we say we can help you, we mean that, too.

Central Intelligence platform

SSB also distinguishes itself from competitors by applying our decades of industry experience to the development of our technology. Unlike other solutions, SSB's Central Intelligence Education platform is purpose-built to deliver all of the components necessary to your specific data initiative:

YOUR DATA SOURCES

SSB'S CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE PLATFORM

TICKETING   CRM

DONOR   MERCH

E-COMMERCE   EMAIL

F&B   SOCIAL

EVENTS ACCESS

DATA INTEGRATION

DATA MANAGEMENT

MASTER DATA MANAGEMENT

BUSINESS RULES   CLEANDATA TECHNOLOGY

DATA VISUALIZATION

DASHBOARDING   REPORTING   ANALYTICS

CONSTITUENT INSIGHT

CONSTITUENT PROFILE   SEGMENTATION   BI-DIRECTIONAL INTEGRATIONS TO CRM/EMAIL

RESULTS DRIVEN BY STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

Data Integration: After creating a centralized data input location, our proprietary ETL processes consolidate and clean information from all of your sources, including all ticket types, point-of-sale devices, food and beverage applications, and all related CRM systems. We even grab data from RFI tags that track campus movement and equipment usage. If you generate data, we pull it in.

Data Management: Master Data Management (MDM), featuring our best-of-breed CleanData technology, is there the data hygiene magic happens. Through a rigorous process of cleaning, matching, ranking, and mastering, our platform automatically filters through data records to eliminate inaccuracies and partial records, ultimately turning out a current and complete registry—including email addresses, phone numbers, and more—that details all your constituent relationships and transactions within the Athletics organization at large. We also enable segmentation of specific groups or populations across multiple data sets or sources, so it's easier to assess information when working toward particular objectives.

Data Visualization: Once it's been aggregated, positioned, and structured, SSB redistributes the now completely integrated data to anyone you authorize to see it—ensuring real-time accuracy and easy accessibility through a centralized portal interface. But we don't stop there. We also present your information in easy-to-understand dashboards, while ensuring you can easily generate the kind of real-time, automated reports and business intelligence you need to access every day.

Constituent Insight: Finally, our platform helps you derive the greatest value from your data by transforming your 360-degree constituent view into actionable insights, so you can make real-world impacts on your operations right away. You can use what you learn to build new ticketholder campaigns, maximize the effectiveness and yield of your annual fund and philanthropic donor campaigns, personalize your marketing to specific groups of fans or alumni, and take concrete action toward increasing event attendance, while minimizing no-shows. Everything you learn is designed to help further your objectives, by enabling you to generate the resources you need to recruit stellar athletes, optimize your program, bolster your fan base, and bring home those trophies.

SSB in action

Dozens of SSB customers—including collegiate and professional sports organizations—are leveraging the power of their data today to drive serious results like these:

- **Arizona State University** increased online season ticket renewals by 400% in one year.

- The **Minnesota Vikings** saw a 20-30% increase in email open rates with more personalized marketing.

- **Monumental Sports & Entertainment,** owner of a number of franchises including the 2018 Stanley Cup-winning Washington Capitals, found new ROI metrics.

- And **Ole Miss** saw a $1M increase in incremental revenues after one year of implementation, reaching the highest revenue generated for all sports in 2017.

Imagine the possibilities. And realize the value.

What's next?

Bottom line: If you want to build and sustain an advantage in your competitive market, you need more than just data integration. You need a data integration partner that understands your unique operational models and the connections between your constituents, particularly when it comes to the complex ways in which collegiate athletics intertwines with the overall educational institution. You need a partner with deep expertise in your market, and technology that's purpose-built to deliver strategic, actionable insights about the operational health of your department.

SSB is committed to helping your college or university reach those objectives by harnessing the tremendous power and value of your data. Ready to learn more? We'd love to show you what we can do. Get in touch at www.ssbinfo.com or email salesedu@ssbinfo.com to schedule a free demo today.

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