



# Ole Miss Boosts Revenue with 360° View of Fan Base

## PROFILE

University of Mississippi, affectionately known to alumni, students and friends as Ole Miss, is a public research university in Oxford, Mississippi, and includes the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson. Ole Miss was founded in 1948 and has an enrollment of 24,250 students. In addition to its main campus, the university also has campuses in Tupelo, Booneville, Grenada and Southaven.



## CHALLENGE

Ole Miss needed to understand how fans engaged with them across multiple touch-points, to increase ticket sales, lower no-show rates, improve fan engagement, and increase margins on merchandise and concessions.



## SOLUTION

SSB assembled data from disparate sources, (over 120 integrations), enabling a comprehensive view of customers with business intelligence and segmentation tools to analyze and visualize opportunities. Ole Miss could then execute initiatives to target customers effectively.



## RESULTS

- Over 125K new unique users
- Average additional 716K in lead generation
- \$1 Million gain in incremental revenue



## CHALLENGE

### A Trendsetter in Data Collection

When it came to data, Ole Miss was a leader in collegiate athletics. Early adopters in mobile apps and proximity-based marketing technology, their program rewarded game attendees with incentives and they captured game-day data such as attendee entry times, length of stay, and entry/exit locations. Fan surveys were commonly used to quantify and track the fan experience. And Ole Miss was one of the early collegiate athletic programs to install a concessions point of sale system at all athletics venues.

### So Much Data and Stopped In Their Tracks

Ole Miss knew their fans were engaging with them at multiple touch-points: merchandise, social media, concessions, donations and apps. But those touch-points were all recorded or siloed in different places. One single fan—someone who purchased tickets, bought a hot dog at the game, opened emails, posted on social media, and downloaded their app—actually looked like multiple fans. There was no way to leverage it for revenue or lead capture.

“It felt like we had all of the pieces of a Ferrari, but couldn’t assemble it,” said Deputy Athletics Director for External Relations and Business Development Michael Thompson.

With a previous career in the high profile agency world, and the Southeastern Conference’s lead on



*Michael Thompson,  
Deputy Athletics Director  
for External Relations and  
Business Development*

the conference-wide Fan Experience Survey, Thompson possesses a rare combination of sports and marketing prowess.

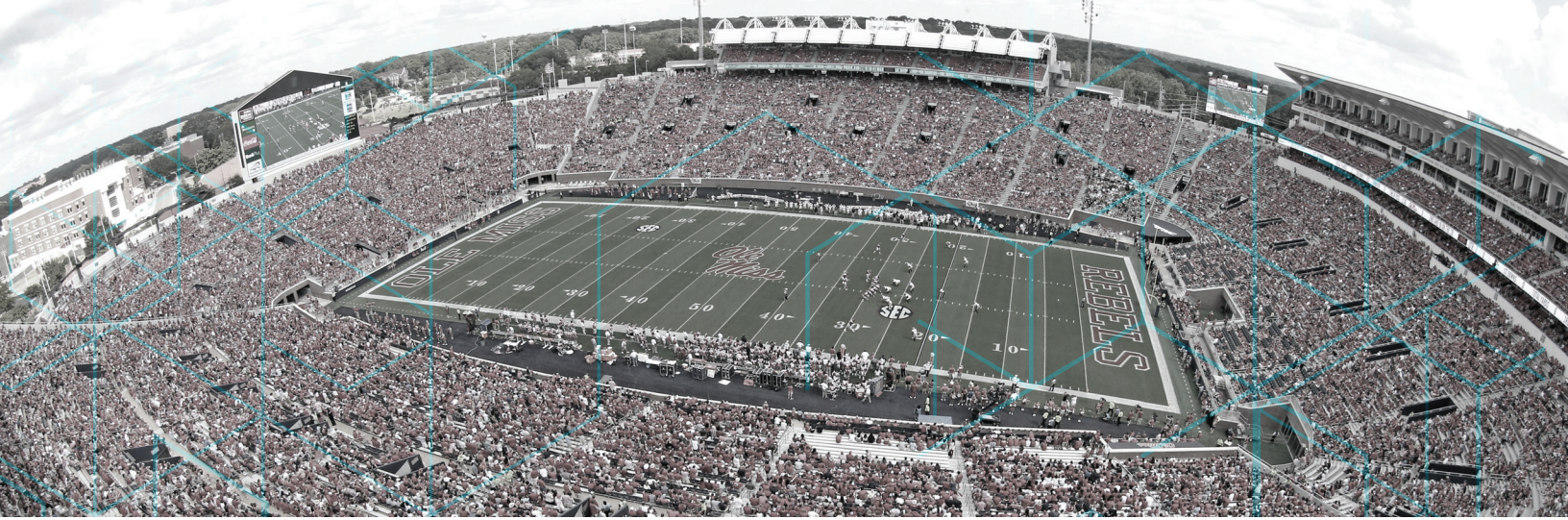
Ole Miss knew they needed a platform to integrate their data, and enable analysis and segmentation. Because only a comprehensive system would lead to increased ticket sales, lower no-show rates, better fan engagement and higher revenue for merchandise and concessions.

But there were risks. For most collegiate athletic departments this was uncharted waters.

Despite resource questions, convincing senior leadership came down to two things.

**First, the opportunity cost.** “It was a massive waste to not have this information aggregated” Thompson said, and after Ole Miss talked to SSB, “it was an absolute no-brainer, it would be the foundation for almost limitless opportunities.”

**Second, the past proof.** Research and data had driven previous campaigns. And because it had truly helped Ole Miss’s programs evolve, it had power. Those wins made the the data integration platform less of a risk.



## SOLUTION

The SSB solution assembled data from disparate data sources, (over 120 available integrations), enabling analysis and visualization with business intelligence tools. Through segmentation, the software then pushed that data out to CRMs and digital channels.

Ole Miss and SSB started by integrating data from ticket sales and fundraising in athletics. Later data from the team store, concessions, fan experience surveys, demographic information, emails, social media, wi-fi, and the two mobile apps were added to complete the 360-degree customer view.

“Before, we had a wheel with all of the spokes in different silos with nothing in the middle to connect them,” said Thompson. “Now Central Intelligence acts as a command center for all of it, allowing us to analyze different relationships between the spokes.”

## RESULTS

### A 360 Degree View of Fans— with Smart Segmentation

In the first year alone, database efficiency allowed Ole Miss to personalize campaigns in all major programs. As a result, they increased total accounts by 23%, increased major email KPIs on average 68%, and online transactions went up 10%.

As data become richer and their view of fans widened across all touchpoints, Ole Miss could more easily segment, grow leads, streamline reporting, and make improvements across the athletic department.

**Ole Miss gained \$1 Million  
in incremental revenue.**

### Powerful Email Marketing

Their email marketing program continues to get smarter and more efficient. Open rates have improved by 22% over 2 years.

### Dramatic Ecommerce Boost

With a more complete view of the fan, ecommerce got a big boost. Better segmentation and marketing had a dramatic impact on ecommerce, propelling conversions by 22% and revenue by 54%, year over year.



## Database Growth

Over 125K new unique users identified from 2014-2018, all centrally located in one data warehouse.

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
5,828	27,491	45,137	24,782	23,418

By identifying new fans and understanding their behaviors, lead generation increased, attributing, on average, an additional 716K over the past three years.

## Efficient Reports

Rather than waiting for reports to generate and spending hours in Excel, staff can understand complex data systems and customer relationships in minutes. This efficiency saved five hours of administrative work per week, allowing them to spend time on more critical strategic initiatives.

## Stadium Initiatives

Ole Miss launched a 100 Changes in 100 Days Campaign. Based on surveys from fans, they worked on everything from refillable soda offers to a new sound system; from a dedicated usher training program to a running ticker of Top-25 and SEC scores displayed throughout the game on the ribbon boards. With the data to back it up, it was an easy sell to stakeholders.

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## Major Gifts Insight

Individual fan data offered great insight for conversations between major gifts officers and potential donors or sponsors. For example, if the donor had expressed dissatisfaction about concessions quality, they know to bring up new food distributor partnerships. This in turn reassured the donor that their feedback mattered and that Ole Miss cared.

## Fan-Scoring-Fueled Segmentation

With data from over ten different sources Ole Miss created a fan scoring system that included over 20 wealth and engagement indicators. These overall scores helped identify potential major gift donors, segment fans and track customer lifetime value.



## LOOKING AHEAD

### Pricing Structure & Tax Reform

For Ole Miss, all the new data is a rising tide. With a new, stronger data foundation, decisions around pricing structure and tax reform have become far more informed and strategic.

“The dispersed data was a root cause of our issues,” said Thompson. “And the aggregation is like a foundation for unlimited revenue opportunities.”

Even though the school has shown fantastic growth and great results, Thompson is especially excited about how Ole Miss will continue to leverage SSB in ways they haven’t even discovered yet.

	NO DATA FOUNDATION	STRONG DATA FOUNDATION
PRICING STRUCTURE	Annual ticket price increase of 10%	Data helped us understand that a lower ticket price in certain sections means more attendees. That equates to a happier crowd, more concession and merchandise purchases and higher revenue.
TAX REFORM	No strategy to accommodate tax reform. Guessing based on estimates, not facts.	Strategic decisions to adjust models based on aggregate data will accommodate tax reform easily.

“*I’d say we’re still in our infancy of leveraging the data. SSB made such a positive impact on our organization already, and there’s more data than we can even analyze. This is only the beginning.*”



#### ABOUT SSB

SSB empowers sports, education, and healthcare organizations worldwide with superior technology and deep industry expertise that transforms customer and constituent data and delivers quantifiable business outcomes. With our cloud-based customer and operational data management platform, Central Intelligence, we enable our clients to make educated, actionable, and profitable decisions that take business to a new level. Learn more by visiting <https://ssbinfo.com>