

ROOKIE ONBOARDING

A WHITEPAPER

APRIL 2019

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ACTIONABLE DATA INSIGHTS

Rookie Onboarding

What is Rookie Onboarding, and why should your organization care about it? Rookie Onboarding is about welcoming new accounts into the organization's community.

We've seen partners succeed by structuring a new package buyer program so there are many great touchpoints with rookie season ticket holders throughout the year. Granular details about how your onboarding process works will depend on your organization's nuances. However, it is crucial to iron out this process and have a timely and strategic welcome to the community because first impressions are everything and you don't want to wait and risk disappointing your new package buyer.

Some things to take into consideration when building out this process:

- Does the sales rep transition accounts to a service?
- Is there a separate service team?
- Can you automate certain processes to reduce the risk of missing key opportunities to touch base with rookie accounts?



What does this onboarding process look like? Below you'll find an overview of the main themes to consider when developing your touchpoint plan for new package buyers.

For more details, we have included a full sample of a Rookie Onboarding plan at the end of this whitepaper.

First Call: The first onboarding call is critical.



- You need to welcome them to the community and bring them in to get them involved. Make sure they know the best ways to use their tickets, get answers to their questions and where to go with concerns.

Community Engagement: Remember that renewals don't start on day one of the season. They start as soon as the purchase is made for the first time, or the moment they renew. The first weeks after purchase are critical in cementing this highly emotional decision and paving the way for long-time customers. One way to work towards this is by providing a lightweight series of touchpoints introducing the member on how they can interact with team. Things you can do could be:

- Reconfirm rep name.
- Let them know about the ways they can connect with the organization (social, newsletter, etc).
- Share your member events calendar.
- Send a personal rookie event invite.

Second Call: This call is a splash of special treatment to let them know what to expect for the upcoming season. One option is to make some type of special offer, experience or gift for being a rookie member (can be offered / delivered in a way that will not alienate existing members).

Rookie Engagement: It is important to keep the new members engaged and create momentum with some strategic touchpoints and relationship builders throughout the season. Some examples of this include:

- Rookie member recognition at first home game (e.g. make an announcement over the PA and get them to stand at their seats, or have names scroll on the scoreboard).
- Member events, which are important opportunities to have quality face time.

Remember: not all touchpoints are created equal. There are touchpoints, significant touchpoints and what we like to call “wow” moments. Having a carefully orchestrated plan to build the



relationship with all three engagement types will make things easier come renewal time. See how they're doing and check in too! Let them know you care! Track what works and what doesn't – don't annoy them with things they aren't interested in.

Continuous education is key! The more you communicate benefits and opportunities, the more your new members will engage naturally (and

integrate themselves into the community by taking advantage of the benefits).

From our work across sports leagues and franchises, we've established that the more a member is engaged, the more they will attend and spend over their lifetime as a customer. It may seem obvious, but the investment of time, effort and intention to nurture fans to highly engaged status is something that still gets missed. Overall, we have found that partners have had success by effectively educating rookies on the benefits of being a member and by bringing them into the greater organizational community of members.

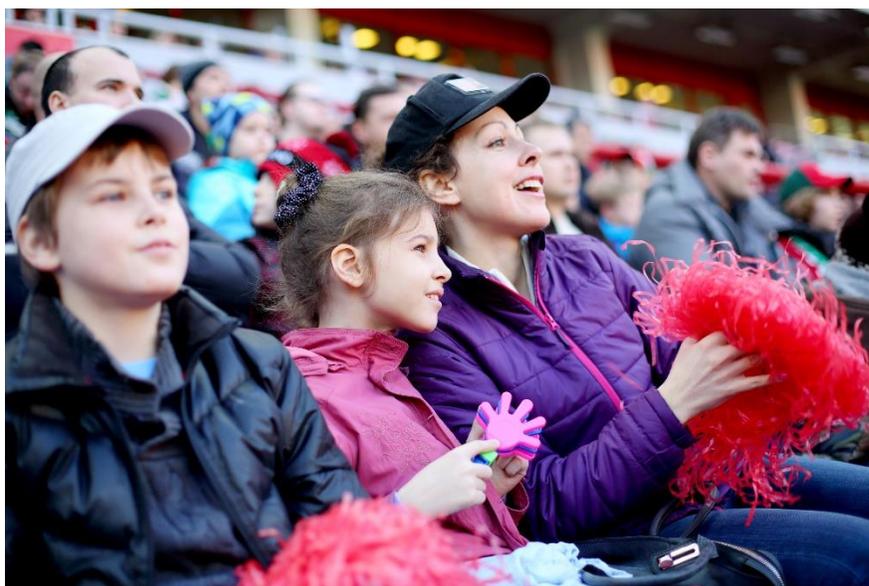
TOP "HACKS" TO SUCCEEDING WITH YOUR ONBOARDING AND BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH FANS

- Establish preferred methods of contact early in the relationship with your season ticketholders because silence is scary come renewal time – we have learned that texting can work wonders if it's an approved and comfortable mode of communication for that fan!
- Try to get at least 3 in-person significant and meaningful touches through the season. These could be in-seat visits, coffees, special event visit, or whatever else you can think of.
- Try to deliver at least 1 unique wow moment throughout the season.
- Think of sending a monthly rookie email to highlight a different benefit (rather than expecting the new package buyer to remember all the benefits out of the gate).
- Did we mention that it is important to get rookie accounts interacting with your content (newsletters, social, etc.)? Not only does this help you to measure engagement, it also connects your rookies to your brand experience.
- As renewals get close, familiarize your rookie accounts with the renewals process.
- Gather feedback from your rookies so you can answer concerns and get better for the next generation.

Strategize around creatively nurturing rookie accounts. Remember that no two fans are exactly alike so make an effort to tease out how best to engage them. At StellarAlgo, we brainstorm new and creative ideas to nurture and engage rookie accounts prior to each new season. Here are a few great ideas we heard and liked this year:

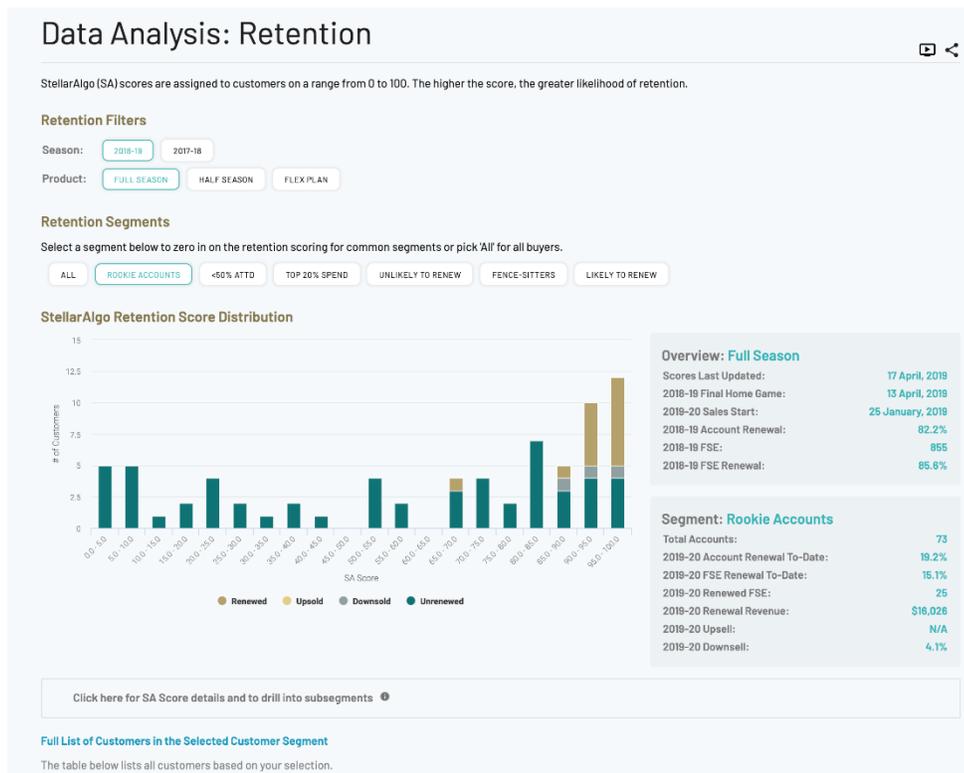
- Introduce and pair new season ticketholders with longer tenured season ticket member ambassadors.
- Hold rookie season ticketholder happy hours or events prior to select home games.
- Carve out special recognition or sessions at your pre-season town-hall style State of the Franchise meetings.
- Send handwritten happy birthday cards to all rookie accounts.
- Invite a rookie account holder to do the ceremonial first pitch, puck drop or coin toss. Ask them to share why they decided to become a member and explain why that's important to the franchise and community.
- Pre-game sideline experiences or post-game on-field photos.
- Locker room tours to meet the team.
- Offer a skate with the team – perhaps with the family!

Another option is hosting some type of rookie event prior to a home game, where the membership benefits could be reiterated, and leadership could speak about the state of being a member.



Also – if team performance is a factor in the purchase decision, lay the groundwork for why the season ticketholder experience is unique and special regardless of how the team performs.

There is no silver bullet for doing this perfectly. We encourage you to test and learn how things work best for your organization. For measurement, you could isolate a control group to see how they renew compared to those who are on your new Rookie Onboarding program. And don't forget to use the StellarAlgo data platform to create cohorts to track the performance of your campaigns!



When you create cohorts in StellarAlgo, you have the ability to track how at any given point, the engagement of your rookie account holders is influencing their likelihood to renew. This is an important additional layer to keeping on top of how you're doing with your Rookie Onboarding efforts.

Do you have any questions about how Rookie Onboarding could benefit your organization?

Reach out to our team today at info@stellaralgo.com!

Schedule A: Sample Rookie Onboarding Plan

PHASE I - TIME OF PURCHASE

Once your season ticket member buys, the onboarding process begins. Step one is to make sure they know who their rep is. It is very critical that you establish a personal relationship here, as well as learn their preferred communication style, why they bought tickets (if you do not know already), and other pertinent information about the account.

- First onboarding call: Welcome them to the community! This is really about describing the community and bringing them in to get the rookie account involved. This is an opportunity to express gratitude for the purchase and get them excited for the season. Remember that first impressions are everything!

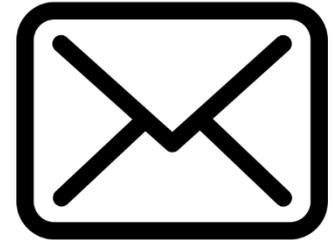


PHASE II – KICK-OFF ONBOARDING

Create a content series to get the new account holder up to speed on all of the ways they can engage with the team, use their tickets, give feedback, etc. What can they expect this season?

- Lightweight email series:
 - Reintroduce rep name.

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- Present ways they can connect with the organization, such as social media or a newsletter. Send them a member events calendar or even a personal rookie event invite.
 - Encourage the new member to get signed up with different organizational channels to not miss out on the full benefits of membership.
 - Second onboarding call:
 - Introduce a bit of special treatment and let them know what to expect for the upcoming season.
 - Consider some type of special offer or giveaway for being rookie member (can be offered / delivered in a way that will not alienate existing members).



PHASE III – TOUCHPOINT TIME

Time to continue that onboarding momentum with some strategic touchpoints and relationship builders throughout the season.

- Action 1: Get them to the home opener!
 - There is an opportunity to hit the ground running here. Get rookies to stand in their seats for recognition; or have reps come down for an in-seat visit. Let them know you're excited to have them!
- Action 2: Check in to see how the season is going.
- Action 3: Say Happy Birthday! It's a good occasion to show appreciation and say "we love you."
- Action 4: Invite them to a rookie onboarding event.
 - Member events can be a powerful tool to get additional face time with your rookie accounts. Get a sense for how



their season is going and how they're enjoying the experience. The more significant touchpoints you can get with a rookie in their first season, the better! Stage out significant touchpoints throughout the season.

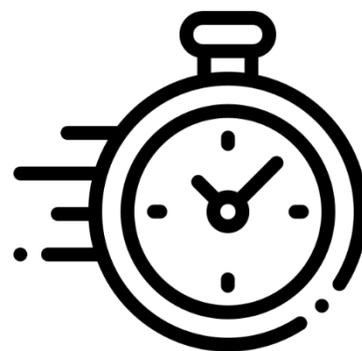
- Action 5: Share helpful tips for making the most out of their investment. One reach out could say, "Are you taking any vacation this summer? Here are some ways to get value from your tickets while out of town."
- Action 6: Make an in-seat visit. Are they going with their kids? Business?) Provide tailored little giveaways like, "here's a free drink coupon on us / here's a free ice cream on us," which says, "thanks for being a STM... you are special!"
- Action 7: Send monthly rookie account emails and feature a different benefit each time!



PHASE IV – PRIMING THE RENEWAL DECISION

It's their first time through this. No surprises!

- As you approach the start of the renewals window, begin to familiarize the account with how renewals work and what to expect.
- We see more and more organizations going towards auto-renew with an opt-out, but you should make sure you're talking to your rookie accounts about how things work so there are no surprises!
- Take the opportunity to discuss the renewals process 4-6 weeks prior to the window!



PHASE V – LEARNING

This should be the first time you are soliciting feedback on how you are doing as a customer first organization, but this is definitely a key time. Ask those that renewed. Ask those that didn't. What information will help you renew more, attract new fans, etc.?

