

CASE STUDY

Sounders: Connecting off the Field

**How the Sounders used Amperity to better connect
with their fans**

| “The ultimate goal is to have one-on-one relationships with every fan.”

Ryan Gustafson

VP Strategy and Development, Sounders

A Vision of Better Relationships

The team at the Seattle Sounders FC wanted to make the fan experience outside of the stadium as meaningful as watching a great match inside the stadium. To make this happen, they needed to know their customers intimately - from how fans interacted with every touchpoint, to their unique motivations, needs, and preferences. They wanted to use this understanding to drive more relevant communications, meaningful personalization, and seamless customer experiences, and encourage long-term loyalty and engagement.

The Data Challenge

To bring this vision to life, the Sounders needed unified data about their customers, and they needed to use it in way that continued to respect the privacy of their fans. They had already made deep investments in a variety of systems including a modern ticketing system, CRM capabilities, a robust email deployment & personalization tool, and more. However, while each of these systems contained a vast wealth of valuable information, they weren't integrated. The data within each system was siloed, incomplete, and hard to access. Even after attempting to centralize the information in a data warehouse, the team struggled to generate a unified customer view, and they were bogged down by the slow and manual processes of generating lists and segments. Because of this, the Sounders struggled to understand trends in customer behaviors, to fuel personalized marketing campaigns, and to streamline customer experiences.

“We could access a lot of the data we’re using with Amperity, but either we couldn't join it, or it took way too long to process, or it wasn't rolled together in the way we needed it - so it took me days to get the data right for just one campaign. With Amperity it's ready in minutes and I can make it automated.”

Chris Rue

Business Analyst, Sounders

Unlocking Data with Amperity

To solve for these challenges, the Sounders brought on Amperity, whose platform uses machine learning and cloud-scale to manage customer data completely, accurately, and at scale.

First, Amperity integrated with SeatGeek, TicketMaster, Exact Target, a league CRM, and a series of additional files. This method of integration doesn't require connectors, and avoids the long and complex process of extracting, transforming, and loading data. Within a few weeks, the Sounder's data was stood up for use, with its original richness intact.

Once data was prepared, Amperity used machine learning to resolve identities, deduplicate records, and build rich customer profiles, even when the data lacked linking keys across sources. This process was ongoing, with profiles refreshed daily as new data entered the system. This gave the Sounders the current and comprehensive view of their customers they had been missing.

The Amperity platform is built for intuitive access for marketers and analysts, with both a visual and SQL segment editor. With all their data unified and available, the Sounders team used Amperity to explore it. They discovered connections, insights, and fan segments that were previously unknown to them, including:

- Fans who only purchase on the primary channel (don't buy resold tickets)
- Fans who only attend when a specific opponent is playing, but never any other matches
- Fans who purchase in a very precise window before matches occur (granular last-minute ticket buyer segments)

“Our fans engage with us in so many different ways, whether it's through social, buying tickets through us, through buying tickets for a friend, or getting tickets from a friend. We didn't really have a good way of understanding the full behavior of our fans as it relates to engaging with us and buying tickets. Amperity allows us to do that.”

Ryan Gustafson

VP Strategy and Development, Sounders

Putting the Data to Use

Armed with unified data and a richer understanding of their customers, the Sounders improved customer experiences and brought new use cases to life. First, without changing anything, customers started receiving fewer emails. This was because the Sounder's systems were now deduplicated at the individual level, so the same fans were no longer receiving the same message at one or more of their email addresses. Next, segments like high lifetime value fans and game-preference segments grew more accurate and uniform, so the right messages were now reaching the right customers, every time. And finally, because the team was getting to know customers' preferences more intimately, they started to build more granular offers, communications, and messaging, for a more meaningful relationship with fans.

“Now it's easier, more efficient, and more secure, so we have a lot more confidence that the people we're marketing to are the correct people and we're removing and cleaning up the data so we're not engaging people who shouldn't be in that list... Amperity has given us the confidence to establish that one-on-one relationship with the fan.”

Kristi Bruner

Senior Marketing Manager, Sounders

Better Targeting

Next, the Sounders launched a series of targeted campaigns and communications. First they grew their understanding of fans that interacted with them on Facebook. Then they provided them with better access to the products and services they wanted. The Sounders created granular customer segments - based on match preferences, opponent preferences, purchase timing, lifetime spend, lead-score using site interactions, native language, and more - and orchestrated them directly to Facebook for custom and lookalike audiences.

The results varied by segment, with top performers ranging from 24:1 to 34:1 return on ad spend (ROAS). Better still, the segments could be created and delivered in a matter of minutes, allowing the Sounders to try new ideas, test, and iterate.

“Now we know things about people that we didn't know we knew, because now they live in one place. Before we might've had two people talking to the same person, but they didn't know because the fan was in the system separately, or they had a different email address or maybe a different part of their name. So Amperity has helped us streamline and be smart and strategic about who we're talking to and when.”

Peter Wiggum

Manager, Business Strategy and Analytics, Sounders

Better Email Personalization

Next the Sounders used their unified data to improve email personalization, so customers would get more of the offers and communications they wanted. Sending fewer emails overall but producing granular and highly accurate segments for sales and discounted tickets, the team drove a 22% increase in open rates and a 29% increase in click through rate. They also sent personalized emails to fans who had previously taken advantage of a program to reserve season tickets in advance. Better data fueled an 80% increase in conversions for the program over the previous year.

Next up for the Sounders is leveraging their unified data for richer insight into customer behaviors and motivations. These will be used to invent new campaigns, product offers, and more. Over time, unified data will also power new experiences like personalized customer representative calls, in-person activities, and post-match interactions.

“Having Amperity has created a spirit within the organization that we can start doing things that we've always wanted to do.”

Chris Rue

Business Analyst, Sounders

Benefits Summary

BETTER MARKETING, ANALYTICS, AND CX

ROAS

up to 34:1 ROAS through precise communications for key segments on Facebook

Segmentation

segments built using frequency, spend, and geography data for a 80% increase in YOY season ticket deposits

Personalization

Sounders used rich customer profiles to infuse personalized content and offers into their marketing programs

Email

22% increase in open rates; 29% increase in click through rate

Analytics

with data at their fingertips, Sounders invested in audience discovery and analysis, uncovering hidden insights and customer segments that were previously unknown

Customer Relationships

by sending few, but more relevant and valuable offers and communications to fans, the Sounders began the journey of building better fan relationships and driving long-term loyalty

SMARTER DATA MANAGEMENT

Completeness

Systems were integrated and data was unified for a continually fresh and comprehensive view of the customer

Speed and Efficiency

Segments could now be created in minutes, down from 2-3 days, unlocking the team's ability to test and iterate rapidly

Direct Access

Marketers and analysts now have direct access to a single source of truth for their customer data

Automation

Segments programmatically orchestrations to external systems

About Amperity

Amperity is revolutionizing customer identity resolution, data unification, and data management for enterprise brands, finally delivering on the promise of complete customer 360 views. Using advanced machine learning and cloud-scale, Amperity continuously ingests raw data, resolves identities and stitches online and offline data together, and generates the richest customer profiles possible. With Amperity, many of the world's most loved brands are unlocking their siloed data, powering their organizations with a complete and accurate understanding of their customers, and bringing their best, data-driven ideas to life.