

Using iWave to Uncover Funding For Youth Sport and Community Development

Background

Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment Foundation, the nonprofit arm of the franchise that owns the Toronto Maple Leafs, Toronto Raptors, Toronto Football Club, and Toronto Argonauts, is an organization for youth who face barriers. Since 2009, they have invested \$35 million in launching a full portfolio of programs, programming grants and refurbishment projects including a space dedicated to youth who face barriers to sport. “We don’t want to just bring youth together for community sport,” says Brett Fyfer, Campaign Director, “[...] we want to see knowledge and skill translation. We really see sports as a vehicle or mechanism to improve lives, whether it be with mental and physical health, or from a workplace and an educational standpoint.”

The Challenge

MLSE Foundation strives to go beyond the mandate of just relying on dollars generated by MLSE and its subsidiaries. Brett and his team focus on seeking external funding, whether it be from individuals, corporations, private foundations, or various levels of government. A second challenge they face is the association with MLSE. “The association for anyone who is a season’s ticket holder [to one of MLSE’s professional sports teams] knows what it costs to be involved or how much the players get paid, and they assume we are attached to a really big entity, which can hurt us.”

The Solution

MLSE Foundation is able to use iWave to find prospective donors across North America and engage with them using messaging that is tailored to their interests. Within iWave, they can search through alumni data or look at a prospect’s past giving history to nonprofits located in Toronto, Canada. “The affinity for our teams and our brand benefits us,” says Brett. “We know that individuals who are passionate about sports teams in the city of Toronto enjoy being associated with MLSE in some way, even if it’s just with the Foundation, it’s pretty meaningful for them”. iWave has also played a role in building invite lists of prospective donors for the annual Toronto Maple Leafs golf tournament, and the MLSE Foundation’s Game Changers Golf Classic.

Though MLSE Foundation has had success with the obvious association with sports, Brett recognizes that there are opportunities to find donors within iWave that have other connections to their mission. “[Affinity] doesn’t always need to be sport specifically. I know that someone who cares about healthcare is likely to care about physical activity and wellness, which helps to create a clearer picture of what individuals we’re looking for” said Brett. This will be incredibly important as MLSE Foundation is gearing up for a campaign starting in January 2021. iWave will play a role in expanding the donor pool by understanding individuals in the community and those who appreciate the work they do. “I’m incredibly excited to use iWave to find new donor opportunities for us by going beyond Downtown Toronto and looking at the province [of Ontario] and potentially at the national level. I feel like we’re just scratching the surface of what we can do with iWave.”


 MLSE
 FOUNDATION


ORGANIZATION

Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment Foundation

LOCATION

Toronto, Canada

INDUSTRY

Human Services

KEY CHALLENGE

Uncovering external funding from individuals and foundations.

KEY BENEFIT

Leveraging iWave’s affinity data to find new donors with a passion for sport or a connection to their mission.