

Sports Geek Nation AMA with Vincent Ircandia

Vincent Ircandia is the Founder and CEO of StellarAlgo, a company focused on fan data analytics through the usage of machine learning technology and their SaaS customer data platform. The Company is based in Canada and works with some of North America's largest sports and entertainment brands.

Vince has wide experience in the sports industry having worked as the Senior Vice President of Business Operations for Portland Trail Blazers focusing on organizational strategy, revenue strategy, ticket operations, CRM/consumer insights, business opportunity analysis, innovation and technology, and marketing automation. Prior to his stint at the Trail Blazers, Vince was the Director of Business Operations and Analytics for AEG Sports where he provided analytic support to AEG's North American and European sports properties including the LA Kings and LA Galaxy.

Connect with Vincent Ircandia on Twitter [@Vincent Ircandia](#), [LinkedIn](#) and Slack [@vircandia](#)
Find out more about StellarAlgo on Stellaralgo.com

Here's the full transcript:

Links to names will link you into Slack community, if you are not a member [please sign up here](#).

Q. [seancallanan](#): I'll open proceedings for 2019 [@vircandia](#) can you give everyone some background in sports and how StellarAlgo got started?

A. [vircandia](#): Absolutely. I started StellarAlgo after spending 10 years on the team side building out analytics teams. I noticed that the gap in the industry tools available was about making fan data actionable and predictive. Now, with StellarAlgo, that's our goal in everything we do - through machine learning, we're helping teams drive value from their fan data in a really timely and automated way.

Q. [tjansley](#): Hey Vince! What do you see that is lacking from a team side currently in the digital aspect? Also what do you see as the next big thing for a team to spend resources in that help drive revenue?

A. [vircandia](#): Hi TJ! Thanks for the question.

One of the biggest areas is de-anonymizing online audiences and making that connection between your CRM, ticketing and known fan universe. By de-anonymizing that big online universe it allows you to activate, engage and convert fans via multiple channels. That's what we see as a next major trend for leading teams.

[lennygoh](#): Great answer. I know someone who can do this... #shamelessplug

Q. [lennygoh](#): @vircandia is there anything unique you've seen in the data about one type of sport in terms of fan behaviour and their habits to spend or engage vs. all sports in general?

A. vircandia: Hi @lennygoh. The leagues/sports, as you know, have a lot of similarities but also some very important nuances.

It's a big question and could spend a full session on it I think. One area I think we are really excited about is the growth we are seeing in Major League Soccer. We are really seeing fan bases expand geographically and engagement wise. We think the growth in the MLS is something that really makes it a league to watch in North America.

Q. [Conrad Caplin \(prontocx\)](#): @vircandia do you help teams source the data for analysis? If not, what are the primary sources of data and which source channels are easiest to work with?

A. vircandia: Hi @Conrad Caplin (prontocx) - We are constantly integrating with new data sources but use a combination of first, second and third-party data. The ticketing data is extremely important for us and we have direct data pipes that hook into most of the major ticketing systems. Other important data sources for us include CRM systems, Email Marketing systems, survey (customer sentiment providers), social, online retail and web.

We go directly to source system and/ or pull from a team's existing internal data infrastructure.

The industry is still getting better in its ability to de-anonymize at-venue merchandise and food and beverage buyers so this is a big opportunity for the future.

In terms of ease, it's a spectrum based on how robust the individual systems are. Thankfully *most* tech/ data source systems have invested in good back-end data transfer capabilities. Where we really add our value is in looking at all those fan data points and helping to predict the best nurturing paths to maximize customer affinity, engagement and lifetime value.

Q. [Johannes Wohler](#): Hi @vircandia do you work with teams that have OTT-platforms and can you see if there is any correlation between ticket buyers and the ones consuming the content on the digital platforms demographically or even psychologically?

A. vircandia: Hi Johannes - Thanks for the question! Still a small number of teams showing live matches via OTT and receiving the data back but we have pulled this data in for four teams. We've done this more with league data sets and we conduct propensity and correlation analyses with a variety of online sources.

We've found that customers that live in a team's local market that consume OTT content are generally anywhere from 2x - 4x more likely to buy a ticket within 12 months.

In a similar vein if someone buys online team merchandise and lives in the local market they are over 5x more likely to buy a ticket within 12 months.

Q. seancallanan: Question from me @vircandia most sports teams have too much data and you help distill what they should focus on. How do you approach the opposite? New team, new fan base, no data. (Like say my new esports team *Gravitas*) I'm selling the development from Fan Zero but is there anything specific you think we should focus on?

A. vircandia: @seancallanan thanks! I'm sure you guys are hungry to find some data points to support your decision-making in the early going. Always difficult starting out from Fan Zero but also very exciting because you can focus in on your most important outcomes without the noise.

I am biased but building a data-driven culture is something that has proven results in building effective and efficient teams and organizations. Aligning around your most valuable and important data use cases is an important first step followed closely by mapping what data is available in support of those. With a new team, iteration is key. Start tracking crudely and simply in order to minimize executional risk and maximize time to value and then move up in sophistication level.

There are so many different data sets and ways to use data around esports teams so identify those most important and available and get cracking.

Congratulations by the way.

Q. lennygoh: @vircandia what's your advice around moving a fan through the entire journey? What's the best way to categorize when a fan turns into a truly qualified lead.

I'd especially like to hear thoughts around digital engagement with the brand and when is the key time to pass that qualified lead to a salesperson to reach out about season membership.

jase: My 2 cents @lennygoh; My experience is that the conversion rate roughly doubles when delivered to the fan just after a win and roughly triples if they are at the game at the time.

A. vircandia: Hi @lennygoh thanks for sending this. Personalization is so important in this day and age. I also love your reference to understanding that customer's journey.

Using data science alongside your digital and sales efforts can really help to understand how touchpoint types, frequency and quality will help to convert more fans. But you also have to listen to the fan along the way.

What are that fans propensities and digital expressions of interest for upcoming games, offers and products.

Ultimately it comes down to testing and learning around journeys and fan segments. Sounds complicated but it really doesn't have to be. Those hand raise moments for an inside sales team, for example, are usually pretty evident.

Also agree with @jase. So important to take action at relevant moments. If you are manually pulling this data together intermittently and taking action late you are missing opportunity.

What is Sports Geek Nation?

Been forwarded this from a colleague? That's great we love seeing our members get credit for sharing their knowledge. Sports Geek Nation is a curated sports business community in Slack and Facebook which will help you learn from the very best in the world. Sports Geek Nation was founded by Sean Callanan in 2015 (as #SportsBiz Slack), it connects sports executives who work in digital, data and technology.

Sports Geek Nation has members from (in alphabetical order) Australia, Canada, Denmark, India, Lithuania, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States working in sports such as basketball, football, ice hockey, baseball, AFL, horse racing, golf, rugby league, netball and more.

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