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THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Stories of purpose and lasting impact

Taking the 'Red Ball' approach

Helping transform the USTA's membership program in a new era of tennis

ADVANTAGE: USTA

A NEWLY ENGAGED TENNIS COMMUNITY IN IT FOR THE **FUN OF THE SPORT**

THE SITUATION

When you learn the game of tennis, balls come in different colors and sizes based on your level, experience, and age group. One of the best ways to be introduced to the sport is by using the “red ball,” the largest and lightest of the options. It’s easier to hit, allows for focus on skill development, and can build confidence in beginners. But the biggest advantage? For those beginners, it makes the sport *more fun*—a critical element of the game no matter your level.

It is precisely the concept of the “Red Ball” that the USTA was hoping to adopt when working to transform its current membership offering. Its goal was simple in conception but a bold challenge to execute: Bring 35 million players into the tennis community by 2035 through a segment-driven strategy across players, coaches, and facilities. And the path the USTA was looking to take to get there? Also bold: Instead of focusing on typical goals of membership programs, such as top-line growth, the plan was to drive the program from a place of love. No pun intended.

Part of the impetus for pursuing this goal was that the USTA’s existing membership value proposition had come to be seen by players as primarily about gaining access to USTA-sanctioned leagues and tournaments. And yet players, coaches, and communities were looking for *more*; these tennis lovers were hungry for enhanced support and engagement opportunities. The USTA saw an opportunity to elevate its value proposition so that it communicated its renewed focus on accessibility and increased engagement. The message needed to come across that the USTA is not only for serious athletes desiring competitive play, but also for players looking to play for fun, as a vehicle for health and wellness, or just to be a part of the tennis community.

Put simply, how was the USTA going to get more people to play more tennis?



THE SOLVE

Deloitte was able to bring significant experience to the USTA in helping organizations design, build, and transform membership and loyalty programs. Given the nature of the challenge, the Deloitte team rallied around an engagement strategy built on the notion of making tennis more accessible to more players. The USTA team's passion about all aspects of tennis—playing, coaching, and watching—was palpable and served to up the enthusiasm and energy levels as the project got underway.

The Deloitte team explored multiple avenues, both in the tennis world and the larger lifestyle and well-being sector, to create an engaging membership program that offered to be more than just a way to play in sanctioned events. Their approach centered on the loyalty cascade, a set of strategic choices for membership program design and launch.

The team proposed an evolved membership offering catering to all segments of the tennis community, emphasizing the importance of reinvesting program revenue to enrich benefits, enhance member experiences, and introduce self-sustaining financial models, all while increasing value for the player. Deloitte's team leveraged a prioritization framework to highlight the key features and benefits, with elements such as emotional engagement through personalized rewards, simplifying program administration, and retaining members through continued community opportunities.

They also focused on expanding the benefits and reach, including a partnership evaluation framework aimed at building strategic relationships outside of the court. This framework would aim to provide USTA members with extra resources and information, such as easy access to travel and hospitality partners, making it easier for members to get out on the court at the time and place of their choosing.

MATCH POINT: FOSTERING GROWTH AND ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE SPORT

GOING FORWARD

Deloitte and the USTA's game-changing strategy will seek to open doors, and courts, to new players across the country, serving red balls to new players while readying professionals to compete at higher and higher levels. Because at the core of the work remains a very simple and specific goal: to build a path to more people playing more tennis!



GAME - SET - MATCH
ADVANCING THE GAME ONE MEMBER AT A TIME

LET'S CONNECT.

Do these challenges sound familiar?



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