

# I-AAA ADACORNER



@D1AAA\_ADA



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Loyola University Chicago won the men's basketball national championship in 1963 (and is still the only Division I school from the state of Illinois to have done so), yet the Ramblers didn't become a well-recognized name to the average college basketball fan as a result. After earning our first appearance back to the Big Dance in 33 years, our 2018 Final Four run changed that.

Predictably, one question that we hear most frequently following that magical run to San Antonio is, "What impact has making the Final Four had on Loyola?" The impact was immediate and continues today. Now, more than a year later, we're able to answer that question in a more comprehensive fashion.

There have certainly been some very measurable and tangible benefits. We more than tripled our season-ticket base in 2019 and grew overall game attendance significantly. Records for annual giving and licensing revenue were set each of

the last two years and our corporate sponsorship program is poised for substantial growth as we launch a partnership with industry leader Learfield IMG College.

The other significant and arguably more valuable benefit was the growth in brand recognition for Loyola University Chicago. The earned media attention received during the 2018 NCAA Tournament alone did more from an exposure standpoint for the university than anything else in the history of our school. Without question, we were also the beneficiary of some factors that were beyond our control, yet had a profound impact on our visibility and "likability" during that time.

The first was the timing. At that moment in 2018, there was a growing cloud of negativity around college basketball caused in part by the beginnings of an FBI investigation into recruiting improprieties. The country seemed to be looking for a feel-good story and they found it in an energetic coach leading a group of young men who played an extremely unselfish brand of basketball for a school that had the No. 1 Graduation Success Rate in the nation two years in a row, and featured a pair of student-athletes who had been teammates and best friends since third grade.

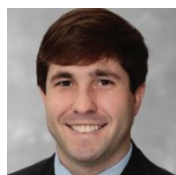
The second was the Sr. Jean factor. Ninety-eight years old (at the time) with a high basketball IQ, Sr. Jean captivated fans across the country. The number of stories, articles and profiles that featured her exponentially increased the exposure we received as an institution. According to the NCAA, her individual breakout media session at the Final Four was the single biggest event of its kind for a coach/player/run in the history of the tournament. Ultimately, interest in her took on a life of its own and she literally became her own brand. With nearly 18,000 units sold, Sr. Jean's is the "best best-selling sport related bobblehead of all time," according to the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum.

Though impossible to replicate, our plan moving forward is to capitalize on the affinity and notoriety that the 2018 Final Four provided by continuing to invest in our programs and position ourselves to be a regular fixture in college basketball postseason play.

# ICLACORNER



@ICLALicensing



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## The Process of Being Strategic

Shortly after arriving at The University of Alabama, we were given the direction to create a five-year master plan for our trademark licensing program. But who were we at Alabama? Where do we want to be with our licensing program? How do we get there over the next five years? Through many conversations, we identified customer service, education, relationships, and maximizing resources as key characteristics that would be the ethos of our program. Next, we settled on a structure of goals, objectives, strategies and tactics that would outline our plan. Below are some questions we used to help guide our discussion and decision-making on what we would strategically write into our plan.

1. What are our goals for our licensing program?

2. What are our unique objectives that will help us achieve these goals?

3. What strategies can we use to satisfy the objectives?

4. What are the tactics we are going to use to make the strategies a success?

To be strategic, you must take the time to cast a long-term vision for success. Obviously, this raises a lot of questions like, when is the right time? How do you manage short-term responsibilities with long-term planning? What are the priorities that will best maximize your available resources? At some level, we all have a unique set of opportunities that can assist the overall growth and development of our institution, if we take advantage of them.

As we moved forward with the contents of our master plan, our mantra was to do the core things well. Once we felt established with our core, then we can begin to add more on top. Over the first three years we learned a lot about our program. We built trust with our administration and licensing agent by following through on our plan year over year, and we were able to point back to specific aspects of our plan that led to successful outcomes. Going into year four, we decided to completely refresh our strategy into a new three-year plan, and now that plan has filtered into everything we do.

As you know, licensing by its very nature can have a long lead-time to bring plans to fruition. Each year our goal is to learn more. We want to know when things happen so that we can get an earlier start on future brainstorming and planning. We built a 365-day calendar to help us track what we have been doing and the things we hope to add in the future. We have developed deep relationships with our great licensing partners and agent who are like-minded with us to think ahead, build mutually beneficial plans, and maximize each opportunity.

If you have another perspective on this from your institution, we would love to hear from you. If you have been looking for a few steps to kickstart a new plan for your program, there is no time better than the present. How can you get started?

1. Block off time for uninterrupted thinking/planning
2. Review all the things you do
3. List the things you need to do
4. Brainstorm how you can do them better
5. Obtain feedback from administration, peers and partners
6. Start building a plan with a calendar for direction