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Located in the Annex of the Memorial Athletic and Convocation Center at Kent State University (KSU) is an academic oasis for the Golden Flashes student-athletes. The 5,000-square-foot George L. Jenkins Student-Athlete Services Center has been assisting those who walked through its doors since 2017. Thanks to George Jenkins, the generosity of other donors, and the ongoing commitment by the university and athletics to fundraising, the Center has helped, and will continue to help members of the athletics community.

The Jenkins Center provides student-athletes with resources and dedicated specialists to assist with their academic success, including physical spaces for study, computers, and AV equipment for academic meetings as well as tutors and counselors. To adapt and meet the

changing needs of current and future student-athletes, as well as replacing outdated resources, a tactical approach to fundraising needed to be developed.

Every year Kent State athletics participates in an annual tradition known as Giving Tuesday through the Office of Philanthropy. The month-long, university-wide event during November secures gifts from the Kent State community for team enhancement funds, and other support areas such as the Jenkins Center. This strategic campaign helps further these gifts through different incentives, matches and competitions. Student-athletes, coaches, staff, and supportive individuals are encouraged to become fundraisers on the Giving Tuesday webpage, set a dollar goal and share on social media, reaching friends and family as potential donors on a more personal level. Before Giving Tuesday launches every year, Maggie McKendry, associate athletics director, athletic philanthropy / senior director of philanthropy, and her staff of The Golden Flashes Club, the philanthropic branch supporting Kent State athletics, meet with student-athletes educating them on the importance of philanthropy to raise

money to enhance their experience here and to leave a legacy for future student-athletes. Along with goal of raising money for immediate needs, another objective is familiarizing current student-athletes with the fundraising process that supports so much of their experience.

Last November under McKendry's leadership, The Golden Flashes Club helped raise more than \$293,000 on Giving Tuesday and more than \$1.485 million since 2019. Graduating student-athletes to be boldly prepared for life after sport is ingrained in Kent State's mission. Appreciating and emphasizing the role of academic fundraising to achieve the needs of both current and future student-athletes is also part of Kent State's culture. George L. Jenkins Student-Athlete Services Center is a beacon of success on how philanthropy can create a brighter future for Kent State's Flash Family. To view Kent State's Athletic Academic Enhancement Fund website, visit kentstatesports.com/SupportJenkinsCenter.



Kyne Sheehy

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I began my outbound sales career in the NBA. Back then, we had limited technology to help us make sales. We kept our notes in the antiquated ticket system, we called people off a spreadsheet of names and numbers, we had limited information on our targets we were calling to try to sell.

Fast forward to 2023; it's amazing to see the technological advancements that have helped propel not only the sports industry, but specifically collegiate athletics. At a time when the landscape is changing, it's imperative that we use technology to help us work smarter and help drive decisions.

Having the data and analytics at your fingertips through dashboard reporting is essential. You

have to know your numbers, and now you can have a dashboard to show where you rank on the scoreboard at any time.

Whether the rep or manager, dashboards can be very impactful tools towards productivity. At Notre Dame, we include our survey feedback on contacts within our CRM allowing our team to be smarter on retention calls. It may include a score of likelihood to renew and other stats to utilize. Scoring leads with numerical values including the professional information they've submitted to you and how they've engaged with your website/brand across the internet will help dictate the strategy for the approach and conversation.

Tools to help you communicate better can be vital to success. There are texting platforms that integrate into your CRM and allow you to have so many different types of messages. Response rates tend to be encouraging and allow reps to meet our fans where they want to be met. Plugins for different tools can be helpful whether it's for email, real estate figures, etc., and can increase overall productivity. Other cool resources are 3D seat viewers and AI technology, which can allow you to better prepare for conversations in addition to helping the customer visualize their seats from the phone.

AI can help you with sales scripts, prompts, or even text/email content. It's still important to personalize and fact check, but it can help drive thinking.

From a fan experience standpoint, there are technological improvements that continue to allow us to better serve our fans. Some examples can be items like pedestal scanners, which can take the scanning focus off ushers and allow them to focus on the service of our guests. Complimentary wireless charging stations or even opportunities to rent a battery charger are becoming more frequent. I saw recently that the new Intuit Dome (Clippers' future home) will have power (USB connections) tied to every seat, and I think that's pretty innovative for our industry.

Ultimately, being successful comes down to the people who utilize the process and execute it consistently. The tools mentioned above can only help contribute to your overall success. Nothing will replace the human factor and at the end of the day we are still the only ones who can guarantee our success. By always showing up and putting forth the best daily effort, you'll see some pretty great results.