



PARTNERSHIP ABSTRACT

Opportunity:

Making the most of a significant football victory/campus event that captured the attention of alumni and supporters from around the world for fundraising purposes.

Partnership:

A new, viral, grassroots fundraising channel was launched by Ole Miss using ScaleFunder's crowdfunding platform.

Results:

In less than 100 hours, Ole Miss athletics raised over \$100,000 from more than 840 donors (an average gift of \$120)—well above the \$75,000 goal needed to cover unanticipated expenses related to the football victory.

IN THEIR WORDS...

“The tool was in place, and the ‘cause’ was really a perfect storm. It is my hope that this will be a catalyst for future initiatives within the university—for both academic and athletic programs. This was possible because of Wendell Weakley, president and CEO of the UM Foundation, who provided the support and vision for more cause-driven fundraising in higher education.”

SUZANNE THIGPEN
Director of Annual Giving | University of Mississippi

ScaleFunder Case Study

Ole Miss and Ruffalo Noel Levitz



Opportunity

On Saturday, October 4, 2014, the University of Mississippi football team defeated the University of Alabama, 23-17, to give the Rebels victories in their opening five games of the season for the first time since 1962.

Following the game, many fans in the sellout crowd went onto the playing field and tore down the stadium's goalposts in celebration of the win. These acts resulted in \$75,000 in unanticipated expenses to Ole Miss Athletics.

That night, just a few hours after the victory, Athletics Director, Ross Bjork, tweeted a photo of the celebratory crowd with a lighthearted message encouraging everyone in the photo to help cover the expenses.

What started out as a fun tweet on a Saturday night became an incredibly successful crowdfunding campaign and generated significant dollars and donors as well as immeasurable positive media exposure over the next 100 hours!

Partnership

In the summer of 2014, the University of Mississippi became the latest institution to partner with ScaleFunder, a Ruffalo Noel Levitz crowdfunding platform, in order to attract gifts and donors from all segments of donors and prospects.

By the afternoon of October 4, the Ole Miss crowdfunding site (institutionally as well as within athletics) was not only in full operation, but gave them an immediate opportunity to leverage the technology and overall popularity of crowdfunding.

Because Ole Miss already had established the partnership with Ruffalo Noel Levitz and ScaleFunder, they were prepared and able to utilize a combination of social media posts along with a video message from their athletic director to quickly create a crowdfunding page for the “October 4, 2014, Victory Celebration Fund.”

Results

By the afternoon of October 8, less than 100 hours after the conclusion of the game, Ole Miss had generated more than \$100,000 from more than 840 donors—an average gift of approximately \$120 per donor, and well above the \$75,000 in unanticipated expenses directly resulting from the on-field victory.

“We were going to pay all of this no matter what, and it was worth it,” Bjork told ESPN.com regarding the \$75,000 in expenses. “This wasn’t all about the money. It was about the connection and the cause and tapping into the emotion from the big win.”

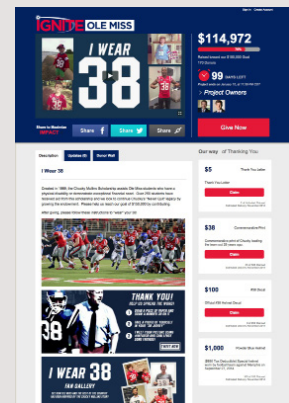
Ole Miss leveraged the “Victory Celebration Fund” campaign through popular gamification enticements easily created (and highly recommended!) through ScaleFunder, a Ruffalo Noel Levitz crowdfunding platform. These included everything from a thank you letter from the athletic director, to a commemorative print, to actual pieces of the goalposts (\$500 and above). In fact, the goalpost levels proved to be so popular, Ole Miss had to convert some of their larger pieces into smaller pieces to meet demand!

About the Ruffalo Noel Levitz ScaleFunder platform

ScaleFunder makes it easy to leverage online fundraising efforts to engage with supporters, motivate prospects, and acquire new donors. ScaleFunder features a custom branded platform for your organization; enables supporters to see and feel the impact of their gift; dynamically showcase projects and the impact of giving; an easy ability for donors to share the campaign through social media; and the inclusion of tiered giving impact levels. All of this is integrated with your payment processing system to deliver funds within your existing business process framework.

“I WEAR 38” CAMPAIGN

On the afternoon of October 8, Ole Miss Athletics launched a previously planned crowdfunding campaign entitled “I Wear 38,” benefitting an endowed scholarship fund created in 1989 and named after a former player (Chucky Mullins) who wore uniform #38 with the Rebels, but was sadly paralyzed making a tackle during a 1989 game and passed away less than two years later.



Again, leveraging the ScaleFunder platform for the “I Wear 38” campaign, Ole Miss incorporated video and other social media opportunities to generate more than \$113,000 from over 150 donors in a matter of hours!

All of the current Ole Miss Athletics campaigns can be viewed on their main giving page at ignite.olemiss.edu

To learn more and to schedule an online demo with ScaleFunder, visit www.scalefunder.com.