



New rules, new tactics:

A guide to targeting sports fans in
the cookieless future



Name: Patrick Smith
Age: 22
Location: Ames
Team: Iowa State
Last log-in: 22:00



Name: Jacob Rice
Age: 28
Location: Ames
Team: Iowa State
Last log-in: 10:00



Introduction

The depreciating value of third-party cookie data means marketers must start thinking seriously about the implications for their audience targeting strategies. From H2 2024, Google will completely phase out this data while browsers like Safari and Firefox already limit cookie tracking, and Apple's IOS 14.4 update brings restrictions of its own.

Yet **60% of marketers** are yet to land on an audience data strategy to adjust to these changes, according to research by LiveRamp and Censuswide. So, where do you begin? And what does this mean for targeting an already challenging audience segment: sports fans?

The reality is that with quality and availability of audience data declining, brands who are serious about sports need to start building audiences of their own.

And whether you are a sponsor or not, gamification is a tried and trusted way to capture audience data and engage sports audiences at the same time. After all, fans are largely happy to give consent for use of their personal data as they get a fun, interactive and competitive experience in return.

This "zero-party data" gives marketers ownable demographic, psychographic and behavioral insights to enable personalized marketing and deeper buyer understanding – with zero reliance on third-party cookies.

In this report, we explain why smart brands are already getting ahead of the cookie-phaseout with gamification, and the actionable steps you can take to build a database today that will power your fan marketing of tomorrow.

Matt Ryter

VP Sales -North America
Genius Sports



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01

Cookies: A long goodbye

What's changing?

For the best part of 20 years, advertisers have relied on cookie data for online audience targeting. But that's all about to change.

Google's plan to phase out third-party cookie data, also known as the Privacy Sandbox, is no secret. But that does not stop its impact being a major concern for brands across the world. The quality, quantity and availability of easily accessible audience data is about to drop off a cliff.

Currently, third-party targeting audiences are built via browser and device-based tracking. The size of these audiences will soon become too insufficient for media buying at scale.

What data privacy measures affect audience targeting?

- Desktop browsers such as Safari and Firefox now limit cookie tracking.
- The iOS 14.4 update by Apple restricts Google and Meta from tracking users.
- Google expects to begin the third-party cookie phaseout by H2 2024.

Did you know?

86%

of users say data privacy is a growing concern for them (KPMG)

What does this mean for marketers?



Tightening data privacy restrictions will stop deterministic user identifiers like name, address and email address from being captured in third-party audience datasets.

If brands, agencies and DSPs don't own this data themselves, their targeting and personalization capabilities across channels like programmatic will fall sharply.

Campaign measurement will become trickier too, advertising measurement platforms will no longer be able to track user behavior as effectively.

Did you
KNOW?

60%

of marketers say reaching audiences at scale without cookies is their biggest professional concern (Live Ramp / Censuswide)



02

Why you need
zero-party
data

The audience is all yours

By collecting zero-party audience data, brands get an ownable database of sports fans to serve personalized marketing to, across channels like CRM, website and display and social retargeting.

Meanwhile, data connectivity platforms like LiveRamp now enable brands to break down walled gardens by connecting and activating first-party audiences across DSPs for contextual digital targeting – with **no need for third-party cookies.**

What is zero-party audience data?

- Zero-party data is personal information that users are happy to share with a brand.
- They're happy to give you their personal details for marketing purposes.
- This is because they're getting a fair value exchange or brand experience in return.

Did you
KNOW?

71%

of consumers are inclined to share personal data (Octane AI)

Unlock personalization power



Know your buyers

Better understand and segment your existing customers to drive sales, loyalty and marketing performance.

1:1 marketing

Personalize your messaging and ad creative across owned channels including CRM emails, SMS and in-app notifications – plus run programmatic retargeting.

Tailored content

Create website and app content relevant to what customers want, from trends across locations and popular sports leagues.

Authentic fan connections

Keep sports audiences spending with your brand by running marketing campaigns that relate to each customer's favorite sports league or team.

Discover new audiences

Build look-a-like audiences by understanding exactly who your buyers are – all the way down to age, location, spending history and other identifiers.

Did you
know?

80%

of consumers are willing to share personal data with a brand to receive something in exchange (Yotpo)

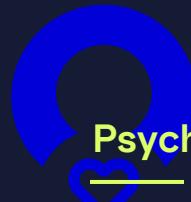
What data do you need?



Demographic

Information about specific audience characteristics such as:

- ||| Age
- ||| Gender
- ||| Income
- ||| Job



Psychographic

The most valuable data category for brands, this data enables deep personalization and is not usually obtained via third-party cookies:

- ||| User interests
- ||| Personality traits
- ||| Favorite player
- ||| Favorite team



Behavioral

Engagement data to enable segmentation, retargeting and optimized on-platform experiences:

- ||| Last login time
- ||| Last purchase
- ||| Dwell time



Geographic

Location data for segmentation, localization and geo-targeting such as:

- ||| Country
- ||| Zip codes
- ||| Proximity to retail venues
- ||| Time zone

03

Build a

future-proof

audience data

strategy

Tried gamification yet?

60% of marketers are still developing first-party data strategies for the cookieless world.
(LiveRamp / Censuswide)

8% of marketers have no first-party data strategy at all.
(LiveRamp / Censuswide)

When it comes to sports audiences, gamification is one of the best data capture strategies available to brands.

Today's sports fans expect fun, interactive and personalized digital experiences and gamification ticks every box.

What is gamification?

Gamification is adding elements of game playing and competition, for example points scoring and predictions, to encourage engagement with a brand, product or service, typically used as an online marketing technique.

Did you
KNOW?

50%

of consumers engage in gamification to unlock discounts and rewards
(Shopper Preference Report)



The gamification value exchange

Value to a fan

- ▮ Compete against friends
- ▮ Social competition
- ▮ Accomplishment
- ▮ Deeper sports engagement
- ▮ Test sports knowledge

Value to a brand

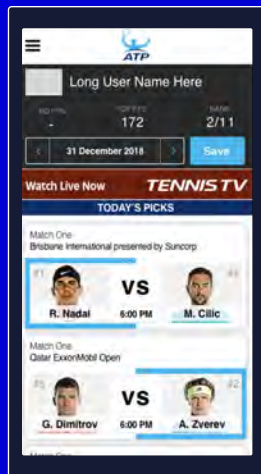
- ▮ Audience building
- ▮ User contact data
- ▮ Psychographic data
- ▮ Sporting interests
- ▮ Brand affiliation with sport

Types of gamification products

Fantasy

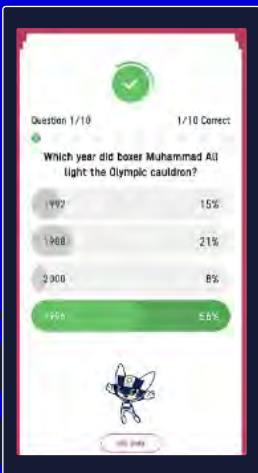


Pick 'em

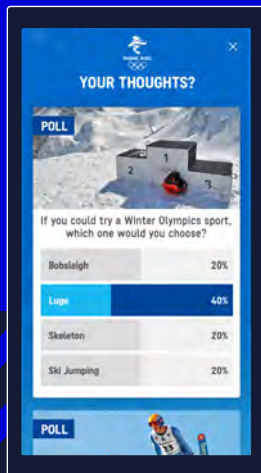


Brands can add gamification to their website or app, build a microsite or even integrate with in-store experiences.

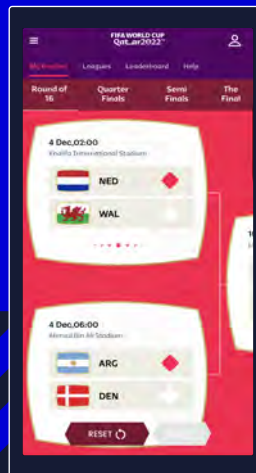
Trivia



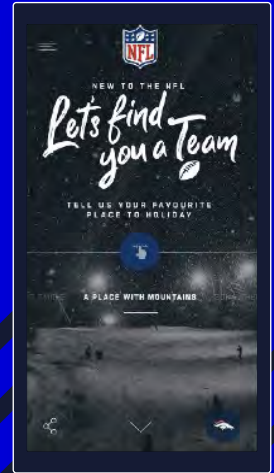
Polls



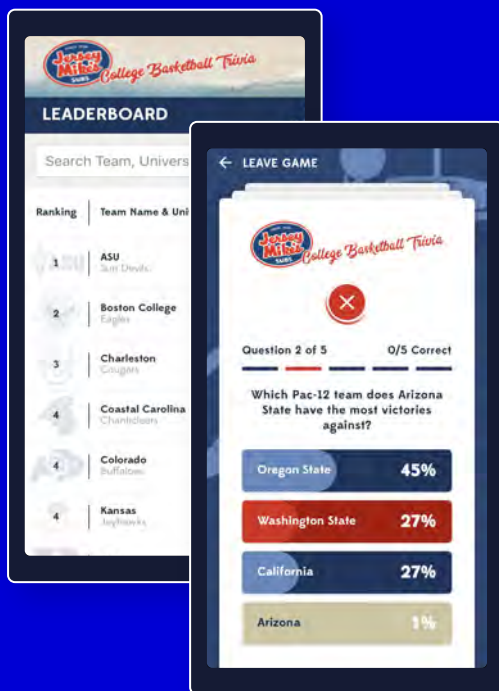
Bracket challenge



Personality quiz



Jersey Mike's converts 150k basketball fans



An official sponsor of 45 NCAA schools, Jersey Mike's Subs wanted to maximize IP rights, capture audience data and increase sales across its thousands of stores.

To do this, the U.S. sandwich franchise launched the College Basketball Trivia Challenge, a series of sports quizzes, that tested fans' knowledge on each of the schools it sponsors.

It's available to play via the Jersey Mike's mobile app and integrates the brand's "MyMike" loyalty scheme.

150k+

fans registered to play in one season.

300k+

total quizzes completed in one season.

About Genius Sports


Genius Sports is the world's leading sports data technology company.

We help over 800 sports leagues, teams, brands, sponsors and agencies around the world to engage and activate sports audiences.

Our data-driven fan engagement solutions power authentic, real-time digital activations including gamification, targeted media buying, dynamic omni-channel content, personalized CRM and much more.

Brands and sponsors we've helped grow





Ready to
supercharge
your zero-party
data strategy?

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