

MLSE Eliminates Booking Fees and Shares Data Across 5 Properties



4,000

COVERS PER NIGHT

11X

REPEAT VISITS

\$48,000

ANNUAL BOOKING FEE SAVINGS

Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment (MLSE)—parent company of the Toronto Maple Leafs and the 2019 NBA champion Raptors—is one of North America's preeminent entertainment brands. At the Scotia bank Arena in downtown Toronto, MLSE's operations staff is used to seating more than 4,000 covers per night across its five on-premises restaurants. Combined with nearly 20,000 fans in the stadium, the operational demands are intense: from pre-concert dinner rushes to three-turn nights during the frenzy of the NBA Finals

Paying for Covers but Unable to Share Data Across Properties

In the summer of 2018, Al Rajan was the General Manager at e11even, one of Scotia bank Arena's fine dining concepts. Now MLSE's Director of Restaurant Operations, Rajan looks back on the reservation system he had in place at the time. "We were paying between \$2,300 and \$2,400 a month at e11even alone" for covers, he says. Since many guests were searching for the restaurant by name and being routed to the partner's booking link, Rajan felt the expense of the paid reservation system outweighed its benefit. "Paying for guests who were already seeking us out wasn't very intelligent or intuitive."

Making matters worse, Rajan discovered that the partner was buying search ads using his branded keywords, essentially competing with him for diners who would have just as readily booked direct. Data sharing was also a problem. With five concepts across a sprawling complex, MLSE needed to be able to build global guest profiles. "We couldn't share information between properties," Rajan says. "There was one basic feature that let you see that other properties had that guest, but you couldn't see any details." Frustrated with siloed information and unnecessary booking fees, Rajan lobbied to find another reservation platform

Referred to a Better Venue Management System

MLSE approached another prominent North American arena group and asked if they could refer a new reservation and venue management partner.

The team was looking for a user-friendly system "that could power an arena" with the ability to:

- Collect and share guest data across 5 properties
- Integrate with the Symphony POS system
- Offer guests a simple, on-brand booking experience

By October 2018, SevenRooms was live across Scotia bank Arena's restaurants.

Being able to share guest data across properties helps us treat guests completely different than before. We do 4,000 covers a night. To be able to see who's who and get them back in the door has had a big impact on our service.

Al Rajan

Director of Restaurant Operations



Same Covers, No Fees

MLSE immediately replaced the previous booking system with SevenRooms' white-labeled booking widgets. These allowed MLSE to control their direct booking experience across Google, social media, and other channels. In the following year, MLSE served more than 48,000 guests booked through SevenRooms alone— each of which would have previously cost a dollar or more.

The team also gained critical insight into their marketing campaign performance. "Now that the booking widgets let us track where our reservations come from, we can measure exactly how well our campaigns are doing," says Rajan. "Not only can I tell you how many people have made reservations through a specific marketing campaign, but also what those people spent. That's very valuable information."

Using Data to Tailor Experiences and Marketing

With SevenRooms, MLSE finally has the data-sharing they need to deliver consistent service across all their properties, and to properly recognize and engage their VIP guests. "Being able to share guest data lets us tailor experiences. When we see a guest at Real Sports who frequently comes into the Platinum Club, we can walk right up to their table and offer them a glass of their favorite wine. You speak to guests in a completely different way when you connect their spend history across properties."

The new data has also transformed MLSE's marketing. "We're being way more tactical with our marketing now. We're not doing 'spray-and-pray' anymore. Anybody who leaves a five-star review, we send a thank-you email that looks like a very personal message coming from the GM. "The click-through rate on those emails is huge," says Rajan of an 83% open rate and 25% click through rate. "I've never seen numbers like that before." The emails are driving repeat business. e11even's customer marketing campaigns have historically driven 0.5% of targeted guests to visit again. The present campaign is driving 6.25%, an 11.5x increase in repeat visits among guests targeted in the email campaign.

Automated, Intelligent Operations

MLSE's success with SevenRooms has led them to adopt its functionality in more Scotiabank Arena concepts. Clubs that have never attempted email marketing before are beginning to use SevenRooms' marketing features; members-only clubs are starting to be bookable for the first time thanks to SevenRooms' sophisticated booking capabilities. "As soon as an arena event gets announced, we'll set the rules that let the right people access the right inventory through our booking channels. We just set it and forget it."

By implementing SevenRooms across busy, high-end venues, MLSE has gained a holistic view of their operations while improving the booking journey and driving new revenue. What started as an effort to own their reservation channels has turned into a wholesale reimagining of how operations software can help the MLSE team engage their world-class guests.



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