



FANTASY SPORTS SCORES REAL-WORLD VICTORY

In A Must-Win Battle, Phone2Action Helps The Fantasy Sports Industry Turn Player Passion Into Statehouse Success

The Challenge: Fantasy Sports In Government Crosshairs

In 2015, fantasy sports companies FanDuel and DraftKings were ascendent—and their commercials were impossible to miss. But in November of that year, New York’s Attorney General equated fantasy sports with illegal gambling. As the booming industry was thrown into crisis, the trade association Fantasy Sports For All (FSFA) pushed back against the existential threat.

The group’s goal was to convince lawmakers to make fantasy sports unambiguously legal with new legislation. The existing laws, which were written well before the rise of digital fantasy sports, were in need of an update.

“New York fantasy sports fans rallied—with more than 100,000 emails and thousands of phone calls to legislators – and legislators heard them and responded.”

Nigel Eccles, FanDuel CEO and Co-Founder

The Strategy: Activate the Grassroots

Fantasy Sports For All’s strategy was a coordinated grassroots campaign in which players would talk directly to their elected officials and advocate for their beloved pastime. Executive Director Robert Sechrist, who came to the role with deep experience in state-level politics, determined that Phone2Action was the right tool for the job.

“We looked at it and thought it was perfect for what we needed it to do,” he says, “and it was easy.”

In a complicated campaign with so many moving pieces, Phone2Action brings together the ability to contact lawmakers through phone calls, text messages, and other communication. “Phone2Action allows you to make different types of legislator contacts from one place—it’s great for advocacy,” says Sechrist. “It makes our job easier because we’re just driving people to one page.”

Turning Players Into Advocates

The process of grassroots activation began when FanDuel and DraftKings activated their own customers by encouraging them to visit the Fantasy Sports For All website. The association captured their information and then used Phone2Action to turn fantasy players into policy advocates.

“We would segment them into different groups of activists,” says Sechrist. “If somebody sent one email message, we would try to get them to send more email messages or take a different action, like posting on social media.”

FSFA soon cultivated a universe of highly engaged individuals. “Those were the people that we would approach about writing an op-ed, doing a letter to the editor, or making a phone call recruiting people.”

Indeed, the data showed that fantasy sports is an issue that arouses deep passion in its fan base. “There were people who came to the website and literally sent the form five times,” says Sechrist.

“There were people that opened the email every time, clicked it, and took an action every time, and asked their friends to do it too.”

Sechrist says that FSFA made use of Phone2Action’s text capabilities as well. “Early in the morning when the bill was being heard, we texted out a phone number and asked people to call. We saw a tremendous amount of success with every text blast. We measured a 30% conversion rate.

We pushed hundreds of calls with a text blast again using the Phone2Action system.”

Strategic Email Releases

All this grassroots activity got the attention of lawmakers, and was even referenced by New York Assemblyman John Ceretto during discussion on the chamber floor:

“... we received in my office numerous e-mails and phone calls on passage of this legislation, fantasy sports ... in fact, as one of the constituents said this morning as she called my office, she said, ‘Ceretto, don’t come home without passing this legislation.’”¹

Sechrist attributes that activity directly to FSFA’s work with Phone2Action. “There’s nobody else doing that,” he says.

Indeed, since email volume is a way that lawmakers measure passion from their constituents, it was important for FSFA to manage the email flow to each lawmaker.

“You can time the release of your emails based on events on the ground. So we would literally hear in real time from our lobbyists, ‘Hey, so-and-so says he’s not getting enough email,’ and then we’d unleash 100 emails that day.’ And then they would say, ‘Okay, I get it.’”

“Those kinds of delivery options are not available with the competitors of Phone2Action,” says Sechrist, “so that’s another reason we like working with their team.”



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A Winning Result: Fantasy Sports Fans Rallied

In June 2016, the New York legislature passed a bill making fantasy sports explicitly legal. The Governor signed the measure into law in August. And the companies involved credited grassroots activity with the win.

“I know that there were hundreds of thousands of contacts made through either email, social media, telephone calls, messages, all of those things. That’s really the difference. If you look at why this got done, and you want to point to one reason ... it’s that. The fans.”

“... I spoke to many [New York State] legislators, and every single one of them said ‘I have never received so much of an outpouring for any issue.’”

- DraftKings CEO Jason Robins, TechCrunch Interview

“New York fantasy sports fans rallied—with more than 100,000 emails and thousands of phone calls to legislators—and legislators heard them and responded.”

- Nigel Eccles, FanDuel CEO and Co-Founder, press release

The Work Ahead

While the New York victory was critical, Fantasy Sports For All has plenty of work ahead of it. In fact, it’s waging campaigns with Phone2Action across the country. To date, almost 250,000 advocates of daily fantasy sports have made more than 591,000 connections to legislators.

Fantasy sports players bring passion to their pastime. Phone2Action helps FSFA channel that passion into legislative victories.

Ready to set up your own Phone2Action grassroots advocacy campaign in less than 30 minutes?

Schedule a demo today: phone2action.com/schedule-demo or call 202-888-7439.

¹ New York State Assembly Transcript, June 17, 2016, Page 171