

LinkedIn for Nonprofits

Positive Coaching Alliance finds new supporters, board members and donors with LinkedIn Sales Navigator



Location: Mountain View, CA
No. of Employees: 11-50 | Industry: Nonprofits

Product:

LinkedIn Sales Navigator



“We’ve had a ton of success stories with [Sales Navigator] that keep us going. We just hired a major gift officer and got her up to speed on how we use it, and she said, ‘This is gold. This is amazing.’”

Jason Sacks
Chief Development Officer
Positive Coaching Alliance



Challenge

- Positive Coaching Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating positive, character-building youth sports programs. They provide research-based training and resources for coaches, parents, athletes and leaders. In the past 20 years, PCA has become a nationwide organization with programming in all 50 states. They have helped over 20 million young people benefit from a positive, inclusive sports culture that develops social and emotional skills, teaches life lessons, and prepares them for adulthood.
- PCA relies on funding from individual and corporate donors to subsidize their work, particularly in underserved communities. Recruiting board members and seeking out potential donors was a manual, labor-intensive process that relied heavily on existing contacts and public directories. “It wasn’t the most efficient thing,” says Jason Sacks, Chief Development Officer. “It was a lot of research, looking at different company websites, reading people’s bios to see if they might have played sports in college, so might be interested in our work, for example.”
- In order to continue scaling up their organization, PCA needed a better way to find and connect with potential board members and donors. They needed to identify professionals in positions of authority at their organizations, interested in youth sports and/or open to donating to the organization or serving on a local PCA board.



Solution

- PCA began using LinkedIn Sales Navigator to search for the people who most closely matched their donor profiles, refining their keywords over time to get the right match.
- “We discovered that if somebody has played college sports, they would write that in their bio or somewhere on their LinkedIn profile,” says Sacks. Using Sales Navigator’s targeting capabilities, PCA could hone in on the most likely candidates. “For example, a Vice President at a consulting firm, who played basketball in college and now says she’s a youth sports coach, that’s someone our message is likely going to resonate with.”



Results

- With Sales Navigator, PCA has made connections and developed long-term relationships. Sacks says the number of quality candidates they’ve continually discovered has been invigorating. As one example, they found a professional in the finance industry who played college football, but was unfamiliar with PCA. Within months of a relationship being formed, he made a substantial, game-changing gift.
- As another example, PCA used LinkedIn to identify and recruit a key new leader for the organization. “We were recruiting for our board in New York City,” recalls Sacks, “And we found [with Sales Navigator] someone who was a swimmer in college but had never heard of PCA. We reached out to him, he joined the board, became the Chair of our local board, and today he’s the Vice Chair of our national board. At the launch of our New York City chapter, he said, ‘I don’t know how you guys found me, but I’m so glad you did.’ And I’ve heard that exact same statement multiple times: ‘I don’t know how you found me but I’m glad you did.’ And how we found them is LinkedIn.”

10%

conversion rate when nurturing contacts, resulting in engaged board or leadership council members.

At least

50%

of conversations in Sales Navigator resulted in engagement with PCA from the prospect

50k

potential donors identified and researched using LinkedIn Sales Navigator

A multi-threaded approach to build relationships

- PCA augments their Sales Navigator efforts with targeted advertising on LinkedIn, as well as organic posts on their page. “We’re actually running promoted ads targeting different people, which has been super helpful,” says Sacks. “And even when we just post something on our page, we can look and see who interacted with the post, who liked it, and then we can follow up with the ones who might be a good match.”
- The team also follows up when the organization is tagged in a post. “Recently, someone who went through one of our interactive coach workshops via Zoom, and posted about it. They said it was one of the best things they’d ever gone through,” says Sacks. “And this person was a partner at a law firm, so we were able to follow up with this person to see if they were interested in learning more about how they can get involved with PCA”.

Increasing sophistication over time

- PCA has worked with LinkedIn for Nonprofits experts to achieve more on the platform. From refining search terms to deepening relationships, PCA has worked to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. Even with the progress they’ve made, Sacks can see even more potential to be realized. “I think on a scale of one to ten, we’re probably a six or seven on how we use Sales Navigator,” he says. “And at that level, we’ve been really productive. So if we can continue to get better, I think it will be even more useful for us.”

Building a network with a mission

Expanding their network of board members, volunteers and supporters is central to promoting PCA’s mission. “One of our biggest initiatives over the last year has been reaching out to coaches and programs in underserved communities. We know the importance of making sure all kids and all communities have a positive, inclusive sports experience, so being able to fully subsidize the cost of our program is extremely important. And that comes from unrestricted giving, that comes from more donors, more board members, more people fully engaged,” says Sacks.

“You know, the more people we get involved, the more connections we can bring to the table. Not everybody’s going to be a significant donor, but they could be an introduction to a new school, or a new corporate sponsor, or another funder.”



“Being able to engage and increase the number of people that are giving to the PCA, and become a part of the PCA family in some way, is so important. And LinkedIn has been one of the most efficient ways to grow that.”

Jason Sacks
Chief Development Officer
Positive Coaching Alliance