



**Nave
Strategies**

CASE STUDY

Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony Orchestra

Transforming patron data into a scalable revenue growth engine

Strategy. Revenue. Systems. Built for small teams.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Data organization

Subscription program design

Campaign architecture

Venue rescaling

Inventory management

Change management

Copywriting

The Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony Orchestra (wcfssymphony) is a Group 7 professional orchestra serving the Cedar Valley region of Iowa. Like many performing arts organizations, wcfssymphony had accumulated years of patron data — but not in a format that allowed for targeted, strategic marketing. The organization understood opportunity was being left on the table but lacked the internal bandwidth to act on it.



"J.L. helped us overcome a major marketing hurdle. **We had the vision but lacked capacity.** J.L. organized our data, crafted a strong marketing strategy, and aligned our season subscription campaign with industry best practices—**making a big impact with limited resources.**"

Jordan Bancroft
Executive Director, Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony

OUR APPROACH

Nave Strategies provided end-to-end strategic and operational support — not just recommendations, but execution. Our team handled database development, copywriting, list segmentation, and production coordination alongside the strategic work.

Data & Database Development

Organized patron data into a clean, segmented database — enabling targeted outreach for the first time and creating a durable organizational asset.

Subscription Program Redesign

- Classical Package (4 concerts) — 15% discount
- Classical + Pops Package (6 concerts) — 20% discount
- Choose Your Own Flex Package — 10% discount
- Early bird incentive — additional 5% in first four weeks

Venue Rescaling & Inventory Management

- Added a \$20 entry-level price point
- Reduced third-tier capacity from 143 to 53 seats
- Implemented staged inventory release tied to demand

Campaign Architecture & Copywriting

- Two structured waves: early bird and standard
- Three targeted emails per wave, segmented by audience
- Personalized direct mail with custom cover letters and order forms

SUBSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN RESULTS

The 2025–26 subscription campaign — the first under the redesigned program — produced gains across every metric compared to the prior year baseline.

+42%

Subscriber households

59 → 84

+33%

Packages sold

111 → 148

+45%

Subscription revenue

\$21,935 → \$31,791

+75%

Total admissions

444 → 776

The admissions growth tells the deepest part of the story: structured packages with meaningful discounts gave patrons a compelling reason to commit to the full season. The Classical + Pops package alone represented 65% of packages sold and 75% of subscription revenue. Renewal rates were strong, with new households acquired from a targeted prospect list of lapsed subscribers and multi-concert single ticket buyers.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

The wcfsymphony results are striking — but the context makes them more useful than they first appear.

Before this engagement, wcfsymphony already had subscribers. Patrons who attended four or more concerts in a season were counted as subscribers, and many of them returned year after year to keep their seats. By that measure, the program was working. What it wasn't doing was giving patrons a financial reason to commit early, a clearly defined package to choose from, or a discount that made subscribing feel like a better decision than buying single tickets.

In other words, wcfsymphony was generating loyalty without rewarding it.

The redesigned program changed that. Classical subscribers received a 15% discount. Classical + Pops subscribers received 20%. The Choose Your Own Flex Package offered 10%. For patrons who were already planning to attend multiple concerts, the math became obvious: subscribing cost less and guaranteed their seats.

The results — +42% subscriber households, +45% subscription revenue, +75% total admissions — happened despite introducing discounts for the first time, not because of some other advantage. The organization didn't have a larger marketing budget or a more sophisticated campaign than its peers. What it had was a product worth buying and the data infrastructure to reach the right people with the right message.

63x

*return on campaign
spend*

The total campaign cost — renewals and new acquisition combined — was \$500.

The redesigned program cost \$500 and outperformed it by \$9,856 — while also growing the subscriber base by 42% and total admissions by 75%.

Ready to put your patron data to work?

Let's talk about what's possible for your organization —
no prep needed, just bring your challenges.

Schedule a free call



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