In ticket sales, operations, community relations and beyond, School of Tourism and Hospitality Management alums have found slam-dunk careers with the Philadelphia 76ers.

By Christopher A. Vito
Photography by Ryan S. Brandenberg

NET GAIN

The handset of a telephone is nestled into its cradle, setting off a party. Music plays. Employees dance. A few of them issue fist-bumps or high-fives. Others deliver chest-bumps. This is Corporate America completely standing on its head.

Just as the Philadelphia 76ers celebrate their wins on the basketball court, the folks within the team’s sales office do the same. Their jarring acknowledgement of each sale makes for an unconventional work atmosphere among the 112 sales employees, who comprise the largest ticket sales force in the National Basketball Association (NBA).

“When that music starts,” said Troy Sneed, a Sixers account executive, “you would think someone just hit the game-winning shot. It’s the greatest feeling in the world.”

Sneed, BS ’13, is among a number of School of Tourism and Hospitality Management alumni who work for the 76ers in a variety of positions and departments. Graduates of the school’s Sport and Recreation Management program have found professional homes within the NBA franchise, helping to form an industry partnership that’s been mutually beneficial.

“It’s a team-first mentality”

On the court, the Sixers are building for the future. Through detailed scouting and their selections in the NBA Draft, they hope to develop young stars around which to construct a winning team. The ticket-sales staff has employed an identical method for recruiting talent.

Sneed and Danielle Balliet, BS ’13, used an introduction to the Sixers through the team’s Night Sales initiative to find their careers. Started in 2011 by Sixers Director of Ticket Sales Matt McShea, the program welcomes college students in an internship capacity. Like the team’s full-time ticket sales staffers, candidates endure a thorough training program before jumping on the phones to develop leads for the Sixers’ sales department.