



National Football League: Scoring Big for Fans and Employees with Cloud Technology from SAP

For nearly a century, professional athletes of the National Football League (NFL) have been dazzling American fans. And modern technology plays a big role in bringing those fans closer to the game. The league now uses cloud technology from SAP to help passionate fans pick a winning fantasy football team and to make it easier for dedicated employees to manage their careers.

Executive overview

Organization

National Football League (NFL)

Headquarters

New York, New York

Industry

Sports and entertainment

Products and Services

Professional American football league composed of 32 teams

Employees

Approximately 1,000

Web Site

www.nfl.com

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

The organization's top objectives

- Support NFL business goals with innovative use of digital technology
- Make NFL.com the go-to place for the ultimate fantasy football experience
- Strengthen the talent that runs the growing NFL

The resolution

- SAP HANA® Cloud Platform integrates massive amounts of data
- SAP Lumira® Cloud platform delivers real-time player insight to avid fans
- HR solutions from SuccessFactors, an SAP company, enable all employees to track goals and objectives

The key benefits

- Increased traffic and sales on NFL.com
- Ability to provide fantasy football fans real-time player comparison data and customized recommendations
- Improved business outcomes with better alignment, visibility, and acceleration of employee goals and performance

Read more ►

TOP BENEFITS ACHIEVED

~45%

Growth of fantasy football platform since 2010

99.5%

Of employees tracking goals in the new HR system in 2013, with a 100% target for 2014

70%

Of NFL Web site accesses via mobile devices

See more metrics ►



"Most of the NFL's top priorities have a technology dependency – everything from player health and safety to fan engagement and growing our brand."

Michelle McKenna Doyle, Senior Vice President and CIO, National Football League

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Resolution

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Future plans

Technology is a game changer at the NFL

To say that fans of American football are passionate about their game is an understatement. Whether it's the loyal season ticket holder in the stadium, or the guy glued to his television set every Sunday, watching a National Football League (NFL) game is a nearly sacred ritual for millions of fans. And don't forget the estimated 33 million enthusiasts who compete against friends and coworkers in the phenomenon known as fantasy football.

Some things haven't changed very much during the NFL's 90-year history. Eleven players on offense still square off against eleven players on defense; and

these talented competitors continue to compete on the gridiron in a physical contest of strength and skill.

But increasingly, modern digital technology is playing an important role in promoting this venerable game and helping the league meet its 21st century business needs. A great example is how the NFL is maximizing the performance data it gathers from both players and employees. The league uses this data and cloud technology from SAP to support two distinct business objectives: improving the fan experience and further strengthening – what it considers – the best team of employees in professional sports.



“The best teams are the ones with the best talent, so managing talent is critical for the league office and all our business divisions.”

Michelle McKenna Doyle, Senior Vice President and CIO, National Football League

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The right game plan and solid teamwork lead to victory

One specific goal was to make NFL.com the go-to place for fantasy football. “We wanted to get our fans more involved with the league and provide them an even fuller football experience,” says Cory Mummery, senior director for producing NFL digital media. So the NFL turned to the SAP® Services organization to help them leverage its unmatched collection of player performance data to provide fantasy football fans with a personalized resource – one that could combine detailed player comparisons and user-specific recommendations based on customized settings.

The result is the Player Comparison Tool now available to fans everywhere from the NFL.com Web site. To enable this vision, the NFL chose the SAP HANA® Cloud Platform and the SAP Lumira® Cloud platform. These tools help the NFL integrate a massive amount

of data, enable real-time analytics, and then deliver that insight directly to the fan.

NFL leadership also had a clear idea of how to build the effectiveness of its back-office team. HR solutions from SuccessFactors, an SAP company, let NFL employees better manage their goals and maximize individual contributions. The talent management tools also make it easier for managers to track performance progress and highlight accomplishments.

In SAP, the NFL found the perfect teammate. “The NFL is a lot of things, but we’re not technologists,” says Brian Rolapp, executive vice president of NFL Media and president and CEO of NFL Network. “SAP had the scale and expertise to help us solve some of our fundamental technology problems.”



“In about three months, we had a robust HR system that is second to none. It is how we measure performance, how we pick the cream of the crop, and how we help our people and the league prosper.”

John Buzzeo, Vice President of Human Resources, National Football League

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Showcasing incredible performances on and off the field

Thanks to the Player Comparison Tool, developed by SAP Services, fantasy footballers have the real-time information they need to draft a truly awesome team, pick their starters, and make those critical game-day adjustments. And as Mummery explains, "Fantasy football gets our fans more attached to the league and drives other areas of our business." For example, NFL officials cite that fantasy football players consume seven times more content on NFL.com than the nonfantasy fan, increasing the value of fantasy football overall.

Cloud technology is scoring big points in HR as well. "Employees can more easily track how they're doing against their goals in both 'half-time' and annual reviews," notes Michelle McKenna Doyle, senior vice president and CIO of the NFL. "That accountability has really raised the bar in our performances."

While it's still early in the game for the NFL's new HR program, the near-term goal is to soon have 100% employee utilization across all the NFL business offices.

KEY BENEFITS

~45%

Growth of fantasy football platform since 2010

99.5%

Of employees tracking goals in new HR system in 2013, with a 100% target for 2014

<1 second

Response time on the player comparison tool, which can handle 720 requests per second

7x

More content consumed on NFL.com by fantasy football users

70%

Of NFL Web site accesses via mobile devices



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The digital future of pro football

"In the future, digital technology will be even more important in how fans follow the game, access content, and share the football experience with their friends," predicts Mummery. And SAP solutions are certain to be part of that strategy.

Doyle agrees. "I think technology will continue to evolve the entire game," adds the CIO, "providing even greater access to data for the fan."

Mobile technology is a perfect example. "We're focusing a lot of energy on expanding the fantasy football experience from the desktop to the mobile device," Mummery says. That makes a lot of sense. An estimated 70% of fans now visit the NFL Web site from a mobile device.

But rest assured football fans; some things will never change. The players will continue to dazzle us with their incredible performances on the field. The game will always be won in the trenches. And come Monday morning, we will still second-guess the coach's call to run on third down.



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