Accenture helps the Australian Rugby Union Achieve Digital Success and Fan Engagement in Mobility, Analytics and Cloud
Rugby is intensely competitive – on and off the field. As a sport, Rugby competes in one of the most challenging markets in the world, striving with three other major sports for the hearts and minds of stakeholders and fans. All four sports are fighting for a greater revenue share, and new ways to engage with their fans.

The Australian Rugby Union (ARU) has partnered with Accenture to use cutting-edge technology – including analytics, mobility and innovative cloud based customer relationship management systems to build a unique experience for its members and fans and create a vibrant commercial future for the organisation.

Business challenges
The Australian Rugby Union is the governing body of Rugby Union in Australia. Founded in 1949, it oversees eight member unions representing each state and territory; the national team, the Qantas Wallabies; and all professional and amateur aspects of the game.

The ARU has traditionally been a sporting innovator, but as the landscape has shifted, challenges in engaging fans, driving participation and capturing opportunities from digital content have emerged.

The ARU looked to technology to deal with these challenges. The organisation saw the potential to engage fans by harnessing the power of customer relationship management, analytics and mobile devices to bring them closer to the action. By using smart technology, the ARU can better understand its fan and member base, and develop member-centric business models.

To maximise its use of technology, the ARU named Accenture its official technology consulting partner in June 2012. Under this partnership, Accenture is helping the ARU implement innovative mobile and online applications, performance analytics, and customer relationship management (CRM) systems.

How Accenture helped
Accenture has helped the ARU define how cloud, mobility and analytics can help to improve relationship management and personalise online experiences.

British & Irish Lions Tour mobile app
Once every 12 years, a select team of top Rugby talent from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales known as the British & Irish Lions, tours Australia. This major event captures the attention of Rugby fanatics across the globe.

Ahead of the 2013 tour which included Test matches in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney, Accenture worked with the ARU to develop a mobile app available across Android™, Apple® iOS and Samsung, that delivered the ultimate fan experience. The app provided all the latest news from on and off the field, including live play-by-play commentary, real-time scores, exclusive video, post-match analysis, and more.

Official Technology Consulting Partner of the Qantas Wallabies
High performance. Delivered.
The app was integrated with social media tools such as Twitter. This enabled fans to receive constant updates and watch highlights. As well as significant downloads, the app scored 4+ customer feedback on the App Store and Google Play, and was a featured App Store Application.

Lions Tour Analytics
As the Official Technology Consulting partner of the Qantas Wallabies, Accenture also provided extensive analytics to bring deeper insight into the 2013 British & Irish Lions Tour.

Accenture used analytics to revolutionise the fan experience. Fans could access real-time analysis during the match and a complete post-match wrap-up, including head-to-head statistics, winning attack channels for play success and breakdowns of player performance. Supporters could also view and share this information through online and social media channels.

For this project, Accenture used a Microsoft SQL Server and Qlikview environment to generate analytics models that examined real-time match data to offer fans comprehensive statistical analysis and easy-to-understand charts. These outputs were shared on Accenture and ARU websites, online and social media channels, in newspapers, and on television.

Digital Content Strategy
The ARU has significant digital content for the Wallabies, ranging from extensive game archives, to inside the dressing room content. Accenture and the ARU worked together to create a framework for:

- Assessing the value of these assets
- Prioritising how to curate these assets in a way that consumers would value
- Distributing these assets in a cost-effective way

This has helped the ARU find new ways of engaging fans and sponsors.

Overhauling CRM operating models
Prior to Accenture's engagement, the ARU was using CRM technology that no longer met its needs. The system had restricted functionality, and did not allow the ARU to add scale and sophistication to its CRM practices.

Accenture designed a high-level CRM shared services operating model that could deliver a single view of members and customers, improve relationship management and personalise online experiences. To achieve this, the project team took a holistic approach to the ARU’s member engagement lifecycle – from members seeking information and becoming involved in community activities, to purchasing tickets and merchandise, and renewing memberships. This enables the ARU to segment its customers and implement more effective marketing campaigns.

Accenture helped the ARU to design an operating model, processes and technology to take advantage of new cloud based ways of delivering CRM.

Accenture and the ARU are now partnering in delivering and rolling out this capability.

High performance delivered
The ARU is already reaping impressive benefits from the technology partnership with Accenture.

The 2013 Lions Tour was a runaway success, with close to 400,000 fans attending the nine matches – making it the best attended Rugby tour in the world outside a Rugby World Cup. The British & Irish Lions Tour app was well received in the market, helping increase fan engagement. The app jumped to the number one spot on the New and Noteworthy list on Apple’s App Store when it was launched in May 2013, and has been downloaded nearly 37,000 times by Android, Samsung and iOS users.

The statistical outputs produced by Accenture analytics reached more than 244 million fans through print and online and social media channels.

Accenture’s CRM solution has provided the ARU with a robust platform to underpin future growth. The new system improved the organisation’s ability to provide personalised engagement, identify cross-sell opportunities and boost loyalty. The ARU expects the CRM system will offer substantial commercial benefits for Rugby as a whole.

ARU Chief Executive Officer Bill Pulver said Accenture’s team was as passionate about the game and its heritage as his organisation.

“Accenture has provided a range of critical technology and consulting services to the ARU that spans content and digital strategies, mobile and online apps, match and fan analytics, and CRM,” he said. “During the Lions Tour, Accenture delivered a first-of-its-kind mobile app that was downloaded by tens of thousands of Rugby fans, and provided a unique fan experience. We are delighted with our partnership and look forward to what our ongoing relationship will bring.”
About Accenture Mobility

Accenture is focused on enabling its clients to achieve breakthrough growth throughout the rapidly changing mobile ecosystem. Accenture Mobility offers five mobility services including consulting, software services – applications, software services – devices and platforms, managed services, and enterprise integration services. These are designed to help organisations embrace business to employee, business to consumer, business to business and machine to machine business opportunities. Accenture offers mobility and embedded software services across a wide range of industries and platforms, including Android™, Apple® iOS, Blackberry®, Linux, Meego™, Symbian, Windows® Phone and Windows 8. For more information about Accenture Mobility, follow @MobilityWise or visit accenture.com/mobility.

About Accenture Interactive

Accenture Interactive helps the world’s leading brands drive superior marketing performance across the full multichannel customer experience. Working with over 4,000 Accenture professionals dedicated to serving the marketing function, Accenture Interactive offers integrated, industrialised and industry-driven marketing solutions and services across consulting, technology and outsourcing powered by analytics. Follow @AccentureSocial or visit accenture.com/interactive.

About Accenture Analytics

Accenture Analytics delivers the insights organisations need to make better business decisions, faster. Our extensive capabilities range from accessing and reporting on data to predictive modelling, forecasting and sophisticated statistical analysis. We draw on deep functional, business process and technology experience to develop innovative consulting and outsourcing services for our clients in the health, public service and private sectors. At the intersection of business and technology, Accenture Analytics enables organisations to achieve the business outcomes that drive high performance. For more information about Accenture Analytics, visit www.accenture.com/analytics.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 266,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$27.9 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2012. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

Contact

Dr Jock Cassidy
Managing Director,
Accenture Mobility, Australia
Email: john.h.cassidy@accenture.com
Phone: +61290056407