

# Project Profile



MAJOR SPORTS ORGANIZATION SAVES MILLIONS WITH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT



A 19-year-old organization supporting the #1 participation sport in the United States looked to [A] for site redevelopment, content technology integration and project management—efforts ultimately saving millions of dollars in losses from project failures and poor technology management.





# About the Organization

As of 2014, this major sports organization claimed 1.69 million members comprising 57,472 certified leagues and held 8,600 competitions, tournaments and national championship events the same year throughout the United States.

The organization's members include tens of thousands of amateurs and professionals ranging from youth to retirees, from the hometown-local looking to join a league, to pros traveling both nationally and internationally. As a result, the client's site needed to be responsive to end users and meet their unique needs and goals.

[A] worked with the client to unlock the full potential of their CMS, improve content strategy by bridging siloed departments and streamline project management to reduce wasteful spending and increase ROI. Armed with a robust CMS, a fully connected and empowered team and a full-accountability project management process, the organization now easily manages complex content, including events, membership levels, dues and registration for an increasingly diverse and mobile member base.

## Client Basics

National Sports Association  
1.5 Million Members

## Key Technologies:

Ektron Version: 9  
VMWare Cloud  
Xamarin Mobile platform

Microsoft Web Stack  
Microsoft Dynamics products  
Atlassian Enterprise Software



# Maximizing the CMS

[A] was first approached by the client in 2012 to help manage its CMS due to the departure of the organization's Ektron developer. [A] quickly discovered that the client had been taking little advantage of Ektron's CMS capabilities, hard-coding much of the website instead and keeping content static, siloed and locked up.

[A] worked to re-architect the client's Ektron site which resulted in giving content editors control of design and content. Whereas all changes to the website were previously handled exclusively by developers, content editors could now control many aspects of content management and distribution, including page layouts, templates, taxonomies and more. The organization was able to enjoy a more robust content strategy allowing for quicker production and distribution of content and greater flexibility in targeting it to the needs of the organization's users.

Unlocking the agility and power of the organization's CMS required deep involvement, education and support. Since the client had no dedicated Ektron developer in place, [A] became the de facto IT department and worked with developers and other staff remotely and on-site every two weeks for many months until the organization was fully trained on the capabilities of their CMS.

An important part of this process involved mapping technologies to show the client how every program, piece of technology and system in the organization worked together. As a result, the client could now unlock the full potential of each platform and technology and create a truly agile, focused and powerful content marketing strategy.

## Goals

- Maintain content management system (CMS) after departure of lead developer.
- Implement a project management process to save money and track ROI.
- Target content for tens of thousands of members with different goals and needs.

## Approach

- Re-architected CMS to allow content editors direct control of content and design.
- Created a project management tool and helped hire a project manager to prioritize projects, allocate resources and track efforts.
- Built a dedicated mobile app to deliver personalized news and information to members.

## Results

- Quicker content production, distribution and targeting to the organization's users.
- Significantly reduced project overspend and technology maintenance costs.
- Improved perceived value of organization with member-exclusive mobile app.
- Enabled the systems, technologies and customer experience to increase membership and member retention going forward.





## Building a Better Team

When [A] began working with the client, departments were siloed and not communicating with one another. Over the space of two weeks, [A] worked with the client both on-site and off-site interviewing every group in the organization to help bridge the gap between the needs and ideas coming from the marketing departments and what the organization's technology could provide.

This intimate involvement also offered [A] insight into gaps in the client's technology, direction, organizational structure, processes and staffing skills. Two primary findings during the technology assessment was the the need for a cross-system, member-centric data model and a centralized infrastructure and support model. In terms of organizational structure, [A] was instrumental in a top down realignment of the organization's IT team and creating support for better project management.

As part of the IT reorganization and restructuring, [A] helped the client hire a senior director of software applications and architecture and continues to support the director in procuring new senior technology talent to expand the team. [A] was also instrumental in recommending and interviewing other key hires to fill crucial skills and operational gaps. Although the client has gained much more hiring autonomy and technical capability, [A] still remains a key member in the organization's hiring and skills assessment process.





# Big Savings With Project Management

Early on, [A] identified the lack of project management as the primary reason for a broad spectrum of technology project failures, millions of dollars in losses and outdated or poor technology implementations.

Previously, projects were often pushed through by organization members who had clout but who failed to scope requirements, gather resources or consider budgets and ROI. As a result, projects suffered endless rounds of change orders, went way over deadlines and cost and offered no clear or measurable returns.

In 2014, [A] recommended the implementation of a project management office (PMO) and tool to provide a central funnel and help manage all projects. This gave the client a centralized project management system, the ability to prioritize projects, allocate resources more efficiently and track efforts and returns.

As part of the organizational recommendations, [A] also assisted in hiring of a project management director and a business analyst. [A] worked with the director to define and implement the program and project management processes to include standard requirements analysis, business and process analysis, vendor management, cost assessment, project tracking and status reporting.

By mid 2015, the organization had completed 32 well-scoped and budgeted projects and had another 17 in progress. After careful analysis, the organization also canceled 3 of their original projects to stop wasteful spending and improve ROI.

The creation of a PMO has given the organization a new foundation that will enable increased revenue and cost savings in the future. It has also provided more system stability, resulted in the creation of more tournaments to satisfy new members, and given the organization better marketing data to help increase the membership base and retain more existing members.





## Putting Content In User's Hands

[A] developed and maintains native iOS and Android mobile applications built on the Xamarin platform. The apps integrate content from the content management system, CRM and other systems to provide members unique access to member information, up-to-date rules, member awards and performance history as well as live tournament coverage news.

Because significant traffic comes from mobile devices, [A] is working on fully responsive prototype, interface design, development and deployment which will create a beautiful mobile experience for all users while giving the property a fresh and modern feel.



## What We Did

Over time, [A] has invested in many projects and strategies which continue to contribute to the client's enduring success including the following:

**Organizational management:** [A] led a full organizational review of the organization from the ground up. This led to a reorganization of upper management and a complete overhaul of the technical team and technical strategy based on [A]'s recommendations.

**Project management office:** Implemented an organization-wide PMO, stopping significant project overspend and increasing the project success rate from 12 stalled, 1 successful and 3 failed projects in 2013, to 32 successful projects in 2015.

**Process improvement:** Completed projects in 2015 reduced costs by improving or eliminating inefficient processes, stabilized and secured information systems, improved data quality for marketing and set the stage for increased revenue opportunities in 2016 and beyond.



**Rearchitecture of web environment and CMS:** Improvements to the structure of the web environment and CMS enhanced user experience and reduced the time and cost of the management of the client's website. These changes also laid the foundation for growth and personalized content delivery.

**iOS and Android Mobile applications:** [A] assisted the client in creating a dedicated mobile app to provide priority information exclusive to members and improve the perceived value of the organization. Using a CMS platform and the Xamarin development platform provides flexibility and stability for future expansion of the application.

**Responsive site migration and design refresh:** [A] is currently helping to move the client towards a fully-responsive, modern, website design. This will significantly improve mobile experience and will lay the foundation for targeted marketing and personalization to improve membership growth and retention.



## Results

- Implemented an organization-wide project management office significantly reducing failed, over budget and late project delivery.
- Completed 32 new carefully scoped and budgeted projects that increased organizational efficiency and improved data quality.
- Improved marketing data to help increase membership base and retain more existing members.
- Increased value of organization to users through a mobile app providing member-exclusive content.
- Improved user experience and reduced the cost and time of website maintenance by rearchitecting CMS and web environment.







# Looking Ahead

While new hires have given the client greater ability to maintain the organization's CMS and complex and diverse needs, [A] continues to remain a vital member of the marketing and development team, providing basic website support, maintaining uptime and stability, troubleshooting templates, and helping with IT governance and best practice recommendations, etc. [A] also remains a key consultant for new hires, making recommendations and assisting in the interview process as needed.

As a result of changes to the Ektron CMS, [A] is also engaging with the client to explore transitioning to a next generation platform with more robust content experience management (CEM) to deliver a more customized experience for the organization's growing and increasingly varied membership base.

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