Unlock the Unique Value of Your Fan Management
Take Advantage of a Digital Platform with Intelligent Technologies
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The Fan Management Challenge

The sports industry sector and fan management are changing at an incredible pace. Exponential growth of TV contracts and shrinking stadium attendance rates in many countries are very often two sides of the same coin. Many fans are no longer keen to enter the stadium, although they are still interested in the success of their team, watching them on TV and other digital channels. This is especially true for younger fans, who are always on the lookout for the most exciting and interesting experiences.

Many teams and stadiums are redefining their fan management strategy to find the best answers to key questions:
• How can we provide the best on-site match-day experience so that casual spectators – especially young ones – become loyal and regular fans and ensure a strong attendance rate in the stadium?
• Who are our fans, and what do we know about their experience?
• How can we engage fans beyond match day through digital channels to grow our fan base beyond stadium visitors and outside our home market and abroad to create new revenue streams?

For all these questions, big investments have already been made around the world.

Many stadiums are either rebuilt or renovated, and free Wi-Fi has become prevalent for most. Top sports entities have set up their own TV production facilities and TV channels. Summer tours throughout the United States and Asia have become quite common for European soccer clubs. The top U.S. sports leagues have dedicated matches in foreign markets such as China, Mexico, and the United Kingdom.

All these developments are great achievements. But they are just some necessary elements of world-class fan engagement programs. The key part of fan engagement is a deeply rooted and intense connection with your fans. You want to understand their real behavior and provide them with the best services possible.
How to Engage Fans in a Digital World

FAN MANAGEMENT NEEDS TO BE PERSONALIZED AND FULL OF PASSION
A deep connection can be built up only if you have lots of information about a person. For most fans, the stadium experience is a social event with friends and family organized by an individual for many people. This means you can’t identify many people in your stadium, because, in the case of ticketing, you just register the person who bought the tickets. The result is that you are covering less than half of your fans.

Many sports organizations are using other ways to identify people. Fans need to register to get Wi-Fi access in the stadium. Teams with fan apps require their fans to sign in, in exchange for exclusive content. But many of these efforts remain siloed, as the same person is registered multiple times in one or more systems.

Leading sports teams have realized these shortcomings and are approaching these two decisive questions with technology-driven solutions:

1. **What fan data do we already have available in our systems?** Intelligent technology allows sports teams to have one central platform connected to all existing systems, such as ticketing, merchandising, concessions, and membership and loyalty programs, or even one system to manage all of these processes.

2. **How can we incentivize fans to identify themselves and give us permission to use their data in a privacy-compliant way?** Modern loyalty programs let fans decide which data they want to hand over to clubs in exchange for rewards, such as meet and greets with star players.

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By answering the two questions with the two solutions described, even fan activity happening outside a club’s system, such as buying a jersey from a retailer, is now available for analysis. The beauty of this approach is that it is no longer important whether an interaction happens within your stadium, in the fan shop, through a partner, or through another touch point in the digital space.

But because sports is all about passion and experiences, you need to understand the experiences of the fans, their behavior, and their complaints. You need to be able to analyze operational data and combine it with experience data.

Young fans in particular, who are used to watching match-day highlights online, will not return when they feel unsatisfied with their experiences in the stadium. That means asking for feedback in a conversational way to solicit their open, honest opinions and doing so without disturbing their match-day experience. The waiting time in a line at the food court is such a moment. Short survey questions can be displayed on the customer-facing part of the point-of-sale terminal. And again, the reward is decisive: You can motivate fans to answer your questions by giving them a chance to win a meet and greet or by offering other incentives.

This approach allows you to build a unified view of your fans by bringing together feedback from multiple sources and touch points along the fan’s journey, either on match day or in the digital world.

By bringing fan data together, you’re able to understand and react to everything from their favorite player, their favorite digital content, their ticket and purchase history, to how previous interactions with your sports team and your stadium facilities have shaped both their loyalty and their future behavior.

What is happening?
Operational data (O-data)

Why is it happening?
Experience data (X-data)
FAN MANAGEMENT MUST BE PREDICTIVE
While reactive elements, such as responding to fan complaints or issues as they arise, should be part and parcel of any true fan management program, what about the silent majority who, unhappy with the experience, will churn with no warning or prior complaint? For example, a dirty restroom on match day can have a huge impact.

That’s where a fan management platform with all its data comes in. With all your data in one place, you’ll get great insights to start predicting what customers really want and what they will do next, giving a voice to that silent majority who won’t simply come out and tell you they’re unhappy. In recent years, advanced fan management analytics have been established that allow you to analyze and interpret statistical patterns in your data to identify trends and uncover hidden insights without a team of data scientists.

THE CHALLENGE
If fans leave the stadium because of a bad experience, most will churn with no warning or prior complaint.

THE SOLUTION
Apply detailed analytics across your entire data set to identify trends and patterns and their underlying causes. You can also predict fan behavior so you can step in to optimize the experience for your customers in the moments that matter most.

Steps from reaction to prediction:
1. Collecting X-data and O-data on one platform
2. Identifying patterns of fan behavior
3. Acting before an event happens
In a recent market research study from Qualtrics, now part of SAP, presented at a sports conference in 2019 about the preferences of U.S. sports fans from different sports teams, it became clear that you can win in fan management even if your team is not having a successful season.

Fans were asked about their spending decisions for matches based on certain criteria. Using a survey-based statistical technique (conjoint analysis), it was determined how fans value different attributes. The insights were quite interesting.²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Implied Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winning</td>
<td>US$114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
<td>$8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concessions</td>
<td>$16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful staff</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This means, for example, that you can achieve the same additional spend value of fans with a cleaner bathroom as you would gain with a 4.6% improvement in winning percentage. In this case, $8.

Such general market research insight is an interesting starting point for the analysis of your fan data. If you have a fan management platform available, you can now ask your own questions in areas where the operational data is below your expectations and make predictions that are relevant for you. This could be, for example, the churn problem for season ticket holders. Because season ticket holders are some of your most valuable customers, it is especially important to identify who is at risk of not renewing.

Machine learning algorithms can automatically detect patterns in your data. Based on the historical data you have on your platform and taking into account all the additional insights about recent experiences, the models can predict which fans are at risk of not renewing and therefore in need of special treatment. See Figure 1 for some examples.

Such an approach can help you to be very efficient with the limited resources you have available in peak times, such as the renewal period for season ticket holders.
FAN MANAGEMENT AS A KEY TASK FOR EMPLOYEES
The stadium workforce comprises many temporary workers. These employees are the linchpin of fan experience success, as they are your face to the fans. But to keep them engaged and informed in the short period of time you are working with them on match day is quite a challenge. Guest service managers in stadiums try to overcome the information gap with printed documents containing essential data.

Ask yourself two questions:
1. How likely would you be to read through a long document while working in a stadium?
2. What is your impression as a fan if service representatives need to read through a document to answer your questions on match day?

New technologies, such as chatbots and dedicated apps for stadium staff, can be part of the solution. But such approaches can be successful only if they get the support of and input from your faces to the fans – your staff. Getting feedback from your temporary workers in the stadium about how engaged they are is a first helpful indication of needed actions.

But imagine taking it to the next level: What if you could ask your staff about the information they are missing or other issues that prevent them from providing exceptional guest services? By combining these insights with actual and historical data, such as the number of complaints about certain services in the stadium, match-day revenues for a certain area of the stadium, or the number of fans in a section who are regular ticket buyers, you would be able to understand the causes of trends and identify actions to improve the employee experience as an important element for successful fan management.

Most sports teams are running their businesses very cost-efficiently, so their staff is quite small compared to their tasks. This means there must be a clear fan management strategy in place with a clear focus to achieve the desired results without needing to add more staff.

It is important to ask yourself this key question: What do you want to achieve with your fan management strategy?

The most successful sports teams commercially have clear targets defined at the foundation of their fan management strategy. Here are some examples:

• Increase the Net Promoter Score by 15% throughout our fan base
• Grow the average attendance rate by 5% over the next three seasons and decrease the churn rate of season ticket holders
• Become the number-one European soccer club in terms of merchandising revenue in Asia
• Grow the fan base by 50% in China and the United States over the next five years
• Double membership numbers in three years
• Engage 25% of known fans as paid subscribers to our digital content

Such concrete targets can facilitate the prioritization of actions and investments. This is imperative considering the global reach of many sports teams and the risk of overstretching available resources.

For example, after you have prioritized the stadium experience in your initial scope discussions, there are more decisions needed. With so many potential touch points to analyze and understand fans, it’s not feasible to start by analyzing all data and gathering feedback at every single one of them. So, as you design your program, think carefully about where and with which fan population you want to start. For example, will you choose fanatic fans, casual fans, business seat owners, occasional fans such as tourists, or fans abroad? And how would you like to see the program evolve over time?
A proven approach for all these discussions is the modeling of a typical day of a fan for the fan population you are targeting.

As you are not starting on a green field in your workshops to design your program, there will already be a lot of existing knowledge. A good way to start is by prioritizing certain fan moments, such as the ticket purchase, the use of the concessions area for food and beverage during halftime, or the postgame experience at the stadium exit. See Figure 2 for an example.

Key to success is remaining flexible regarding your scope while avoiding overreaching. Therefore, we propose an agile approach in your scope definition, which has been proven helpful in fan management projects.

For instance, your immediate business priority may be to increase the experience ratings and revenue for food and beverages because you have identified problems in this area. You could start with your point-of-sale solution in the food and beverage area. Gather feedback from customers while they are in front of the point-of-sale terminal by motivating them with the chance to win a unique experience such as a locker room tour with their favorite player.

Next, having piloted your priority topics for improvements, you can move toward a broader approach and deploy surveys across different touch points. For example, you could study fans throughout their match-day experience – from home to stadium and back – to understand the experience of each behavior and interaction, then implement any improvements.

Figure 2: Sample Fan Experience Customer Journey – Game Day
And finally, as your program matures, you can move toward a comprehensive approach and gather feedback across a fan’s entire experience journey – either digitally, on-site in the stadium, or a combination of both – to start understanding how each interaction impacts the others and how they affect the overall experience and the loyalty of the fan toward your team.

This agile scope approach (see Figure 3) allows you to make quick wins in business priority areas before moving toward a more holistic view of the customer experience across multiple channels so you can identify exactly when to step in along the journey to improve the experience and impact your bottom line.

As part of your fan management program, a constant stream of innovations, even from established partners or startups, is absolutely necessary to stay relevant with your fans and provide them with the best experiences possible. The unified fan management platform can be a very powerful enabler of the best outcome for your organization. By mandating that all applications transfer data back to your platform, you keep control of your fan data and avoid the creation of new silos.

Breaking up the data silos within your organization is a key task for every fan management program. In addition, a change management effort is needed within your organization to overcome the notion that certain data sources are owned by one department or another.

Moreover, you need to get access to your fan data in a data-privacy-compliant way, in case you have outsourced certain areas, such as concessions, merchandising sales, or ticketing. Central management of all these privacies is another key element of your fan management platform.

**Figure 3: Agile Program Scope for Fan Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prioritization</th>
<th>Omnichannel touch point feedback</th>
<th>Experience deep-dives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key metrics (for example, Net Promoter Score, revenue, number of complaints)</td>
<td>Staff assistance for fans</td>
<td>Experience deep-dives based on insights collected before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan group (for example, age, level of engagement, geography)</td>
<td>Stadium facilities</td>
<td>Assess the experience quality for the fans from their perspective, end to end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online ticket purchase</td>
<td>Diagnose and react</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stadium entry and exit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concessions area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Determine top priorities, based on fan management strategy and known challenges

Deploy surveys across touch points identified by fan management programs to identify insights and take action

Create end-to-end solutions to gather feedback across a fan’s entire journey; integrate additional technologies and refine over time
World-class sports teams are always on the offense. When it comes to fan management, these teams do more than just respond to upset fans. They ensure that people designing and delivering experiences for match day and digital touch points are continuously connected to the fans and empowered to take action on feedback.

SAP solutions are used by digital leaders in sports around the globe. With the emphasized focus on fan experiences, it is now about gaining a complete understanding of fans and enabling everyone, from executives and managers to frontline staff, to deliver world-class customer experiences.

SAP can help you to run your fan management program with three key elements:

- Framework as a suite of intelligent business applications that use intelligent technologies and can be extended on a digital platform
- Partner ecosystem that creates a constant stream of innovation based on SAP technology
- Broad range of services to transform fan management programs

Solutions for fan management from SAP are developed using practical input from leaders in sports, cover all areas, and allow individual adjustments particular to the related strategy. See Figure 4.

Many customers have achieved outstanding tangible results. See Figure 5 for a summary of solution benefits based on customer benchmarking studies conducted by SAP.

A winning game plan is on the table. Master the challenges of fan management with SAP solutions.
Better targeting
- Greater understanding of fans
- Seconds needed for campaign preparation – down from weeks
- 20x faster campaign execution

Happier fans
- 25% more fan interactions through fan engagement
- 45% increase in the time spent in the fan shop
- 25% increase in new visitors to Web site

More revenue
- Up to 300% uplift in revenue
- 500% increase in sales conversions
- 33x greater ROI from online advertising

Lower costs
- 60% decrease in call center contacts
- 10 systems retired
- 1 system – down from 50
SAP’s Framework for the **Intelligent Enterprise**

The Intelligent Enterprise framework (Figure 6) is a suite of intelligent business applications that use intelligent technologies and can be extended on a digital platform. This enables next-generation business processes to deliver breakthrough business value on our customers’ journeys to becoming intelligent enterprises.

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**Figure 6: The Intelligent Enterprise Framework**

![Intelligent Enterprise Framework Diagram]

- Intelligent Suite
- Digital Core
- People Management
- Network & Spend Management
- Customer Experience
- Manufacturing & Supply Chain
- Data Management
- Cloud Platform
- Digital Platform
- AI/ML | IoT | Analytics

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How to Ensure a Successful Transformation to an Intelligent Enterprise

The SAP Digital Business Services organization has a broad range of services to cover the entire digital transformation journey, ranging from consulting on a digital innovation road map and implementation plan with proven best practices to the ability to run all deployment options and, ultimately, optimize for continuous innovation.

We provide both choice and value within our service offerings, allowing you to tailor the proper approach based on your specific company expectations and industry requirements.

- 25,000 professionals in 70 countries
- Customers in 130 countries
- Outcomes delivered as one team in one contract
- Projects connected in real time to a global network of support functions through SAP Mission Control Center
- SAP MaxAttention™ services and SAP ActiveAttention offerings to safeguard investments
- Consistent experience – on premise, in the cloud, or with a hybrid approach
- Standardized adoption of processes and tools
- Streamlined onboarding and ramp-up of stakeholders
From proposing comprehensive digitalization to realizing and running it, SAP delivers on the digital transformation promise to its customers on time, within budget, and on value.

Value delivery from SAP is possible due to our many unique, differentiating assets (see Figure 7).

SAP Digital Business Services delivers digital innovation with simplification and accelerated implementation, which are key to adoption and value realization. Continuous improvement is supported through the ongoing assessment of real-life data insights and joint governance with customers.

Value delivery from SAP focuses on the deliverables shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 7: Differentiating Assets from SAP**

- **SAP Transformation Navigator tool**
- **Exhaustive service portfolio**
- **SAP Model Company service**
- **SAP Activate methodology**
- **SAP Solution Manager**

**Figure 8: Deliverables for Value Delivery**

- **Digital business foundation**
  - Digital business model
  - Flexible, scalable enterprise architecture
  - Platform for the digital future
  - People and culture transformation

- **Business insights**
  - Digital boardroom
  - Predictive customer insights
  - Value realization dashboard
  - Agile decision-making and execution support

- **Continuous improvement**
  - Joint value governance
  - Sustainable engagement model
  - Innovation without disruption
  - Simplification
Comprehensive SAP Ecosystem –
Orchestrating the World to Deliver Faster Value

Our comprehensive sports ecosystem offers integration into:
• Open architecture with a choice of hardware and software
• Complementary and innovative third-party solutions
• Broad reach through partners to serve your business of any size anywhere in the world
• Forum for influence and knowledge
• Large skill sets
SAP Is Committed to Innovation

10-YEAR INNOVATION VISION
SAP delivers a constant stream of innovations in sports, ranging from fan management to team performance. Innovations from other industries, such as retail and media, are forcing multipliers to accelerate new approaches in sports. These solutions will be the most empathic symbiosis between machine intelligence and human ingenuity.
• Self-running enterprise systems
• Self-organizing business ecosystems
• New markets and business models

COMPREHENSIVE INDUSTRY COVERAGE
SAP enables comprehensive coverage of the complete sports value chain across the enterprise. With its clear industry road map, SAP is the partner of choice for the sports and entertainment industry.

PROVEN SERVICES OFFERINGS
By bringing together world-class innovators, industry and emerging technology expertise, proven use cases, and design-thinking methods, we help sports companies develop innovations that deliver impact at scale. This will also increase the ability of your team to build up your own innovations and change your culture.
• Proven methodologies to drive innovation, from reimagining customer experiences to enhancing operations
• Innovation that is fueled through a managed innovation ecosystem from SAP
• Ability to build your own innovation capability and culture

SAP supports sports companies in becoming intelligent enterprises – providing integrated business applications that use intelligent technologies and can be extended on SAP Cloud Platform to deliver breakthrough business value.
LEARN MORE

SAP.com – sports and entertainment
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SAP Digital Business Services
SAP Design Thinking