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What can a professional hockey club teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of

DALLAS STARS

Welcome to the era of:

Game Changers

Dallas Stars CIO: A Game Changer Wearing Many Hats

Dan Doggendorf cheers for power play goals and flashy glove saves as hard as anybody in the Dallas Stars organization. But the pro hockey club CIO's main focus is on other "game-changing" events. Like streamlining teamwide mobile communications so none of the players miss a bus. And tapping analytics to understand which merchandise items individual fans are buying, and when.

Doggendorf has led an IT transformation that's helped the Dallas Stars improve internal functions and connect more directly with external stakeholders: fans, sponsors, and the community at large.

Some initiatives involved digitizing basic processes and upgrading antiquated equipment. A new document imaging system automated accounts payable invoices, reducing processing time from 3–4 weeks down to 2–3 days. A new finance system has given managers the ability to analyze budgets in real time. Standardizing on Microsoft Surface tablets helps the whole organization—225 full-timers, up to 900 including part-timers in season—share information in the office, from home, and on the road.

"When I started here, back in 2012, the organization was pretty far behind the curve in terms of use of IT," Doggendorf said. "No one had portable computers except IT. If you wanted to work, you had to be in the building. There was no wifi to speak of. But we've made a lot of progress, and we're continuing to move forward."

An up-close view of the customer

Data integration is a big priority for all pro sports teams, and the Stars are no exception. The club now feeds information from Ticketmaster directly into its CRM system to help its sales team track buyer behavior. With an up-close view of the customer, the team can avoid double-pitching customers for sponsorships and ticket packages.

Hockey personnel have gotten into the action, too. Scouts no longer file individual player reports by email; they enter observations into a program called RinkNet that integrates player information from 13,500 amateur teams, and share it with team management in real time.

The Stars' video coach has command centers in his office, at home, and on the road where he can tag relevant sequences and share clips with coaches during game intermissions. Speed is critical for in-game strategy shifts If the video coach can identify a vulnerability in an opponent's defensive alignment and send a clip to another coach over a secure network, the move could lead to a goal.

A key part of the digital transformation involved replacing an antiquated PBX phone system with the Fuze platform. The change gave the club's call center a dashboard the ability to track inbound and outbound calls, and opened up different lines of communication—voice, video, and messaging—within a single platform.

> "The old system was out of date. We really needed a new platform to communicate better across the organization," Doggendorf said.

Connecting the digital workforce

Fuze's mobility features have opened up a whole new way of work for what had been a desk-bound organization. Rather than wait for important phone calls or miss them altogether, workers in operations, sales, marketing, and customer service are using the Fuze tools to connect from anywhere. They're taking advantage of the features to dial into meetings at home and on the road, relay information through group chats, and be on call for important, breaking business items.

"When I first got here, 5–6 years ago, to work you had to be in the building," Doggendorf said. "We added some new tools and changed some processes, and now it's much easier for people to work wherever they need to be working. They're not tied to their desks anymore."

The Stars' next digital transformation priorities are to expand the use of the club's digital imaging system and leverage more Business Intelligence in the everyday operations.

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On the imaging side, the club is working to automate all aspects of contract management. Digitizing all the information gives management the ability to add workflow functions, like sending reminders to designated parties to speed up approvals and ensure key steps in the process aren't missed.

Doggendorf said the club is planning other moves to collect and leverage data. Integrating data from in-rink merchandise point-of-sale systems will help officials better understand ticket-holders' buying patterns. Also, the shift from paper to digital tickets helps the club identify new fans and track season ticket holders' attendance patterns.

"I feel like I am to the point, and organization is to the point where they want me to push them harder now," he said. "What we're doing right now, I do IT, facility management, security, office services."

NAME:
Dan Doggendorf

COMPANY:
Formerly with the Dallas Stars

TITLE:
Chief Information Officer

PREVIOUS GIGS:
Information security officer for GameStop and director of information security for Penson Financial Services

INDUSTRY:
Professional hockey

EMPLOYEE COUNT:
900

HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:
Data integration initiative helped sales team track buyer behavior; new unified communications system enabled employees to work from anywhere

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Welcome to the era of:

Game Changers

fuze
let work flow.