



What can the world's largest golf tour teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of **PGA TOUR**

Welcome to the era of:

Game Changers



PGA TOUR Information Systems Director: A Game Changer Who Won Over the Skeptics

For the average golfer, an afternoon on the links presents a good opportunity to put phones, computers, and other technology devices on hold for a few hours.

The PGA TOUR has a different relationship with technology. The organizer of six pro golf tours, including most of the high-profile tournaments that beam live on televisions, sees tech as a mechanism to streamline business practices and promote collaboration among its workers.

Over the past four years, the organization has undergone a digital transformation, building a more robust, flexible IT infrastructure leveraging multiple resources in the cloud.

Transitioning from Legacy Systems

Until recently, the PGA TOUR has relied on a legacy system of on-premises hardware to manage its information technology needs. It operated email, voice, and document sharing tools that had served their purpose for a long time but recently started requiring more work and investment to keep them up and running.

The organization decided to move these resources to the cloud to promote both efficiency and collaboration. With 800 employees located in PGA TOUR's Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, headquarters, another 150 full-time remote staff, and the 400+ team members working for 17 TPC golf clubs, it became critical to find solutions that not only enhance collaboration but also enable employees to work from anywhere.

Getting employees on board with the cloud initiative provided a micro-study of human behavior.



“Without the buy-in from senior leadership and widespread adoption from employees, we’d essentially be deploying a business tool that is ultimately ineffective at meeting the needs it was designed to satisfy,” said Doug Edwards, senior director, Information Systems and Customer Services, at PGA TOUR. “This was particularly tricky for us given the average employee tenure is 12 years. With some employees having been with PGA TOUR for nearly 30 years, people certainly have their go-to tools. Any change to that and you can expect to be met with some resistance.”



Overcoming Divisions

Replacing a 25-year-old Lotus Notes email function divided the company. A third of the company loved the new cloud tool, another third loved it but had no idea how to operate it, and the remaining third considered it a step in the wrong direction.

The IT team eventually won over the dissenters by identifying early adopters within the organization and turning them into advocates.

“Adoption never takes place overnight,” Edwards said. “It’s a snowball effect, one that quite often succeeds when initiated at the highest level of an organization. It signals to staff that the decision isn’t just a new tech initiative or something solely owned by IT, but part of a larger culture shift. This two-pronged approach is critical in not only signaling to employees that the business is taking this seriously, but they have ambassadors to turn to with a deep understanding of why this is beneficial to them.”



Facilitating Communication and Efficiency

Edwards said clear communication is critical to the success of any digital transformation initiative.

"You'll find that over time, your employees will cross a threshold," he said. "They won't come to you looking for a new tool—they'll look to see how their current tools can help solve their everyday problems."

Ultimately, Edwards said, employees and staff are naturally going to adopt the tools and processes that help them get their job done. In today's environment, that translates to seeking out applications that mirror the consumer experience. It boils down to functionality and an intuitive user interface.



"Without either, employees may very well opt to use unsanctioned apps instead," he said. "By rooting these tools in the cloud, you are enabling them with the flexibility they need to succeed in a rapidly changing environment."



NAME:
Doug Edwards

COMPANY:
PGA TOUR

TITLE:
Senior Director, Information Systems
and Customer Services

INDUSTRY:
Professional golf

EMPLOYEE COUNT:
1,350

HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:
Presided over a digital transformation that replaced legacy hardware with cloud tools, enhanced collaboration and enabled employees to work from anywhere.

Visionary leaders are changing the game for the modern workforce.

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