

Brumbies move to the top of the table with DXC Technology

Client: The Brumbies

Location: Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Industry: Media and Entertainment

Challenge

- To raise the club's profile through greater online fan engagement.
- To implement a cost-effective digital solution in time for the start of the Super Rugby season.

Solution

- The implementation of a stable, secure, easy-to-use and scalable digital content platform.
- A dedicated team to handle design, infrastructure, implementation and social media marketing.

Results

- The website, app, social media channels and online store are all easy to keep up-to-date with cross-publishing capabilities.
- The online audience has surged: weekly traffic has doubled and unique monthly visitors have jumped from 12,500 to nearly 30,000.
- Facebook followers have increased from 8,000 to more than 157,000.
- The club now has complete control of its web presence and has gone from the bottom, to the top of the league for digital fan engagement, which has attracted major sponsors.



Brumbies Rugby was stuck. One of the international Super Rugby's foundation clubs, the Brumbies has enjoyed more success than any other Australian team, appearing in the finals series six times and winning the competition twice.

However, the club was struggling off the field. It draws on a small 'catchment' area comprising Canberra, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and parts of southern New South Wales (NSW). Nevertheless, the Brumbies has a global presence thanks to the Super Rugby competition being played on five continents. Its attempts to reach fans across the world were stymied by a shared services arrangement under Super Rugby's umbrella.

The Brumbies had plans to raise the club's profile through greater online fan engagement with a new app and website. A new generation of fans was eager to follow the club – streaming matches, buying jerseys and other merchandise, reading score updates, watching interviews with players and coaching staff, and enjoying other 'online only' exclusives such as training and information sessions, 'behind-the-scenes' videos and more.

Without a large digital team or significant in-house technical expertise,

and with only a modest budget, Brumbies Rugby needed a cost-effective solution that would allow it to keep up with its fans' demand for photos, stories, videos and more. Collecting data from its fans was another priority, as was analysing and using the data to provide better online experiences.

Fast at the breakdown

The club began searching for partners and in April 2015 selected DXC Technology (DXC) to scope, design, build and deploy a digital solution in time for the February start of the 2016 Super Rugby season.

DXC needed to work fast, so it adopted the Meteor development framework and supplied a dedicated team to handle every aspect of the project, from design and infrastructure to implementation and social media marketing. The new digital platform needed to be easy to use, scalable and adaptable to new technologies and techniques and, above all, stable and secure.

The answer was Amazon Web Services (AWS). DXC chose AWS because it offered the Brumbies more scalability, more capability and more options.

DXC chose not to host the application in its own data centres because it would not be cost effective to replicate the functionality AWS already provides. AWS also offers more 'availability zones', giving the Brumbies more options for disaster recovery. If there's an issue, DXC simply switches the Brumbies platform to another AWS availability zone, and everything stays up and running.

And finally, as with any form of outsourcing, the Brumbies save money by keeping the infrastructure management, service procurement and security with AWS.

"DXC was not only fast, they understood where we wanted to head," says Simon Chester, General Manager of Commercial Operations at Brumbies Rugby. "We had struggles with other organisations, but DXC took the time to understand our business."

This gave Chester the confidence to leave important technology decisions to DXC, allowing the club to concentrate on its content strategy. One key benefit of DXC's agile approach (and the Meteor framework) was the ability for the Brumbies to see and even use the platform as it was being built. This bolstered the Brumbies' approach to marketing, as the new platform can publish content across multiple online channels without a large technical team.

Ready for kick-off

Brumbies Rugby's new digital content platform was up and running before the 2016 Super Rugby season began. In fact, the marketing team had been using it since May 2015, just one month after the

project began, and within three months the online store was ready for customers. Work on the Brumbies' mobile app began six months ahead of schedule.

"They were very, very fast," says Chester, "and once we had the platform in place the app was built on top of that."

On the back end, the club now has complete control of its web presence. It has replaced the slow, manual system it once had with a platform that has cross-publishing capabilities, so the website, app, social media channels and online store are all easy to keep up-to-date.

The site itself now offers live game updates and streaming video, so fans can watch their team play no matter where they are in the world. Content is pushed out regularly, and the internal team can focus on marketing and promoting their team.

"It used to be very manual," says Chester, "but now we hit one button and we can publish content across all these channels."

Post-match analysis

The results have been game-changing. Brumbies Rugby has gone from the bottom to the top of the league for digital fan engagement by an Australian Super Rugby club. Its online audience has surged: weekly traffic has doubled since the site launched and unique monthly visitors has jumped from 12,500 to nearly 30,000. Facebook followers have increased nearly 20-fold, from 8,000 before the transformation project to more than 157,000 now.

"It's a massive achievement for a small market like Canberra," says

Chester. "The tools DXC provided have been instrumental."

But the benefits aren't limited to website traffic and fan engagement – Brumbies Rugby's revitalised online presence has attracted major sponsors. Land Rover renewed its sponsorship deal and was joined by new backer Continental Tyres.

"This was purely because of our work in the digital space," says Chester. "We've been able to generate a global audience."

And that audience is still growing, with more than half the club's website traffic coming from outside Australia. The club can engage these global fans directly, selling jerseys and other gear, and spreading its brand across five continents.

Managing the store's inventory had been a laborious process, and customer complaints due to items being out of stock were not uncommon. But now, inventory records are automatically updated in real-time, improving service and helping the club's merchandise revenue jump by 30 per cent.

In fact, the club now offers digital memberships to any fan who can't make it to the team's games in person, providing access to behind-the-scenes videos and other exclusive content.

"It's about so much more than just the website and even the app," Chester says. "We're thinking now about the fan experience... we want to own the digital space."

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