



Customer Success Story: The Washington Wizards

Overview

The Washington Wizards are a professional NBA basketball team. They began as the Chicago Packers in 1961, spent several seasons in Baltimore, and finally landed in Washington, as the Washington Bullets, in 1974. In 1997, the team moved into downtown Washington, DC and officially became known as the Washington Wizards.

Challenge

As a professional sports team in a highly competitive league, the Wizards organization has had its share of wins and losses over the years. In the NBA, winning is critical to a team's success as it ties directly to the ability to draw fans, attract top talent, and generate revenue. One key step toward winning is building a strong team of skilled players. In an effort to rejuvenate the team and increase its winning percentage, the Wizards brought in a new President of Basketball Operations, Ernie Grunfeld, and a new Head Coach, Eddie Jordan, in 2003. The new management team immediately identified the need to improve player recruitment efforts and in particular to scout and draft the most talented players – drawing from high school, college, and existing NBA players as sources. The process for scouting and player recruitment in most sports teams is highly unstructured, subjective, and paper-based – and this was the case with the Wizards. This manual system involves multiple scouts watching players throughout the season, completing paper forms, and rating skills in particular areas. These forms then need to be aggregated for each player, reviewed and ultimately fed into the creation of a list of players to be targeted during the NBA draft – a once a year event held in the Summer. In addition to being inefficient, this system often led to inaccurate player data, inconsistency in rating between scouts, incomplete reports,

Highlights

Sports & Entertainment

Processes Enabled:

- Scouting and player recruitment
- Player reporting & analysis

Customer Benefits & Results:

- Increased productivity and efficiency
- Allows scouts offline laptop access through Metastorm BPM process client for Outlook
- Facilitates collaboration between scouts and management
- Improves analysis of potential draft picks
- Reduces errors and data inconsistency

and a lack of structure in terms of player comparison across the available pool of options.

Solution

The new President of Basketball Operations for the Wizards recognized the challenges and issues of the current scouting system and saw the opportunity for improvement. In an innovative move for the industry, Grunfeld brought in Business Process Management (BPM) software from Metastorm to automate the process. Within a few months, all of the Wizards scouts were up and running on the application, with immediate benefits to the team.

Improved Efficiency & Data Accuracy

The Metastorm BPM® solution allowed the Wizards to create a centralized database of player information, move all scouting and player profile forms online, automate the process and enforce a consistent rating scheme, and consolidate scouting reports so that all scouts have access to the same information and can share evaluations. Using the Metastorm BPM Process Client for Microsoft Outlook, all of the Wizards scouts now carry laptops and can work on player evaluations either on-line through the Web portal or off-line via the Outlook interface and then synch back to the main system when reconnected to the network.

Sophisticated Player Analysis

The Metastorm BPM Suite enables quick and easy analysis of player data – supporting ad hoc queries into information on positions, skill sets, strengths, weaknesses, and other critical

evaluation criteria. In addition, ratings from multiple scouts can be automatically merged and averaged into a single score.

Comprehensive Draft Selection Reports

Metastorm BPM and the use of Metastorm’s unique process client for Outlook have improved the team’s ability to prepare for the draft – allowing scouts to run reports on top picks and automatically generate a “Player Brochure” on each player that the team is targeting in the draft. These Player Brochures can be downloaded to a laptop or printed so that all information on a player is organized and at hand on draft day.

The Wizards scouting process has been running on Metastorm BPM for almost two years. The new management team brought fresh leadership and vision and the innovation to leverage technology to improve player operations. The result – player operations are more efficient, scouts are more productive, and the Wizards have built a stronger team and transformed themselves into a top-contender making its first playoff appearance in 8 years in 2005, followed by a second consecutive playoff run in 2006.

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