

AT&T Advances the Technology Evolution of Sports Venues

The leader in venue technology is bringing a comprehensive suite of integrated solutions to the sports and entertainment industry, beginning with its crown jewel: AT&T Park in San Francisco

The directives from league commissioners and team owners have been heard: The in-venue marketplace must bring cutting-edge technology into its stadiums and arenas similar to what is available to fans now on 72-inch high-definition televisions in their own homes. In order to keep fans coming to games, the in-venue fan experience must have the same amenities and more, including a variety of technologies to satisfy a society increasingly reliant on mobility. The torchbearer for connectivity is AT&T Park, home of the World Series Champion San Francisco Giants.

AT&T PARK CARRIES THE TECHNOLOGY TORCH

Already arguably the most connected venue in sports, AT&T Park continues to boost its technology touches to remain ahead of demand. Earlier this year, the Giants developed a two-year plan to enhance the wireless experience at its facility. The first phase of improvement this season doubled the number of wireless access points in the lower bowl to 700, which will be followed up with additional access points in the upper deck.

The upgrades became necessary as levels of bandwidth consumption during Giants games began to skyrocket. During the 2012 regular season, an average of 30% of Giants fans (up from 17% in 2011) connected to the ballpark's AT&T Wi-Fi network via 15,000 tablets and smartphones. These figures peaked at 40% and 16,000 Wi-Fi enabled devices during the World Series when fans devoured 433 gigabytes of data during Game 2 alone.

"We expect that peak that we saw last year will become the new floor for this year," says Bill Schlough, Chief Information Officer at the Giants. "And that's why it's so critical to have AT&T as a partner to help us stay one step ahead of that demand."

These touches are not just for new or recently renovated facilities. All venues with AT&T DAS have potential to expand their Wi-Fi connectivity. And all venues with AT&T sponsorships are able to integrate AT&T's scalable technology to help power the venue marketplace today and into the future.



Photo Credit ©2013 S.F. Giants

Daniel Chang explains AT&T's holistic approach to technology in sports venues such as AT&T Park: "AT&T brings together a range of technologies to provide an enhanced fan experience from in-stadium 4G LTE and Wi-Fi to digital signage to comprehensive mobile applications to enabling exclusive content streams so teams can offer fans experiences only available in person."

TECH AS A NECESSITY, NOT AN AMENITY

Technology is no longer considered an amenity by fans; it's a necessity. Fans from across all demographics are now accustomed to having exclusive information accessible and with speed, a requirement for the modern fan experience. And understanding that much of the conversation today centers on fan experience as the best way to continue to get fans into venues, teams will see a considerable return on their tech investments through ticket sales over time and immediate advertising revenues delivered via digital signage. In San Francisco, the Giants and AT&T have jointly invested approximately \$15 million in technology improvements over the past five years at AT&T Park, a facility that has routinely sold out over the same time span.

Technology necessities today go far beyond just garden-variety Wi-Fi infrastructure, which is not enough to keep the casual fan. Access to technology touches, such as social media interaction, mobile concessions, and multi-cast video, is fast becoming vital to capturing casual fans and increasing their desires to visit the venue more frequently. AT&T is the architect of numerous technologies, including custom mobile apps and high-density Wi-Fi, which is essential to stream live video and other content not available to fans at home.

THE ART OF POSSIBLE

AT&T is uniquely positioned in the sports technology space because it offers a comprehensive sports package. All of its high-level sports applications (sponsorship, infrastructure, account teams, and advanced solutions) are aggregated with one point of contact: the Sports Industry Solutions Practice (ISP) team. The AT&T ISP team differentiates itself from other solution providers because of this integration of cohesive variety. Wi-Fi, DAS, mobile applications, digital signage, etc. all work together under one umbrella to streamline practices for AT&T venues and to create a better in-venue experience for their fans. AT&T demonstrates for its clients "the art of possible" in the mobility ecosystem of stadiums and arenas and reveals how technology is changing fan loyalties and event attendance.

As mobility increasingly becomes a component of everyday life, and sports and technology progressively converge, sports venue operators must continue to create environments connecting their facilities to the outside world. Strategic partnerships, such as the San Francisco Giants and AT&T, are employing a holistic approach, combining on-field action, fan amenities, and sponsorship to drive incremental revenue from the merging of sports, entertainment, and technology.