Next Generation

Sports Network

Customer Story

When you ﬁnd a need,

dream big

What if all the world’s soccer

fans could have access to

any game they wanted to

watch, live, or on-demand,

with detailed data and scores?

That is the exact question that

Harry van Streun, CEO and

President of Next Generation

Sports Network (NGSN) asked

himself two years ago.



Soccer has the biggest audience

out of any sport worldwide, but fans

are underserved because many

of the games just aren’t shown—

even on expensive, sports-package

networks. Harry knew it was time

for the Next Generation Sports

Network (NGSN)—a 24-hour, live-

streaming, on-demand, sports

network that oﬀers all the domestic

and international games you want

for one low price.

Disrupting the current

model

mobile platforms backed by

Microsoft Azure.

• Continuous access to the

network and continuous and

eﬀective operations behind

the scenes with Microsoft

Azure Media Services.

In the US and Canada, there

are more than 40 diﬀerent

nationalities that are very

soccer-centric. If you want to

watch a game from your home

country, most aren’t televised.

The restriction is time. With

linear programming, games

are scheduled at a certain

Listening to trusted

people

Solutions in unexpected

places

While Harry was searching for

the right 3rd party partners,

enterprise services, and cloud

platforms, he ran into a past

business colleague. “I told

time and there are no reruns.

Harry knew his idea would be

groundbreaking, something really

special. “When I talk about what

we’re building, the usual response

is, ‘Hey, sounds great! How much

does it cost? Wow! Can I have it?’

NGSN beats traditional sports

networks because it programs all

the matches available. Games can

be viewed live, or on demand to

watch later at your convenience.

“Our model makes us completely

diﬀerent from any oﬀering out

there today. That’s what Microsoft

is helping us deliver.”

Microsoft Services might

be known for working with

corporate giants like GE and

Boeing, but they are also very

good at helping moderate-sized

businesses quickly make the jump

to achieving big plans. “They

explained what they did for the

Winter Olympics in Sochi. As I

was thinking about our challenges

and the way we were envisioning

our idea, I could only see one

way to go,“ said Harry. The Sochi

project highlighted the beneﬁts

of Azure’s unmatched scale. This

was exactly what NGSN needed.

Azure provides the largest hyper-

scale and distributed global

him we had major decisions

on infrastructure and how to

implement.” Harry knew those

aspects were crucial if he wanted

to make his dream a reality.

“My friend suggested that I meet

with the Microsoft Services team.

I trusted him because we had

worked together, so I went over

with no expectations, not thinking

of engaging with Microsoft.”

However, Harry soon realized

that Microsoft Services was the

best choice to make his dream

happen.

NGSN provides the following

service:

• A uniﬁed interface to news and

results of the Games for various

scale cloud infrastructure in the

world. (As of November 2014,



Microsoft has two times as many

regions as Amazon Web Services

and ﬁve times as many public

regions as Google Cloud.) Azure

can handle sudden traﬃc spikes

and heavy loads without new

infrastructure costs or capacity

worries on the customer’s part,

and its enterprise grade active

redundancy and failover support

throughout the network help

assure reliability. If you’ve ever

been in town when there is a

World Cup game playing, you

are well aware of how busy it

can get—imagine that kind of

activity online, on a global scale.

The reliability of Azure is vital

to ensuring the fans get what

they need. But going beyond

tech specs and cloud prowess,

the Microsoft Services team also

brings care and dedication to

their work. Harry was impressed

with how engaged they were with

his vision of NGSN and how they

were able to turn that vision into

a viable architecture and design

for deployment.

of a global network individually.

“They did a lot of work not only to

build, but also to really understand

all the key requirements needed

to make an integrated solution

that would work.” Harry initially

underestimated the technical

complexity required for NGSN,

but technical complexity is

Recognizing value

Hiring Microsoft Services would

allow Harry to keep NGSN’s

enterprise and cloud needs in

one place, instead of having to

vet, hire, and manage all the

necessary staﬀ and components

irrelevant when Microsoft

Services is on the job. “Right

from the start they were highly

engaged, keen on ﬁnding the right

solution, and committed to getting

the job done.”

Microsoft Services

Microsoft Services helped support the NGSN dream with:

•

•

End-to-end project management

Timing

Implementing Azure Mobile Services APIs to enable the building of more

robust, engaging mobile applications with less eﬀort and in a shorter

time.

Architecting and implementing the Azure cloud services needed for

success

With over 25 years in IT, Harry

had seen it all, noting that IT

projects are typically delayed and

over-budget. But when you’re

innovating, timing is crucial.

“I saw people taking control, I

saw the right quality output, the

right steps being taken, things

being delivered on time and

under budget—I was positively

surprised.” You’ve got to be ﬁrst

on the scene with excellent

results. NGSN would probably

not be preparing for such an

early launch had they gone with

other providers. “The structure,

the reporting, and the leadership

given by Microsoft helped us to

•

•

Data services to end user applications to facilitate the delivery of

game statistics and other data points to users

•

•

Video on demand encoding (summaries, goals and full matches)

Payment provider integration to enable NGSN to conduct the

business of subscriptions and to make subscribing easier for users

•

User management to ensure NGSN users are subscribed and have

the correct content

•

•

End-to-end load testing

Monitoring solutions and telemetry that enable NGSN to eﬃciently

operate the network day to day and to quickly anticipate and mitigate

any potential problems

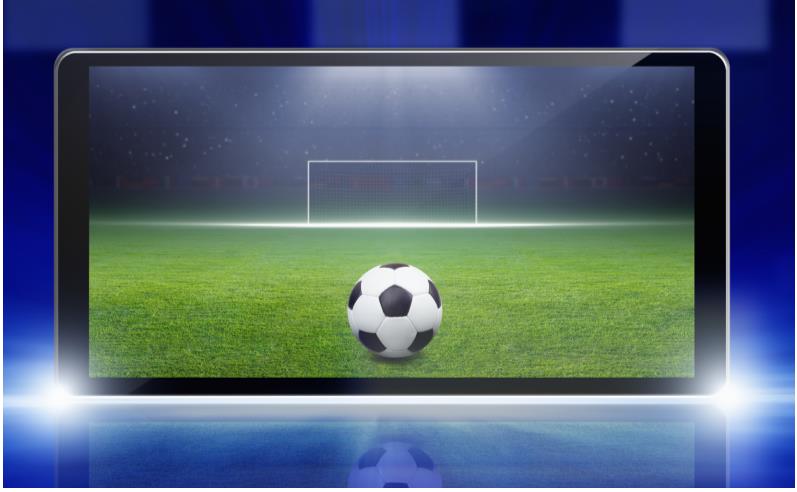
•

Media Services setup and integration with partner solutions

Microsoft Services Azure Center of Excellence team were steadfast in their

leadership, guidance, and experience so they could help make Harry’s dream

a reality.



deliver this quite complex solution the level that is applicable to

in a very short time frame. This

project would normally have

taken a year, and it was delivered

in 6 months. Microsoft Services

and Azure brings that to the

party.” With the superior project

management skills and cloud

experience of Microsoft Services,

NGSN will be hitting the US and

Canada in the ﬁrst quarter of

2015!

your needs. “With Microsoft we

have the platform to grow very

quickly, and the organization

to support this growth.” If your

needs increase, the option

to scale-up is just a few

clicks away. “With our earlier

solutions, growth would have

been a catch-up game. Now

it’s a scale-out game.” NGSN

can concentrate on building

the right mix of services and

marketing while Microsoft

delivers solutions in an eﬃcient

and cost-eﬀective way.

“Am I a positive

reference for

Microsoft? I would

say 100% yes.”

The NGSN dream is now

a reality

The build is complete, but

Growing together

the Microsoft Services team

continues to maintain their high

standards and commitment to

NGSN. “The depth and breadth of

services available through Azure

is much bigger than I anticipated.

I never lost one moment of sleep

because I knew Microsoft would

deliver, and they have.” No matter

what the issue is, the team is

there to resolve it. They ensure

all the diﬀerent elements are

integrated and functioning as

designed so that the technology

is simple. “When I saw our ﬁrst

live transmission out of Russia—

that was a real moment of joy.

It showed on the app with all

the elements working together!”

Choosing Microsoft allowed

Harry to focus on his passion and

savor the glories of success.

Today’s Microsoft is diﬀerent

because it has streamlined the

processes needed to make any

business an in-touch, connected

success. As NGSN ﬁnalizes its

build and launch, they are moving

from deployment and consulting

with Microsoft Services to

24/7 Business Mission Critical

Customer Support by Premier

Support Services. “Am I a positive

reference for Microsoft? I would

say 100% yes. And it’s all based

on facts. If things are wrong,

you’d hear from me as well. But

I have no reason to complain

whatsoever.” Today’s Microsoft

works with its customers to

grow and make their dreams a

reality. “Now when people talk

about complex cloud solutions, I

The future is wide open tell them, make sure you talk to

Microsoft and make sure you get

support from Microsoft Services.”

The Microsoft hyper-scale cloud

platform allows for very fast

scalability—you simply select

If your business is looking to go from catch up to

scale up, please visit www.microsoft.com/services

to learn more about Microsoft Services.

