



Microsoft® Financing helps Coventry City Football Club buy premier marketing software

Overview

Country:
UK

Industry:
Sports

Customer Profile:
Coventry City is a leading British football club.

Partner Profile:
Green 4 Solutions is a Microsoft Certified Partner that specialises in supplying the sports industry.

Management Summary

Coventry City Football Club required a Dynamics CRM and ticketing solution that would enable it to communicate more effectively with its supporters and drive more business. Microsoft Financing was able to provide flexible financing so that Coventry City could get the system it required very quickly.

Coventry City Football Club is on a mission: back in the Premiership by 2008. To get there, the new management team needs to stay on the ball in the boardroom as well as on the pitch. Creating enough revenue from ticket sales and merchandising to fund a transfer kitty is a priority. But how to build a better relationship with existing supporters and win new fans to boot?

The new star player: Dynamics™ CRM 3.0

They turned to Green 4 Solutions, a Microsoft Certified Partner that specialises in supplying the sports industry, for a solution based on Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0 and their own proprietary Green 4 eCommunicator software.

The first part of the system provides multiple channels of communication to different supporter groups. For example, the club can send different, customised email messages to local businesses or season ticket holders. The software tracks who receives and opens the messages as well as the results of each campaign.

The second part ties in a ticketing system using smart cards. This means that the CRM software can track fans as they come through the gates on match days and tie this in with other information in the database. "The vision is a cashless stadium where all purchases, including drinks and merchandising is made on the supporter's card," explains Peter Oliver, a director at Green 4.

The financing challenge

The cash flow of a football club fluctuates during the year. As a result, Coventry City FC wanted to finance the new software to spread the payments evenly over time. However, this same volatility causes some lenders to charge punitive rates of interest, and proceed warily when lending to football clubs.

To avoid these penalties, Green 4 worked with Microsoft Financing to put a comprehensive finance package together. The substantial deal covered the software, configuration, project management, implementation and training. It

also covered the first year's worth of Green 4's subscription-based email backend.

Benefits of Microsoft Financing for the Partner

For Green 4, the process could not have been simpler. They made the initial enquiry online to work out the interest rate. The deal itself was very straightforward. Instead of invoicing the club, they invoiced Microsoft Financing. Once the club signed off the paperwork, Microsoft paid Green 4 immediately and the club started its monthly payments.

Because Microsoft Financing were able to accommodate the club's seasonal cash flow, Coventry City were able to buy the complete solution on day one, which meant a bigger sale for Green 4 and a joined-up solution for the club.

As a start-up business, Green 4 benefited from prompt payment in full when the club accepted the system. "We didn't have to worry about chasing monthly invoices," says Peter Oliver. "We've been able to grow our business much more aggressively and fund additional staff with improved cash flow."

Benefits of Microsoft Financing for the customer

The benefits for Coventry City FC are obvious: a better rate of interest and a more responsive lender. "It took about four working hours to get back to us with a decision in principle. It was extremely simple and quick," says Mal Brannigan, the club's finance director.

The result is that Green 4 has sold more, sold quicker and collected sooner, while their customer got a better solution and a better deal. "It's good business and it's good marketing," says Green 4's Peter Oliver. "It's good all round."

For More Information

For further information about Microsoft Financing products and services, please visit www.microsoft.com/uk/financing email MSFinUK@microsoft.com or call +44 (0)118 909 2299

Microsoft® Financing

Microsoft® Financing is the IT financing package offered by Microsoft. It fulfils the requirements of both medium-sized clients and those operating globally. Finance partner CIT offers individual financing customised to suit each client's budget. By teaming with Microsoft, CIT benefits from the years of expertise Microsoft gained together with its Microsoft Certified Partner Network in implementing IT solutions.

Microsoft Financing helps solve business challenges. The ability to invest in IT solutions can be the difference in whether your company maintains or loses its competitive edge. Whether you're looking for a software-centric solution or one that integrates software, services and hardware, we've simplified IT acquisition and made it more affordable. Predictable payment options customized to fit your A/P cycle and budget enable your company to update its technology more frequently, as well as free up your corporate lines for other investments. In short, Microsoft® Financing makes smart business sense, shifting your focus from, "How will we pay for it?" to, "What do we need?"

For more information visit www.microsoft.com/uk/financing