

From Big Win to Big Data: How Chicago Cubs Uses Informatica to Build Lifelong Fans



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- Andrew McIntyre, Vice President, Technology,
Chicago Cubs

As one of eight charter members of the National League in 1876, the Chicago Cubs have become one of the most recognized teams and most valuable franchises in all of professional sports. The Cubs won back-to-back World Championships in 1907-1908 and overcame a 108-year drought to win it all again in 2016.

The team plays its home games at Wrigley Field, which is the second-oldest ballpark in the majors. Its ivy-covered brick outfield wall, iconic red marquee, and hand-turned scoreboard add to its all-American charm. Home to the Chicago Cubs since 1914, it is a treasured national monument, hosting over three million visitors every year. It is also a favorite venue for concerts, and the campus serves as a neighborhood gathering place for other events such as farmers markets, movies in the park, and ice skating in the winter.

When the Cubs do anything, they do it big. Their world championship parade was the largest ever recorded in the Western Hemisphere and the seventh most-attended event in recorded history,

as five million fans celebrated in the streets of Chicago. Nearly 50 million people watched the World Series games, and the Cubs sold \$70 million worth of merchandise in just 24 hours following the team’s historic win. The Cubs are bolstered by an estimated community comprising millions of dedicated global fans known as Cubs Nation. Not only do these fans congregate in the stands, restaurants, bars, and their own living rooms, they engage and connect over social media to show their support.

Data as a game-changer

With such a highly valued brand, the Cubs franchise is more than just a sports team. It’s a successful business focused on providing its fans—among the most loyal and passionate in baseball—the best possible experience not only at the ballpark, but also at the restaurants, souvenirs shops, hotels, and other businesses around Wrigley Field—many of which the Ricketts family own or support. To enhance



Business Needs:

- Engage fans with richer, more entertaining experiences.
- Maximize marketing opportunities at ballpark and other adjacent properties.
- Direct more revenue into maintaining a winning team.

Data Challenges:

- Integrate data from 24 sources, including on-premises and cloud applications.
- Leverage Wi-Fi, social media, ticketing and CRM data for advanced analytics.
- Keep data quality high for accurate, targeted marketing.

Solution:

- Manage large data streams from online ticketing to game-day experiences with Informatica Big Data Management.
- Use Informatica Cloud Data Integration to integrate data from cloud applications, including Salesforce.
- Use Informatica Data Quality to cleanse and improve third-party data with Informatica PowerCenter for data integration.

Results:

- Opened up new lines of revenue with a single view of every fan.
- Delivered fan experiences more effectively, strengthening brand loyalty.
- Made faster, more profitable decisions about ticket and product pricing.

entertainment value for fans and open up new revenue possibilities, the Cubs needed a better view of their customers.

"Data has always driven the sport of baseball—from batting average calculations to drafting and trading players," says Andrew McIntyre, Vice President, Technology for the Cubs. "Our organization needed to better tap data to drive the business of baseball."

The club's five revenue lines—ticketing, broadcast rights, corporate partnerships, concessions, and merchandising—each produce large volumes of data. But this business intelligence was locked away in separate data silos. The Cubs needed to integrate the data from all the different revenue streams to unleash a holistic view of the customer. Understanding customers' interactions with the Cubs across the board would give the Cubs the insight needed to target the right offers to the right fans at the right time.

For example, the Cubs wanted to leverage online ticketing information and other transactional data to better understand important demographics: Who is sitting in which seat at what game? Who sold their tickets, and when? Who gave their tickets away? Is a fan's attendance increasing or decreasing, and why? Are they eating at restaurants or patronizing local hotels? Answering these questions would help the Cubs track and customize offerings, identify cross-sell and up-sell opportunities, and establish new corporate partnerships to sell hotel suites or tickets to other Wrigley Field events, such as concerts.

"Unifying their experience across properties and making sense of it in near

real time is key to helping us connect with fans more intimately," says McIntyre. "The better we can understand our fans and their needs and preferences, the more revenue we can bring into the organization to invest in players, coaching talent, and new technology."

Digital transformation with intelligent data management

The Cubs decided to partner with Informatica to aggregate data from more than 24 different sources—including business systems, Wi-Fi, social media, ticketing systems, and Salesforce CRM—into a hybrid data integration platform to enable faster, more targeted decisions.

"We want to be the best both on the field and off the field, and that means partnering with the best technology companies," says McIntyre. "We chose Informatica because we knew data integration was going to be critical to our success."

The Cubs selected Informatica Intelligent Data Platform as its end-to-end platform for data management and data-driven digital transformation. The solution combines Informatica PowerCenter for data integration, Informatica Big Data Management (BDM) to manage increasingly larger data streams, Informatica Data Quality to cleanse third-party data, and Informatica Cloud Data Integration for better application integration between cloud applications, including Salesforce.

The Informatica solution provides a unified approach to greater fan intimacy.

As a result, the Cubs launched an advanced online ticketing application and freed up valuable IT and business resources. With Hadoop and Informatica BDM, the Cubs can aggregate massive amounts of data much faster than using a traditional data warehouse.

Driving new revenue with stronger customer loyalty

The Informatica solution provides a single view of every fan, helping the Cubs engage them with mobile experiences such as MLB.com's Ballpark App. It will also enable targeted proximity marketing, including real-time point-of-sale promotions in neighboring restaurants, hotels, and souvenir shops, to enhance the fan experience and increase revenue. The organization also plans to offer fan-facing Wi-Fi at the ballpark, which will provide additional insights into fan sentiment and behaviors.

"Informatica is literally a game-changer by helping us understand who our fans are and what they want, while helping us maintain the tried-and-true traditions at Wrigley Field," says McIntyre. "It will help us change the way we interact with customers and visitors, and attract the next generation of loyal Cubs fans."

For example, the introduction of video boards and digital signage is not new in baseball—but it was for the Cubs. The organization introduced video after extensive consultation with its stakeholders, including fans and

community members. On the flip side, interacting with hawkers selling food and drinks at the ballpark is part of the quintessential experience of attending a Cubs game, so implementing mobile ordering is not a priority for the organization at this time.

Making faster, more profitable decisions

Intelligent data management helps the Cubs make the best business decisions—from which broadcast partners to work with to how tickets and other products such as season ticket packages, group sales, and suites are presented and priced.

“The more data we have, the better we get at making decisions that deliver the best possible fan experience, and boost our bottom line,” says McIntyre. “With Informatica, we’ve streamlined the data acquisition, preparation, and processes

that go into managing our ticket inventory. What used to take several days now takes minutes. We can read the market faster and optimize pricing.”

Building lifelong fan relationships

Informatica is now an official corporate partner of the Chicago Cubs and is helping the team expand its data-driven initiatives to its global fan base and Spring Training facility in Arizona.

“At every stage of our journey, Informatica has played a role—whether it’s as a strategic advisor, helping us choose the best solutions, or identifying people we should work with,” says McIntyre. “By choosing Informatica for enterprise data management, we’re in a great position to make sure people have experiences that will keep them lifelong Cubs fans.”

About The Chicago Cubs

The Chicago Cubs, a charter member of Major League Baseball’s National League since 1876, have won the National League Pennant 17 times and were the first team to win back-to-back World Series titles in the 1907 and 1908 seasons. The team claimed its third World Series Championship in 2016. Known for its ivy covered outfield walls, hand-operated scoreboard, and famous Marquee, historic Wrigley Field has been the home of the Chicago Cubs since 1914, making it the second oldest ballpark in Major League Baseball. In 2009, the Ricketts family bought the Cubs from the Tribune Company and named Tom Ricketts, son of TD Ameritrade founder Joe Ricketts, chairman of the team. For more information, visit www.cubs.com.



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