

Case Study

Bath Rugby
Sport
Communication Services

Ricoh teams up with Bath Rugby to improve coaching and player development



When Bath Rugby moved into its prestigious elite training facility at Farleigh House, it was the beginning of the club's journey as it strives to become the best club in the world. Essential to that journey are the partnerships that Bath Rugby has established. One extremely effective

partnership is with Ricoh. Innovative communication technology from Ricoh is playing a vital role in player coaching and development, and, ultimately, success on the pitch.

Executive summary

Name: Bath Rugby
Location: Bath, South West England
Size: 135 staff
Activity: Professional rugby (compete in Aviva Premiership, European Rugby Champions Cup, and LV= Cup)

Challenges

- Communicate complex information quickly and efficiently
- Help improve club operations on and off the pitch

Solution

- Ricoh Communication Services

Benefits

- Helps improve coaching and player development
- Makes it easy and efficient to communicate complex information
- Enables better match and player performance analysis and planning
- Delivers a partnership for sharing knowledge and creating innovative solutions

Challenges

Bath Rugby, established in 1865, is one of the oldest rugby clubs in the world. Over its prestigious history, international stars such as Jeremy Guscott, Jason Robinson, Phil de Glanville, Mike Catt and Mike Tindall have all played for the club. Today, players such as Jonathan Joseph, George Ford, Anthony Watson, Kyle Eastmond and Francois Louw, have helped the club to an Aviva Premiership Final. Also, the club has recently contributed no less than eight players to the England World Cup training squad.

Lately, Bath Rugby's success has been largely due to an innovative approach to the way the club is run, its facilities and its player training and development. Following a change of ownership, Bath Rugby moved to an elite training facility at Farleigh House, a magnificent stately home and grounds, about ten miles outside the City of Bath. While the club still plays home games at its traditional ground, The Rec, in central Bath, training and club management is now run from Farleigh House.

Farleigh House was an opportunity to change and improve the way the whole club operated, from player development to business functions such as club management and administration, corporate hospitality and the experience for supporters.

Matt Powell, Business Development Director at Bath Rugby, says, "The vision is to be the best rugby club in the world and we now have a strong foundation in place, be that the facilities, coaching or the players themselves. We've invested in a world class facility at Farleigh House, but the Premiership is incredibly competitive so now it's about finding the one percent that will make the difference. Everything we do needs to be exceptional and to do that you've got to have effective partnerships. We look to people for expertise whether that is on nutrition, psychology or IT and we have partnered with Ricoh to help give us an edge."



One of the main ways Bath Rugby is looking to find that one percent difference is its new approach to training and development. Toby Booth, First Team Coach at the club, says, "A big challenge with modern rugby players - and what we're doing differently at Bath - is developing them so they are happy to make decisions and be responsible and accountable for those decisions. This 'Player First' approach has to be knowledge based; it's about understanding what's going on around you in a game and being able to adjust on the run to different situations."

Solution

Bath Rugby and Ricoh have formed a partnership covering corporate sponsorship and hospitality, business services and knowledge exchange. But the core of the partnership is the application of innovative Ricoh technology to improve player development. A Ricoh Communication Services solution at Bath Rugby comprises interactive whiteboard (IWB) technology, Ricoh projectors and Ricoh Multifunction Products (MFPs) at Farleigh House, along with digital signage at The Rec.

Four Ricoh IWBs have been installed in training and analysis rooms where they perform a key role in the club's knowledge-based Player First strategy. The IWBs are used to access and present information in a dynamic, interactive way, so coaches and players can communicate and collaborate effectively.

For example, the IWBs enable coaches to watch and analyse footage of a Bath Rugby game, an opposing team or individual players. Match sequences are played and paused so coaches can mark up the screen image, interact with the players and discuss ways to improve play. Content from an IWB, such as training session analysis of an individual player, can be saved and emailed to the player or printed out on a Ricoh MFP.

Booth says, "There are some thirty plus games in a season so you have to inject freshness and efficiency into what you do, keep meetings short and keep people mentally stimulated. Also, a lot of the young players have grown up with technology, so you need to adapt your methods, use technology to analyse, communicate and instil the information that they are going to need to make decisions on the field."

Ricoh projectors are used to present similar content on larger screens to larger audiences as well as for corporate presentations. Ricoh digital signage equipment at The Rec is used to improve the visitor experience, such as showing specific information and game footage in corporate hospitality suites.

continued overleaf

Benefits

Bath Rugby's partnership with Ricoh is having a significant impact on the club's drive to improve its performance, both on and off the pitch.

For coaching and player development, one of the key benefits of the Ricoh technology has been to communicate often complex information quickly and in a way that is easy to absorb and retain.

Booth says, "What we're trying to do is make better players and give ourselves a better chance of winning. We need to create a progressive environment and the Ricoh technology allows us to be as efficient as we can with players. That means that they stay fresh, they improve and ultimately, it gives us a greater chance of winning at the weekend."

Powell says, "We constantly want to improve and stay ahead of the opposition - it's relentless and very competitive. So Ricoh, particularly on the rugby side in terms of the technology, is helping us communicate to players in a more effective and efficient way and this is brilliant. From a corporate side we've now got some great facilities at Farleigh House, which all our partners enjoy using. Longer term there is an opportunity for Ricoh to help us to improve the customer and supporter experience at The Rec. So far Ricoh has been exceptional and has helped us perform at a world class level."

All of Bath Rugby's corporate operations now run out of Farleigh House and the Ricoh technology is helping to improve management functions, from more efficient printing, through to first-class presentation equipment for board meetings.

Another important element of the partnership is sharing information and continuous improvement. Powell says, "Rico has relationships in sport, so it understands sport - the ambition, pressure and competition, which is very important for us. We can be quite demanding as a partner. We are pushing the boundaries and asking some slightly unrealistic questions and probably making Ricoh think, for instance, how do we communicate to players at half-time in a very short window? We'll take that kind of problem to Ricoh and see if they can come up with a solution in an unfamiliar environment - a hot, steamy, sweaty changing room."

Ricoh Solution/Products

- Ricoh Interactive Whiteboards
- Ricoh Projectors
- Ricoh Multifunction Products
- Ricoh Digital Signage

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