

The Football Association (FA)

Customer
Success Story



Region

United Kingdom



Solutions

Verint® Community™



Industry

Sports Services

Results

- 57% and rising Hotjar NPS score
- 1,150% increase in membership since January 2021
- 60,000 user interactions
- More than one million page views
- 20,000 items of content and 195 groups on platform

The FA Scores a Thriving Social Community with Verint

Opportunity

The Football Association (FA) is the governing body of association football in England. Founded in 1863, it is the oldest football association in the world and is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the amateur and professional game. The FA facilitates all competitive football matches within its remit at a national level, and indirectly at a local level through the county football associations.

The FA aims to promote and develop English football at all levels, from grassroots to the professional game. It is also working hard to ensure fair play, inclusion, and diversity.

The online England Football Community plays a vital role, helping to connect FA staff, fans, players, the network of county football associations, referees, and business partners. Ultimately, the goal is about making the most of the English football community, from experienced players to people new to the game.

Until recently, The FA was relying on a legacy community platform, which had several shortcomings:

- It lacked automated moderation functionality. Any moderation was conducted piecemeal and manually.
- It was expensive to operate and maintain.
- It was short on out-of-the-box integrations, resulting in costly, time-consuming manual integration intervention.
- It was inflexible, which caused the FA to adapt its processes to the legacy platform versus a community platform working to support the FA's operations.

"We wanted to create a modern, adaptive community that empowered everyone – from coaches and referees to staff – to improve engagement," explains Tim Bamber, Social Community Officer at The Football Association.

The requirements were to:

- Provide a flexible, customizable community with self-help tools to drive real value: better engagement, reduced costs, and increased collaboration across the game.
- Help people find solutions with online resources, such as discussion forums, knowledge articles, product documentation, and how-to videos.
- Save people time with social self-service through peer-to-peer support forums.
- Gain valuable insights into football via social customer service, digital marketing, and employee engagement.
- Improve community security through rigorous, automated moderation.

VERINT®

“Football by its nature is non-digital. The community helps to bridge this gap, with a modern, digital platform for engagement and collaboration.”

Tim Bamber, Social Community Officer, The Football Association

Solution

The FA standardized on the Verint® Community™ platform. Some 60,000 active users are now connected to a common interest through one comprehensive and easy to use social community – the England Football Community.

The England Football Community has proven to be highly successful. Bamber says, “Multiple FA departments have joined the community to share insights, knowledge, and opinions, including the coaching workforce, disability, grass roots teams, referees, and safeguarding.”

The platform is comprehensive too. Everything from blogs, forums, articles, and wikis to podcasts and galleries housing webinars and other resources are available.

Innovations throughout the community include:

The England Football Learning Group: This is a unique way for people to tap into discussions, pick up tips, and hunt down knowledge – both from other members and FA staff. The group provides access to expert blogs, in-depth podcasts, and tailored forums. In a recent video, for example, two FA officials reflected on how good coaching had influenced their careers. Another recent forum post asked for advice on the tactics new coaches should teach under-sevens football.

“One particularly valuable forum post recently asked for advice about coaching late into the evening in a city area,” Bamber adds. “Through active support, the advice is helping more people play in the evening, and potentially more safely.”

Referee Community: There is a rich stream of blogs, offering a quick read tailored to a specific subject. Examples include a blog on The FA’s Mental Health Champion Scheme for refereeing and local contacts, a free online module to learning the laws of the game, and the latest technical guidance for match officials.

Coaching podcasts: Guidance, advice, insight, and ideas abound on helping people progress their coaching career journeys. Five hundred coaches are active in the community. Podcast episodes, for example, support and develop coaching within the women’s and girl’s games, including podcasts on scanning as a skill to be taught and understanding the development of the female brain.

Benefits

Masterminded by leading community consultancy 3sides, the England Football Community has been an outstanding success, uniting everyone from the grassroots football played in parks on a Sunday morning to the professional game. “Football by its nature is non-digital,” says Bamber. “The community helps to bridge this gap, with a modern, digital platform for engagement and collaboration.”

In just 18 months, the community has achieved:

- 57 percent and rising Hotjar Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- 1,150 percent increase in membership since January 2021
- 60,000 user interactions
- More than one million page views
- 20,000 items of content added
- 195 groups on the platform

Unlike the previous platform, the England Football Community features automated moderation. “Pre-defined processes prevent certain phrases appearing, while there are clear lines of reporting,” explains Bamber. “The community is also integrated with the Internet Watch Foundation to prevent explicit or otherwise offensive content appearing.”

Reflecting and validating its ease of use and pre-built automation capabilities, the community is managed by one person. Tim Bamber alone is responsible for its development and growth.

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