

Recurly Case Study



HockeyTV

Subscription Model

Scores a Win with Fans



Overview

Ask anyone who is the most famous hockey player of all time, and they'll likely say Wayne Gretzky. He also has one particularly famous quote — but one so thoroughly overused in business we'll not be using it here! A less famous but equally applicable quote is from Scotty Bowman, one of hockey's greatest coaches ever, who said, "If you are going to win games, you had better be ready to adapt."

Marc Ruskin, Founder of HockeyTV and currently the President of HockeyTech (which acquired HockeyTV in April, 2015), did just that when a year-and-a-half ago he took his company's business model from a Pay-Per-View revenue model to one based on subscriptions.

Evaluating and Deploying Recurly

The decision, which came after months of research, analysis, and customer communications was simple: offering their growing user base, which was quickly approaching 500,000 passionate hockey fans, an "all you can eat" model simply had to work! Instead of forcing fans to watch a single game for a single fee, the subscription system allowed them to watch any game, any time, on virtually any device.

So, having decided to go with a subscription model, they needed a billing solution that would meet their needs going forward. They evaluated 3-4 providers and found Recurly to be the best solution. What especially got their attention was Recurly's very flexible API and how that could accommodate HockeyTV's complex business model which initially offered a number of very different types of plans.



Details

Using Recurly Since: 2014



Marc Ruskin

President, HockeyTech

Benefits of Recurly

- Intuitive, easy-to-use solution that provides fast time-to-value
- Flexible, powerful solution lets HockeyTV create a variety of plans to serve their customers' ever-evolving needs
- Their partnership with Recurly means that HockeyTV can continue to adapt and innovate with their subscription model



They needed a solution that would give them great flexibility and adaptability in terms of subscription terms, renewals, payment structures, and international processing.

HockeyTV was also able to deploy Recurly quite easily and where needed, got assistance from Recurly's support and development teams. In terms of end-user training, the solution is so intuitive and easy to use that they were able to get started with minimal guidance.

A Powerful Subscription Ecosystem

“The technology is incredibly powerful but easy to implement — and those two things don't often go hand-in-hand,” reports Ruskin. “Recurly has done a really good job of creating a tremendously powerful subscription ecosystem while maintaining genuine simplicity in terms of the implementation.”

Ruskin does offer this advice to other companies thinking of moving to a subscription model. “With any project, especially as they relate to things as important as customer touch points, it's critical to plan out the implementation, to execute and then to refine over time. Customers should take an evolutionary approach to subscriptions, not a revolutionary one.”

Since switching to Recurly, they have seen a significant increase in viewers per game and in topline revenue; they have also seen a significant decrease in customer care requests. According to Ruskin, “Recurly allows us to offer tens of thousands of live games to our viewers around the world who can't get the content anywhere else.”

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And of course, part of adapting is learning what works and what doesn't. HockeyTV, having learned a lot in their first twelve months of running a subscription-based business, is already adjusting their subscription options. And they are relying on Recurly features like coupons and add-ons to allow them to give their subscribers more flexibility in terms of how they consume content, when they consume it, and what devices they use. They may not be sure yet what exactly all those subscription options will be, but they know that it is Recurly that enables them to offer such a variety of viewing options to their subscriber base of a half-million devoted hockey fans.



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Recurly

Recurly provides enterprise-class recurring billing management for thousands of subscription-based businesses worldwide.

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