Sports Information Services | Sports & Gaming

Transforming a legacy business for scale and growth

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For more than 35 years, SIS has provided short-form betting content, including video and data feeds, to online and retail bookmakers across the world. It faced a challenge: how to grow and scale, to become a 24/7 digital betting service to increase turnover and dwell time for customers. To achieve this, it embarked on a transformation program with Zenitech, and SIS is now a trusted partner to more than 385 customers in 45 countries, supplying 24/7 betting services to retail and online customers, and covering more than 600,000 betting events every year.

Transforming the betting industry

SIS has a history of transforming the betting industry. When it launched in 1986, only live audio commentary was broadcast to betting offices, and results were physically posted to a board. SIS was the first company to change this, by producing pictures from racecourses so retail shops could broadcast live racing in for the first time.
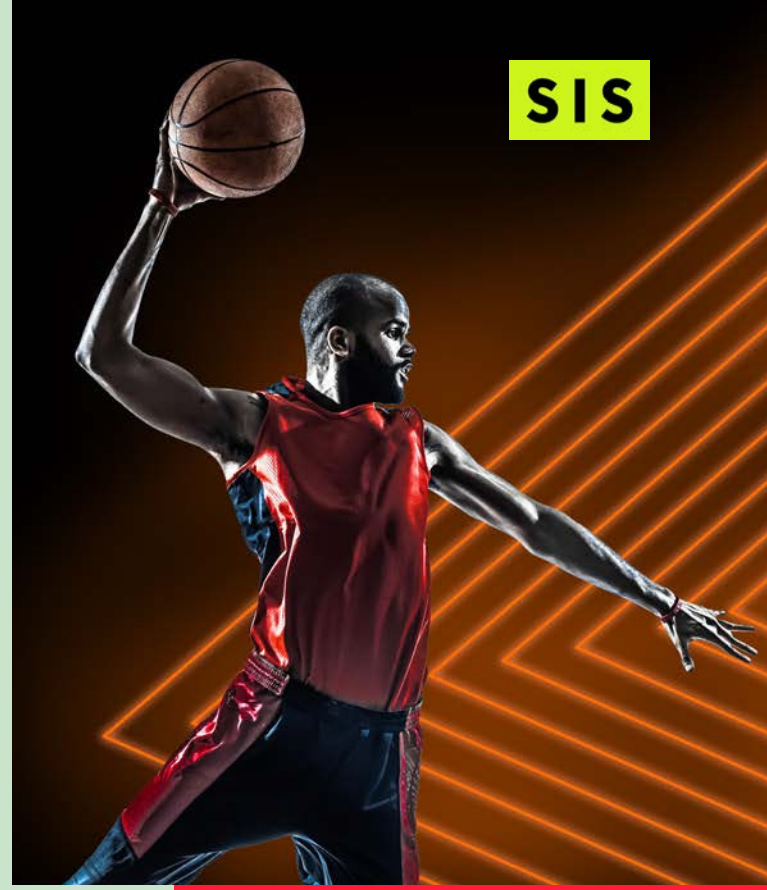
Now, SIS is transforming the profitability of betting operators by providing them with profitable and engaging content that includes live pictures, data, on-screen graphics with betting triggers, and a wide range of markets and pricing to drive revenues. It covers short-form betting events including horse and greyhound racing, virtuals, esports and live numbers draws, with an event every three minutes. These quick-fire events are high frequency, increasing betting turnover and dwell time for retail and online operators all over the world.

SIS' own transformation journey - from analogue broadcasting to 24/7 digital

This has taken SIS on its own transformation journey. It first came to Zenitech with a clear ambition to be able to scale its channel count, and grow customer numbers, including expanding into new markets.

That meant changing the strategic direction of the company from what was essentially an analogue broadcasting business into a global 24/7 digital content, data and graphics provider. It needed a partner to help it build a high-performance and scalable digital capability.

Zenitech was hired initially to rebuild SIS' existing channel automation platform, to build a new data distribution platform, and migrate everything to the cloud. This started with reverse engineering the legacy solutions on which SIS was running, and reconstructing the business logic (the rules and workflows of the business). Zenitech recommended an agile approach, phasing the reconstruction project into manageable milestones that would deliver incremental value to the business.

Over the first two years working together, the teams focused on the technology estate needed to deliver SIS' scale and growth ambitions. Together, Zenitech and SIS:

- Built a suite of industry-leading products to increase content and drive revenue in product areas such as esports, horse racing and content distribution.
- Automated operational processes to reduce cost, and innovative thinking around broadcasting distribution and capture.
- Re-platformed core business applications and services to support 24/7 delivery
- Migrated and re-platformed applications into a cloud infrastructure
- Implemented a DevOps strategy to enable best practice deployments and regular releases

In addition, Zenitech consulted SIS on creating an Agile software development environment to enable fast-paced, continuous delivery of incremental changes that would benefit SIS' bottom line. The delivery team worked closely with SIS' in-house team, sharing suggestions for improvements and collaborating closely throughout the project.

Scaling SIS' business and profitability - driving value to customers

SIS could see the benefits immediately, as it developed its 24/7 service, driving real business value to its customers. This success and its ability to scale its service saw it break into new markets and **grow its customer base by three times.**

As a result, the partnership continued, and the next phase of the project was taking on ownership of the entire end-to-end development and delivery process. Zenitech introduced quality practices (operational, stress, performance, functional and regression testing). All this was done through a nearshore delivery approach, which provides a high-quality, strategically critical service, without breaking the bank for SIS.

Value delivered

SIS continues to scale and grow, offering market-leading innovative products and services, while reducing operational costs through improvements in productivity through automation and technology.

Technology focus:

- Reverse engineering from code base; shaped backlog based on results
- Automation of operational processes
- Singleton Java applications not covered by tests, on premises
- Containerized cloud ready application chains, scalable or shareable; unit, e2e and QAA testing
- Cloud migration programme
- Splitting the big bang release into phases to reduce the risks and to make each release backwards compatible with the existing platform
- Introduction of quality gates (which became standard practice in all new projects)
- Support / maintenance of legacy system throughout, including production incident resolution