Strategic hits a Home Run with ScoreBook.com

ScoreBook.com is a free LANSA Web service for managing amateur sports leagues. It gives sports leagues a central place to manage their operations. Leagues get a free Web site where uploaded pictures and logos, team messages and player rosters form the core of the team Web page. League managers can schedule games, record results, maintain league positions and document highlights with action photos. All this is done dynamically without the need for Web design or programming.

The mastermind behind ScoreBook.com is amateur baseball league organizer and sports enthusiast **Mitch Miles**. He approached Strategic Business Systems, a LANSA Solution Partner, with the ScoreBook.com idea. Strategic agreed to fund startup costs for staffing and technology.

John Myers, president of Strategic Business Systems and ScoreBook.com corporate director says, "ScoreBook.com's longterm goal is to provide the only truly multilingual, state-of-the-art league and team management tools on the Web. We intend to become a true global online community for the many millions of sports participants worldwide."

A worldwide vision

Mitch, now a ScoreBook.com director, explains how the idea came about. "For years I've been managing three baseball leagues by myself. I did all the scheduling manually, input all the game results and set up all the players using Excel spreadsheets. I had stacks of paper spreadsheets. It was almost a full time job. I realized I was not the only one going blind sitting for hours inputting this stuff for multiple leagues."

"Participation in amateur sports is at an all-time high. In the United States alone, over 17 million people participate in amateur baseball and over 30 million people play basketball. Worldwide, over 120 million people play professional or amateur soccer. It seemed to me that the Internet would be a good way for team managers to share the workload."

'I still manage three baseball leagues, but now I only spend a fraction of the time I used to.'

"I envisioned a Web based service providing not just the best league management tools, but also a way of creating a slick-looking site without having to know anything about making Web pages. I approached Strategic Business Systems to turn this vision into reality because they had a proven record of success with Internet systems."

John Myers continues, "Our employees thought it was such a good idea, that they wanted to invest personally if we didn't do it as a company. The whole idea behind ScoreBook is to give amateur leagues, which typically lack the resources and finances to host their own Web sites, a way to get online and provide information to players and fans."

'Live' in fifteen weeks

"ScoreBook.com is a variation on the Business-to-Consumer Internet business model," says John. "Instead of selling products over the Internet, we're providing a service."

"We decided to use LANSA for the Web because this tool had proven itself already in many of our other projects."

"The LANSA repository allows us to define data elements in multiple languages, rather than having to create Web pages in multiple languages. LANSA dynamically serves the Web pages in the defined languages."

"Our developers worked with our graphic designers to come up with a fast-loading, attractive user interface. This interface was used by the LANSA Templates, which generated our systems functions. That is why the pages have a consistent look-and-feel."

"ScoreBook.com runs on an IBM iSeries Model 270 eServer. The iSeries is the heart of our organization. As a Web server it offers unparalleled reliability, which is critical in ensuring effective 24 x 7 operation of a worldwide site."

"The scalability of the iSeries will make it easy to grow the infrastructure as the ScoreBook community grows, without having to rewrite any code."

"A Web project with this kind of worldwide scope demands a development environment that can generate dynamic pages quickly and seamlessly and handle multilingual development without re-coding. LANSA and the iSeries meet this challenge," concludes John.

"To hand code the HTML, Javascript, and CGI programs required for this sort of functionality could take years. With LANSA for the Web, the pieces fit together easily and it took us only 15 weeks to develop the first release of the site."

More time, less calls

Mitch explains that League managers can accomplish all their management functions from the ScoreBook.com site, communicating with team managers and players, setting up game schedules, recording and publishing game results, keeping player statistics and determining team standings and league leaders.

"I still manage three baseball leagues, but now I only spend a fraction of the time that I used to. It is so much easier with ScoreBook."

David Obermeyer, of the New York State Section 9 wrestling league, says, "Right now, half the kids on the team are interested in the site, but when I'm able to post their individual statistics and individual photos, there's an ego thing. I'm sure they'll want to check the site all the time."

Jeff Parrott, a junior roller hockey team manager, comments, "The site has boosted the image of our team."

"We have our own smart looking home page with logos and photos of our victorious moments. The kids are proud of their club and show the site to their friends. As a result we get more enrollments requests and now have four junior-A teams. A large pool of talent."

"The smaller kids don't always remember to tell their parents about changes in training and game schedules. I used to send notes home to the parents, but notes get lost. So I got a lot of phone inquiries from parents, especially on the weekends. Now parents can simply visit our Web site and my phone doesn't ring so often anymore."

Future services

John concludes, "With so many sport enthusiasts visiting our site we have created an excellent medium for targeted advertising. We expect to make money from ad revenue, but a dot.com startup can't survive on ads alone."

"The league Web sites will continue to be offered at no charge, but we are launching a new payable service for teams that will include additional features and statistical overviews. The first sports to be offered this service will be baseball and softball, as they are the most statistically driven sports. As our community grows, we will be adding additional revenue generating services for our members."

'With LANSA for the Web, the pieces fit together easily.'

Company and System Information:

- Strategic Business Systems is a LANSA Solution Partner in Ramsey, New Jersey, USA.
  Strategic has been providing information systems solutions since 1982 and is a prominent systems supplier to the motor vehicle industry, as well as a leading provider of Internet solutions across industries. Strategic customers include Harley-Davidson, Hummer, BMW, Saab, Ducati, Land Rover, KTM Sportmotorcycles, Mikasa, Goya Foods, MCS Canon, New Jersey Carpenters Pension Fund, Donna Karan, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, and many more prestigious names. For more information visit: www.sbsusa.com
- For more information about ScoreBook.Com visit: www.ScoreBook.com
- Strategic hosts the ScoreBook site on an iSeries 270. The box also runs other Strategic applications and ScoreBook uses a just small percentage of its processing power and memory.