



Industry leaders provide insight into four key tech issues impacting the team business in 2016. →

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TECHNOLOGY SURVEY



STEVE VOGELSANG, VP-SALES AND MARKETING, GILL / PORTER • ADAM BLUMENFELD, CEO, BSN SPORTS • JONATHAN HAYDEN, CMO, BOWNET SPORTS • JERRY WILLIAMS, PRESIDENT, SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SPORTS • DON LEONARD, PRESIDENT, CROWN SPORT SALES • PETE SCHNEIDER, PRESIDENT, ATHLETIC DEALERS OF AMERICA • DON BATES, PRESIDENT, ALLEN SPORTS CENTER

Every link in the team sports chain – from vendors and independent reps to buying groups and team dealers – is facing the challenges and opportunities presented by technology. *Team Insight* sought out a representative sample of them for their thoughts on how technology is changing the team game in 2016 and where we go from here. **By Michael Jacobsen**

HOW HAS TECHNOLOGY CHANGED THE WAY THE TEAM SPORTS BUSINESS OPERATES?



STEVE VOGELSANG, GILL / PORTER

It has substantially increased speed and efficiency of the team sales process. There is more real-time vendor/product information immediately accessible and customer communication is coming in 24/7.

ADAM BLUMENFELD,
BSN SPORTS

IT HAS EITHER MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO COMPETE OR IT HAS BEEN A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND A PATHWAY TO RADICALLY IMPROVED CUSTOMER-FACING SOLUTIONS.

JONATHAN HAYDEN,
BOWNET SPORTS

BY INCREASING THE SPEED AND EFFICIENCY OF VIEWING, ORDERING AND SELLING. EFFICIENCIES IN ALL DEPARTMENTS HAVE REDUCED COSTS OF ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL AND PROCESSING TIME.

JERRY WILLIAMS, SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SPORTS

Tremendously over the past few years. Everyone thinks electronic first.

DON LEONARD, CROWN SPORT SALES

EVERYONE IS DOING THEIR RESEARCH ONLINE AND THEN TELLING YOU WHAT THEY WANT. AS A RESULT, DEALERS ARE CONSTANTLY PRESSURED TO MATCH PRICING FOUND ON THE INTERNET.

PETE SCHNEIDER, ATHLETIC DEALERS OF AMERICA

THE INTERNET HAS HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT THROUGH INCREASED COMPETITION FROM E-COMMERCE DEALERS AS WELL AS VENDORS WHO SELL DIRECT TO THE END USER.

DON BATES, PRESIDENT, ALLEN SPORTS CENTER

CONNECTING IN THE FIELD WITH STAFF, VENDORS AND CUSTOMERS HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER.

IPADS AND TABLETS. CATALOGS ARE NOW SHOWN ON A TABLET AS OPPOSED TO BEING HANDED OUT TO DEALERS AND COACHES.

ADAM BLUMENFELD, BSN SPORTS

3D PRINTERS.

PETE SCHNEIDER,
ATHLETIC DEALERS OF AMERICA

Custom uniform builders, online team stores and e-commerce websites, capable of not only showing the products you sell but having the vehicle to actually close the sale online.

DON BATES,
ALLEN SPORTS CENTER

PERSONAL ELECTRONICS SUCH AS TABLETS, SMART-PHONES AND GPS SYSTEMS.

STEVE VOGELSANG, GILL/PORTER

INCREASED VOLUME AND VARIETY OF COMMUNICATION, EMAIL AND TEXTING ARE PREFERRED BY CUSTOMERS. PHONE CALLS, VOICE MAIL AND FAXES ARE DECREASING RAPIDLY.

JERRY WILLIAMS,
SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SPORTS

ONLINE STORES HAVE REVOLUTIONIZED THE WAY WE OPERATE.

JONATHAN HAYDEN, BOWNET SPORTS

ONLINE ORDERING. BOTH THE STORES AND THEIR CUSTOMERS CAN PLACE ORDERS 24/7 FOR JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING FROM ANY SMARTPHONE.



WHAT IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE TEAM SPORTS BUSINESS?

HAS THE TEAM SPORTS BUSINESS EMBRACED TECHNOLOGY?



JONATHAN HAYDEN, BOWNET SPORTS

There are team dealers who have resisted the speed of change, but the younger generation of owners and employees has fully embraced new technologies. They grew up with it so they are more comfortable with the constant changes.

PETE SCHNEIDER,
ATHLETIC DEALERS OF AMERICA

Our industry had been slow to embrace technology initially, but in recent years has been much more open to how the new technology can benefit both the customer and their business.

DON BATES,
ALLEN SPORTS CENTER

THE SPORTS INDUSTRY IS OFTEN SLOW TO ADOPT NEW TECHNOLOGY, BUT CATCHES UP AT AN AMAZING PACE.

JERRY WILLIAMS, SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SPORTS

The industry is slow, but is making strides that need to be profitable.

STEVE VOGELSANG, GILL/PORTER

Depending on size and resources, a growing number of dealers are taking advantage of some level of vendor EDI and online sales platforms.

ADAM BLUMENFELD, BSN SPORTS

OUR INDUSTRY HAS DRAFTED BEHIND OBVIOUS IMPROVEMENTS MADE IN BROADER MARKETS, BUT HAS BEEN SLOW TO CONCEPTUALIZE HOW THESE TOOLS CAN BE UNIQUELY APPLIED TO OUR MARKETPLACE.

DON LEONARD, CROWN SPORT SALES

IT DEPENDS ON THE DEALER. SOME HAVE TOTALLY EMBRACED IT, WHILE OTHERS HAVE BEEN SLOW TO ADAPT.

WHAT IS THE DOWNSIDE OF ALL THIS TECHNOLOGY?



JONATHAN HAYDEN, BOWNET SPORTS

The reduced role of real human interaction. The Internet has now become the expert, in some cases replacing the knowledge of the local sales staff.

DON BATES, ALLEN SPORTS CENTER

Customers now have the ability to research and shop online for pricing after a salesperson spends time defining their needs and budgets for them. It takes some of the loyalty away.

ADAM BLUMENFELD, BSN SPORTS

CUSTOMERS WILL EXPECT SERVICE AND DELIVERY ON PAR WITH WHAT THEY SEE IN REGULAR LIFE WITH AMAZON, WHICH WILL APPLY PRESSURE TO SUPPLY CHAINS TO MEET RAPIDLY CHANGING EXPECTATIONS.

JERRY WILLIAMS, SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SPORTS

THE INTERNET ALLOWS CONSUMERS TO GET PRICES FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES QUICKLY. WE CAN'T SURVIVE SELLING ONLY ON PRICE.

STEVE VOGELSANG, GILL/PORTER

Customer expectations for speed and accuracy are rising and how team customers now define "relationship" is changing. Those that readily adapt will grow market share at the expense of those that cannot.

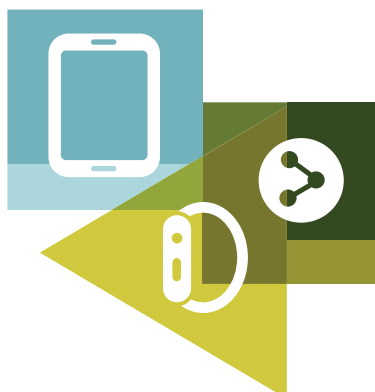
PETE SCHNEIDER, ATHLETIC DEALERS OF AMERICA

The downside can be the relationship side of the business. While most team dealers want to embrace the technology for the benefit of their customers, they don't want to lose touch with the relationships they have fostered over the years.

DON LEONARD, CROWN SPORT SALES

IT HAS TAKEN THE PERSONAL TOUCH AWAY FROM THE TEAM SPORTS BUSINESS.

WHERE DOES TECHNOLOGY IN TEAM SPORTS GO FROM HERE?



STEVE VOGELSANG, GILL/PORTER

Dealer and vendor integration will become more seamless. Product marketing and promotion, inventory availability and order processing, shipping and delivery notifications between the dealer, customer and vendor will get faster and more accurate.

JERRY WILLIAMS, SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SPORTS

I see a day where we rarely speak to the customer and that everything will be electronic. Our personal relationships will grow electronically.

DON BATES, ALLEN SPORTS CENTER

Technology will grow, as in any industry. There may be a day when there are actual virtual uniform builders. You may be able to compare on the same screen competitive uniforms or equipment with side-by-side information.

ADAM BLUMENFELD, BSN SPORTS

Technology goes blazing straight ahead at a pace our industry has never before experienced. The next 10 years will be about an ever-flattening world and supply chain, an over-emphasis on personalization and a premium given to quality, accuracy, self-service and speed.

PETE SCHNEIDER, ATHLETIC DEALERS OF AMERICA

IF YOU WANT YOUR BUSINESS TO SURVIVE AND PROSPER IN THIS INDUSTRY YOU BETTER STAY UP WITH THE TECHNOLOGY CURVE OR RISK EXTINCTION.