

# 5 ways Dropbox is accelerating digital transformation in football

# The need for transformation in football

In partnership with



From Europe's super elite, way down to the grassroots of non-league, how do football clubs survive in the modern era?

The gulf in finances has never been so large: but if there's one thing we know about football, it's that it is a game often won by the finest of margins, where tiny variances behind the scenes can make huge differences on the pitch. These fine margins prompted Sir David Brailsford's theory of marginal gains and Team Sky's cycling success where the cumulative effect of tiny incremental improvements in training, performance, recruitment and business operations can add up quickly and make a big impact - critical for professional teams.

On the pitch, tangible success or failure hinges on a club's ability to scout and sign talent, keep players fit and prepared with personalised coaching sessions. Off the pitch the winners are often those able to send contracts in time, keep fans engaged and advertisers and sponsors happy. And, until digital arrived, competitive advantage was almost always dictated by the size of a club owner's bank balance.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities of football across much of Europe. A recent report from BDO into the top four leagues in the UK highlights 45% of football club finance directors surveyed said their club's finances were 'in need of attention' - more than double the 21% reported in 2019.

And, according to Jon Tibbs, Founder and Chairman at JTA, an international sports consultancy,

"COVID has brought forward perhaps 20 years of challenges into an 18 month timeframe and accelerated the need for clubs at all levels to break down silos with new digital tools to enhance internal communications and engage a potentially global fanbase."

It's a significant dilemma, but digital transformation offers a lifeline for clubs around the world and those innovative enough to fully embrace its capabilities can also gain a competitive advantage. Where do they start, though?

In this eBook, we explore how Dropbox Business is being integrated into football clubs—both big and small—all over the world, helping them to:

- Improve scouting practices to find new talent
- Enhance player performance and training practices
- Engage with fans in new and exciting ways
- Secure new efficiencies and improve the business of football
- Ensure compliance and security

We've been leaning on technology experts, and speaking to Dropbox customers and other industry professionals at clubs across Europe, to hear how the game is changing and how Dropbox is accelerating that transformation.



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# Chapter 1:

# Find new talent

Football clubs are much more complex than they used to be, but one thing remains constant: the need for talent. And in such a competitive environment, the appeal of a team trying to attract new and young players, is highly dependent on their chances of success on the pitch, but also the overall experience players have interacting with them.

To deliver quality experiences and performances, you need a steady stream of excellent players. For the lower leagues, talent becomes a potential stream of much needed income as they nurture players and sell them to the teams above.

And sourcing players early in their careers helps reduce heavy transfer fees and demands for higher wages.



The difficulty is in finding those players and it is a practice fraught with risk since development potential and lifelong value are extremely difficult to predict. It's also highly competitive, where any hesitation or delay can be the difference between signing your primary target or losing out to the competition.

“Imagine scouting with COVID restrictions on travel. It’s impossible to be in all the far flung corners of the world. So, having a smart, integrated, bespoke, digital system that allows you to have easy access with third parties all over the world to attend games on your behalf and spot young talent is everything - it’s the only way you can survive in a football club properly.”

—Jon Tibbs

# How Dropbox helps simplify sourcing and securing new talent

## 1. Centralise your team with shared folders

- Bring your scouting network together and keep them in sync, no matter where they are in the world, or on what time-zone
- Make it easier to access performance reviews and to pick the right talent by using shared folders to centralise player intelligence, organise your footage and commentary, and schedule your next outings.

## 2. Mobility

- Upload and share footage with your club within seconds, directly from your mobile device while pitch-side.
- Comment and feedback on other performance reviews and content from wherever you are - even when on the move

## 3. Secure data management

- With no upload limits, you can collect all the information and data you need on players to build a more complete picture of their skills and characteristics
- If you have a global network, Dropbox can help you simplify managing and organising your data and video analysis by keeping it together in one centralised and highly secure location

## 4. Contracts

- Sign on the spot. Using e-Signature technologies, you can offer a contract at pitchside to make sure you are taking decisions at speed.
- Simplify contract management with an integrated platform that automatically and securely stores contracts in your chosen destination folder.



# Dropbox in action

## Club challenge:

With a global scouting footprint of 50 people around the world all looking for the next footballing prodigy, a Premier League club was looking for a way to keep them aligned and able to collaborate in real time.

## Solution:

Dropbox Business has enabled the club to collect video footage and other content from around the world, connect its scouting network to work together in real time, and capture the best talent.

## Results:

- The use of shared folders has kept teams aligned on particular tasks, kept conversations focused on core objectives and ensured maximum efficiency from the group
- Collaboration dramatically improved across the group as they work together on video footage and added time-based comments to highlight strengths and weaknesses of potential recruits
- Video footage from remote areas of the globe is automatically uploaded into shared folders and other scouts are notified, which means they can respond rapidly to new information and act fast to secure the best players



# Chapter 2:

# Enhance player performance

Finding the raw talent is just the first step in a long journey towards exceptional performances on the pitch. Once you've found the players, now begins the difficult task of developing them to be the best they can be.

For the larger clubs with a global footprint, youth coaching, academies and multiple teams on the training ground, staying on top of individual performances is no small feat. For those with a smaller player base, the critical nature of squeezing every drop of performance out of your group is that much more prevalent.

Individual training and nutrition plans, and fitness rehabilitation regimes - all of this needs to be communicated to the players and shared with the broader support network looking after the players. Connecting this myriad data and bringing the right teams together is fundamental to driving improved performances on the pitch. But making this work during a pandemic when players can't get together in person is extremely difficult and requires first-class coordination and communication.





# How Dropbox makes improving talent easier

## 1. Easy and secure access

- A. Connect your global footprint or local partners and provide rapid and simple access to video, stills and audio - even to the point of reviewing real game footage with players on the bus back home after the game.
- B. Allow fitness teams - physios, sports scientists, strength and conditioning coaches - to track and share player reports, rehab and fitness plans with a simple clickable link.

## 2. Smart sync

Working remotely with video footage can raise bandwidth issues, but with Dropbox's Smart Sync feature, your uploads will happen in the background. With our intelligent synchronisation engine, it will resume your uploads and downloads even if you have an unstable internet connection, making sure that you don't waste your bandwidth or time.

## 3. Time-based feedback

Using the video preview feature in Dropbox, it is now possible to add time-based comments to highlight specific challenges and areas for improvement on any footage.

# Dropbox in action

## Club challenge:

With a wealth of data to review, footage to capture, training plans to enact and share from a host of locations, one Premier League club was looking for a way to improve its workflows and boost the performance of the team.

## Solution:

The club turned to Dropbox Business to bring teams together around performance analysis, align them around next steps to drive improvement, and connect a wealth of data into a comprehensive workflow with Dropbox at the heart.

## Results:

- The analyst team are able to add time-based comments and feedback to video footage to highlight key moments from games or training to identify where improvements are needed
- Centralising all footage in the cloud, the club's analysts and coaches can be brought in from anywhere in the world to review performance data.



# Chapter 3:

# Engage the fans



If the empty stadiums caused by COVID have proved one thing, it's that the fans truly are the lifeblood of most clubs. And teams that are able to engage their fanbase and grow it beyond the boundaries of their stadium can bolster financial stability and longevity.

The recent global pandemic has accelerated the urgency to level up fan engagement and is driving innovation throughout the industry. Gate receipts, retail and merchandising sales, volunteers, community action: it all needs strong fan engagement and without big live events clubs have to get creative. But that creativity has to be organised and well orchestrated.

Whether it's working with the players, sponsors, or partners to run competitions or managing the vast swathes of digital content needed to connect with fans around the world, clubs are having to work much harder than before.

“Research has shown that there are some 4.66 billion people with access to the internet and 4.61 billion using social media. The potential audience to reach for clubs with great ambition is enormous and we are seeing the rise of football across Asia and huge volumes of fans being turned on by clubs using digital tools in savvy ways to connect with them. Think creatively, and think big, and have the right platform at the heart to simplify that engagement.”

—Jon Tibbs

# How Dropbox makes it easier to engage with fans

## 1. Press / publicity packs

- Whether it's a new kit launch, new player announcement, or any publicity event, Dropbox makes it easy to package up stills, video, contracts and other content and securely distribute to reporters and publications around the world.
- Dropbox also works as a perfect repository for the players to dip into when looking for content for their personal social channels. Club representatives and marketing team can work with players to provide ready-to-share content complete with social copy accessible straight from their mobile phones, making it easy to select that image, crop, add a filter and post.

## 2. Digital content management

- Marketing teams are under pressure to produce exceptional content to capture increasingly important second screen experiences for fans watching from home. Dropbox makes it easy to collect live footage from the match and prime it ready for distribution on social channels almost instantly.
- Pre-built folder structures inside Dropbox simplify the challenge of keeping track of where content resides, what channel it has been optimised for, and what campaign or messaging it should run alongside.

## 3. Publish with partners

- Dropbox works with best of breed social media publishing tools. to make the job of running social media campaigns much easier on match day.
- Building on our integrations with Sprout Social and Hootsuite, clubs can schedule and publish to multiple accounts with ease. Since the content is already in Dropbox there is no need to download and then upload assets - simply select from your chosen social media manager and it's all done.

# Dropbox in action

## Club challenge:

Recognising that the connection to the fans is critical for the longevity of any club and priding itself on its digital-first approach, Bundesliga club Borussia Mönchengladbach was looking for ways to accelerate the delivery of action from the pitch to its waiting audiences around the world.

## Solution:

With limited capacity in the stadium, Borussia Mönchengladbach required a single collaboration platform that allowed key moments from the game to be captured and shared quickly with the club's worldwide fanbase.

Using Dropbox to speed up this workflow, pitchside photographs are now shared with the social team, edited, captioned, and posted on social media channels within minutes of being taken.

## Results:

- Borussia Mönchengladbach is reaching nearly two million fans on Facebook, 430K fans on Twitter and 250K fans through the club's app during every single game
- The club is improving the quality of fan communication and has seen an uplift in fan satisfaction

“To become digital first, we need several tools but for me Dropbox is one of the most essential. We use it to have conversations with our fans, and to communicate with them on match day... and the Borussia Mönchengladbach story continues to be told using Dropbox throughout the rest of week too.”

—Andreas Cüppers, Head of Digital Transformation & Innovation, Borussia Mönchengladbach

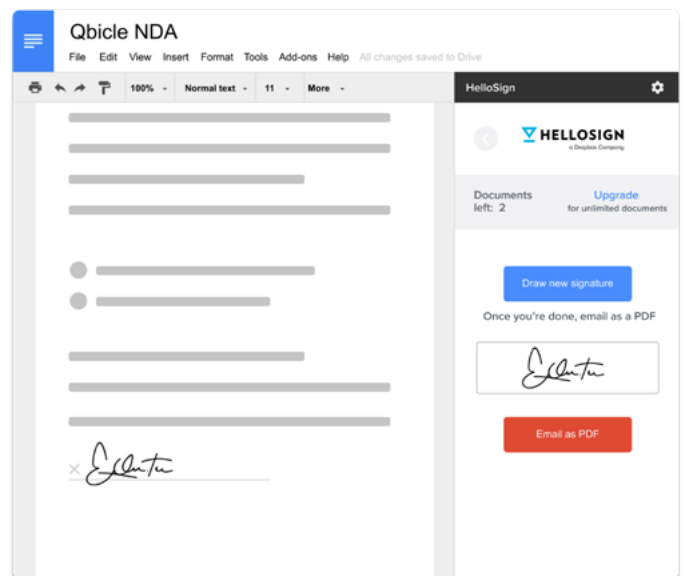


# Chapter 4: Improve the business of football

With a slick operation in place to help you track down talent, improve that talent, and bring it all to your adoring fans and the media, you need to back it all up with a professional operation off the pitch. Football is big business and it means that clubs have to run smart, run a profit, and operate as efficiently as possible.

All commercial and money-making ventures must be handled with the utmost diligence, ensuring compliance but securing the best possible outcome for the club, its players, employees and most critically the fans. Sponsors want to work and associate themselves with well-run clubs.

Digital tools and platforms are making this more simple, offering automation, streamlined workflows, and a host of other efficiencies. But an incoherent strategy can create a complex mess where tools don't communicate with each other and work can come to a grinding halt.



# How Dropbox improves the business of football

## 1. Internal collaboration

When speed is of the essence in negotiations and business, good internal collaboration and communication are essential. Dropbox brings teams and content together into shared Spaces and aligns them around projects, business objectives, contracts or anything else they need to be focused on. This ensures nothing gets missed and you can respond with agility.

## 2. External collaboration

Working with partners, suppliers, clubs or brands around the world is essential to progress your club forward, broaden your footprint and attract new fans and profit. Dropbox makes external collaboration simple with easy to apply access controls and shared folders with task allocation aligning everyone around when and what needs to happen.

## 3. Document and contract workflows

Through our eSignature platform, HelloSign, which is fully integrated with Dropbox, you can accelerate document turnaround times by as much as 80%. Whether your HR team are looking to onboard new team members, you're looking to sign new players or secure contracts with promotional partners, electronic signatures can significantly speed up contract workflows and keep your business moving quickly.

# Dropbox in action

## Club challenge:

Running a successful football club requires running a business with multiple teams, working across multiple locations. By their very nature, clubs are exposed to increased risks of departmental silos: the scourge of the modern workplace. One Premier League team was looking for ways to break these down, while also enhancing their ability to share confidential material.

## Solution:

The club turned to Dropbox Business to improve collaboration amongst its different business departments, keeping them in sync on the same tasks and increasing productivity. They were able to break down internal silos and secure external sharing.

## Results:

- The club has created a process for allowing secure and seamless remote working no matter where its work-teams are based.
- By working on the same documents, comments are actioned quickly and changes are synced instantly.



# Chapter 5:

# Stay compliant and secure

And finally, to remain an attractive proposition for investment and a club players want to play for, you must remain compliant and secure. Any errors or failure to comply will see the club subject to fines, transfer embargoes, or disqualification from competitions.

To simplify the challenge of remaining compliant, clubs around the world have been deploying digital tools and applications for the elevated visibility into process they provide. Leaving a digital trail of breadcrumbs as content passes between back office team members and contracts are signed and returned from employees, digital tools are the perfect solution for compliance - provided they stay secure.

And, since COVID-19 and the rise in remote working, clubs are having to work much harder to balance performance with security while remaining compliant and as productive as possible.



# How Dropbox makes it easy to stay compliant and secure

## 1. Vendor agnostic integrated platform

Dropbox integrates with the tools that you're already familiar with, helping you to remove complexity through enhanced interoperability. Allowing you to stay compliant with comprehensive audit trails.

## 2. Simple document and contract management

Working together, Dropbox and HelloSign provide the perfect platform from which to create documents, collaborate on them, send out for signature, and simply store and manage once returned. Now if you need to send out a new policy and ensure teams have read it and returned it, you can do it in minutes, maintaining the capacity to move at pace.

## 3. Market-leading security

To keep all your most valuable files and content safe, Dropbox is designed with multiple layers of protection, distributed across a scalable, secure infrastructure. Dropbox files at rest are encrypted using 256-bit Advanced Encryption Standard, and Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)/Transport Layer Security (TLS) protects data in transit. Plus, all of Dropbox's applications and infrastructure are regularly tested for vulnerabilities and hardened to enhance security and protect against attacks.



# Dropbox in action

## Club challenge:

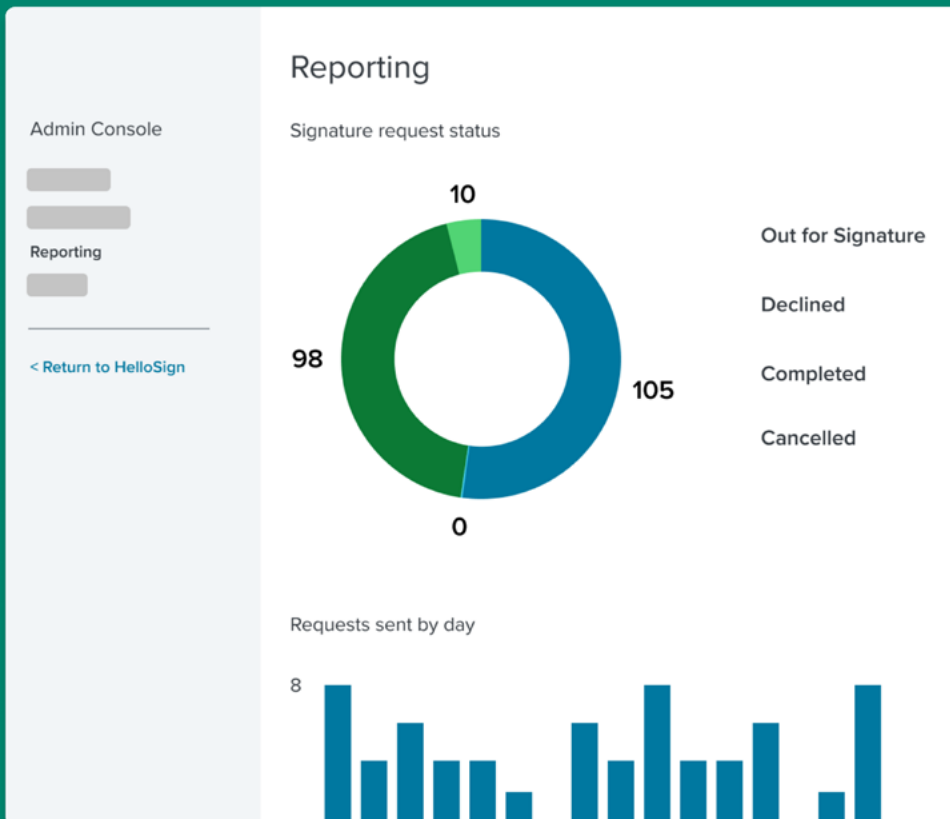
With so much more at stake, clubs have never been under so much pressure to remain compliant and ensure confidential material is kept secure. Bringing all departments together and keeping them in sync is a big win for those looking to protect their longevity, but making sure it's done in a safe and secure environment is just as important.

## Solution:

Clubs are turning to Dropbox Business and HelloSign to stay secure across all devices - both managed and non-managed - wherever their teams are based. Peace of mind comes from a highly secure and available infrastructure that limits downtime and threats.

## Results:

- Using Dropbox Business, clubs can ensure all confidential information is kept secure
- Any leaked announcements or documents can be tracked through Dropbox to see where they've been shared and by whom
- Admin tools can be used to keep track of who has access to your content, speedily onboard new users, and remove old ones
- Combining the eSignature platform, HelloSign, with Dropbox Business, enables player and business contracts to be signed quickly and securely.



# Conclusion: Think digital to drive new revenues and improve the business of football

Football clubs both big and small are under pressure right now to find any competitive advantage they can either on or off the pitch. Any potential area to make those marginal gains must be exploited to its maximum potential. And digital holds the key to unlock opportunities throughout the business.

Digital transformation, when done well, affords significant operational benefits and provides the pace and agility needed to drive home competitive advantage when responding to potential opportunities in the market - whether commercial, operational, or securing playing talent.

According to Jon Tibbs, there has never been a better time to invest in digital tools. "Although revenues have taken a hit because of COVID, now is precisely the time to find other sources of income and improve the way you operate as a club. Digital tools break down silos, enhance internal comms, and help you engage a potentially global fanbase.

There is a real potential to build a virtuous circle as you elevate your club's profile digitally and attract other sources of commercial and media investment to further fuel those engagement strategies. You need a leader with the vision to drive the cultural change but there really is no limit to the potential."

Dropbox Business is uniquely positioned to facilitate that speed and agility required, integrating datasets and core tools and applications into a unified platform to bring the club closer together. Simple sharing and secure management of critical documentation helps streamline operations further to provide new potential for partnerships and unlock more revenues.

Ultimately Dropbox is a tool which is helping clubs around the world to find new talent, work with that talent, nurture it, engage with the fans, and be as efficient and productive as possible.

Dropbox Business helps some of the worlds most successful sports teams, athletic associations and sportswear brands get better work done faster. Whether it's storing, sharing or collaborating on design, media and business files, Dropbox keeps work moving by keeping teams together and organised. With more than 600 million registered users across 180 countries, we're on a mission to design a more enlightened way of working.

Come and find out how, visit [dropbox.com/teamsatwork](https://dropbox.com/teamsatwork)

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