

## Media & Entertainment case study



# England's Football Association increases active fan accounts by 335%

The FA's new digital engagement program anticipates and meets the needs of millions of players, fans and volunteers, helping make football in England truly 'for all'.

## At a glance

**Industry**  
Media & Entertainment

**Location**  
United Kingdom

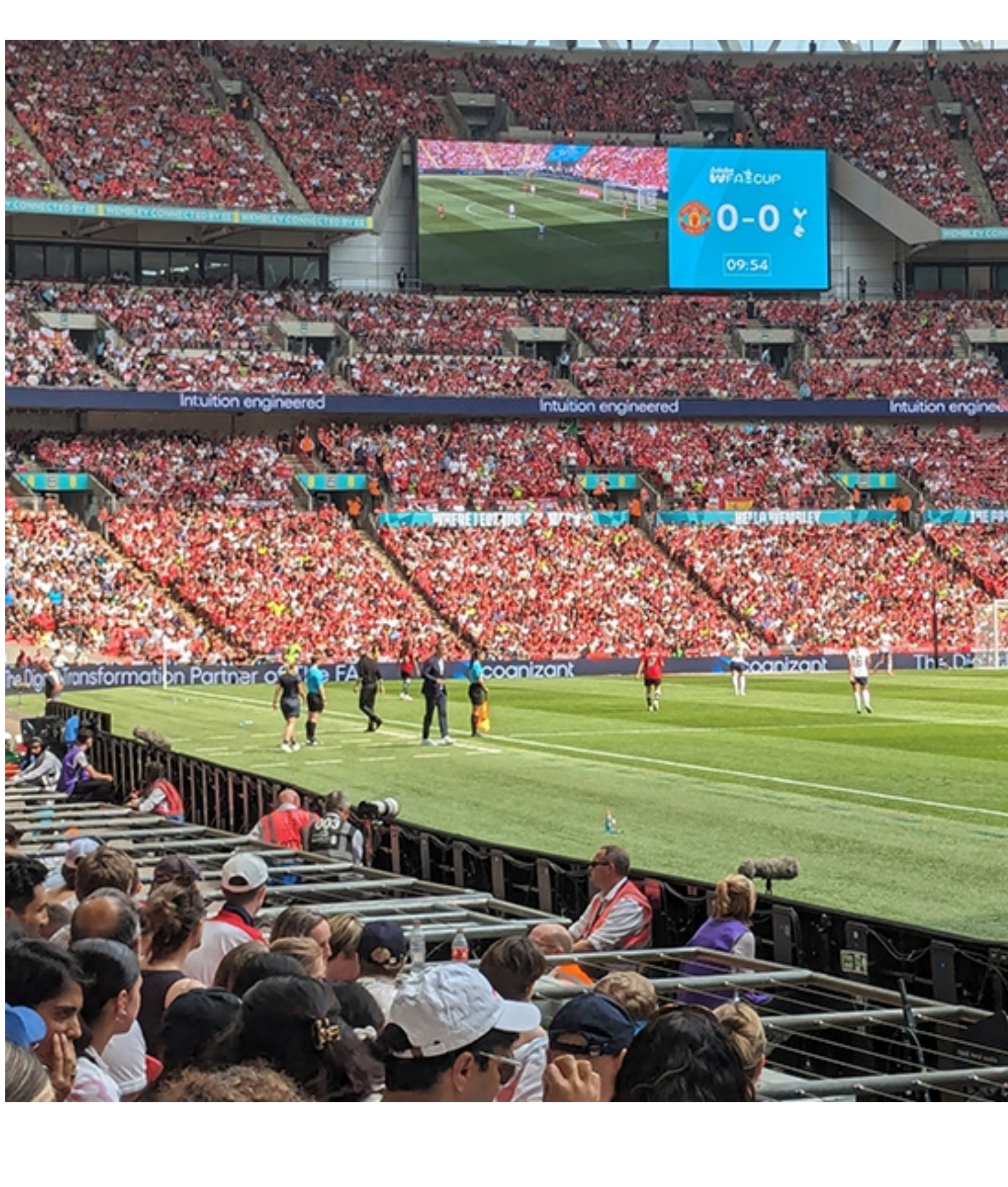
**Challenge**  
Deliver a large-scale digital transformation to enable The FA to engage in a personalized way with the millions of people who participate in football in England.

### Success Highlights

- Active accounts grew from 1.4 million to 6.1 million—a 335% increase
- 9.5 million user interactions in year one—exceeding the target by 250%
- Record 94% customer satisfaction rating achieved within 12 months

## The challenge

The English Football Association (The FA) is the oldest football association in the world. Formed in 1863, it's responsible for overseeing all aspects of the game in England, from grassroots matches played countrywide by amateurs, to globally streamed broadcast championships like The FA Cup.



The FA orchestrates the development of football and its players, with a mission to deliver 'Football for All'. However, to do this effectively, it must interact with all the communities that engage with football in England—including county FAs, fans, players, clubs, organizers, referees and coaches.

With shifts in consumer and broadcaster behavior changing football at all levels, The FA wanted to use data-driven insights and capabilities to enable deeper and more real-time engagement with participants of the game.

This deeper engagement would form part of a holistic digital transformation program that not only expands football's reach, but streamlines its backbone operations to connect football across England—while embedding digital innovation across The FA's core operational infrastructure.

Accomplishing this would require a reimagining of The FA's technology ecosystem, which comprised a disparate range of products and platforms—some over 10 years old. The FA needed in-depth expertise and guidance on this journey and appointed Cognizant as its official digital transformation partner for the long term.

## Our approach

Cognizant implemented a full business engineering program, combining data modernization and digital consumer products to provide a continuous, accurate and data-driven view of football participation in England.

More than 250 Cognizant associates were embedded within The FA, working as one with its internal teams. The partnership has delivered many end-to-end digital experiences, built using insights from user research that enables The FA to engage with audiences in new ways:

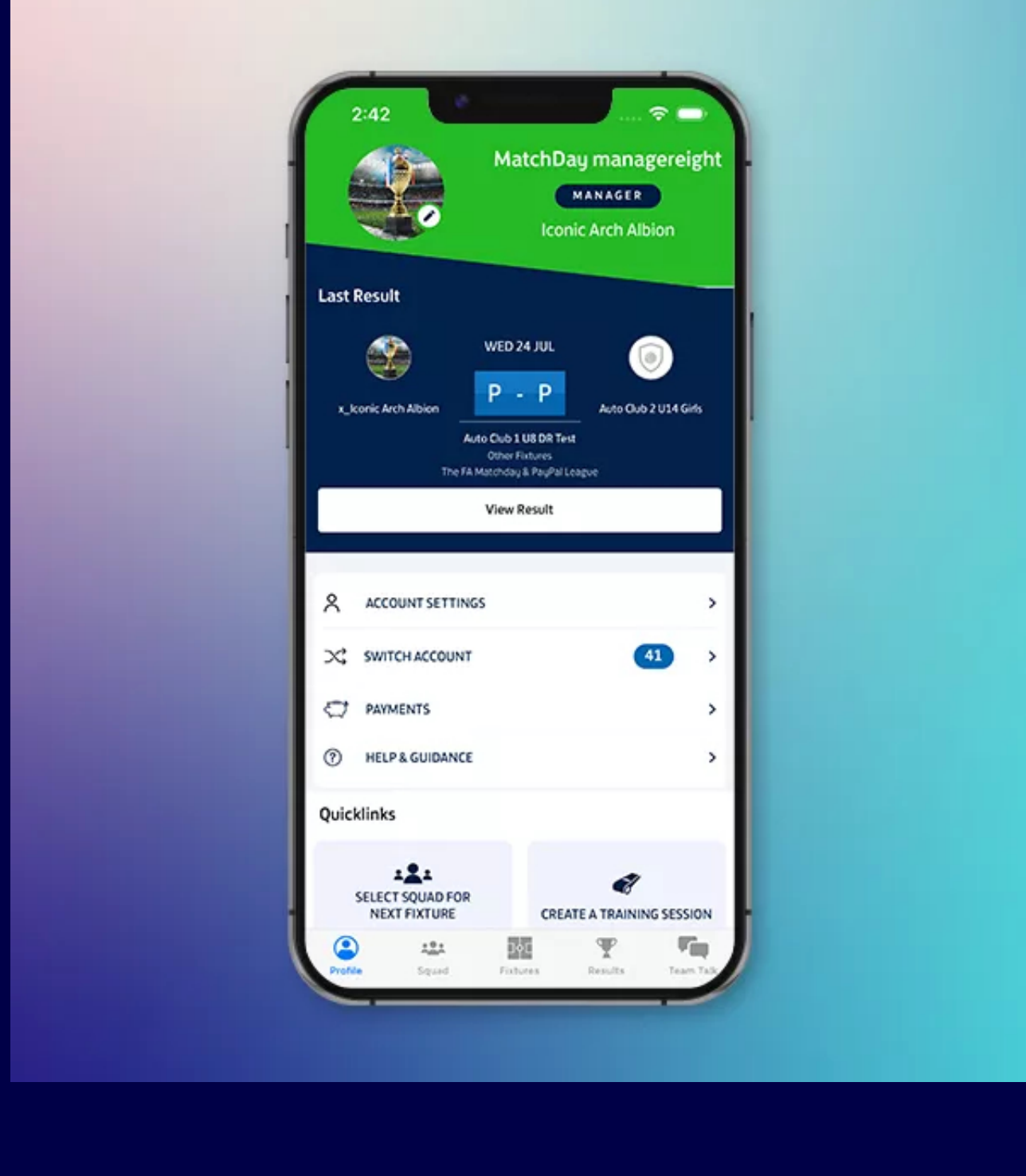
**Englandfootball.com**  
The FA's direct-to-fan brand and the home of English football online. Its rewards program, My England Football, connects commercial partners to fans and delights them with offers and opportunities.

**FA Women & Girls**  
A digital product designed to increase the participation of women and girls in football by sharing engaging content and signposting opportunities to play football for girls of any background and/or ability.

**Matchday by England Football**  
An app that helps grassroots teams orchestrate a football game from a smart device on match day. It allows players, parents, referees and managers to connect centrally, pick a team, determine a formation, share the game venue and timings, take payments and ensure players are registered with The FA and are not under any disciplinary sanctions.

**England Supporters Club**  
A knowledge-sharing hub for fans of the stadium experience, helping facilitate travel, ballots and ticketing news for England matches worldwide.

**Data platform**  
To further The FA's aim to be a data-driven organization, we built a robust data analytics platform on Microsoft Azure Synapse together with a set of data products to enable business users to better understand the data and produce reports as needed. This platform creates a strong foundation for future analytics use cases across all The FA's business lines.



“Throughout the partnership, Cognizant has mobilized a broad range of skills that have allowed us to engage directly with all the game's participants, from players to coaches, fans and parents. That direct relationship has delivered a huge amount of value, including record levels of customer satisfaction within our organization.”

**John Pollard, Head of Product Management, The English Football Association**

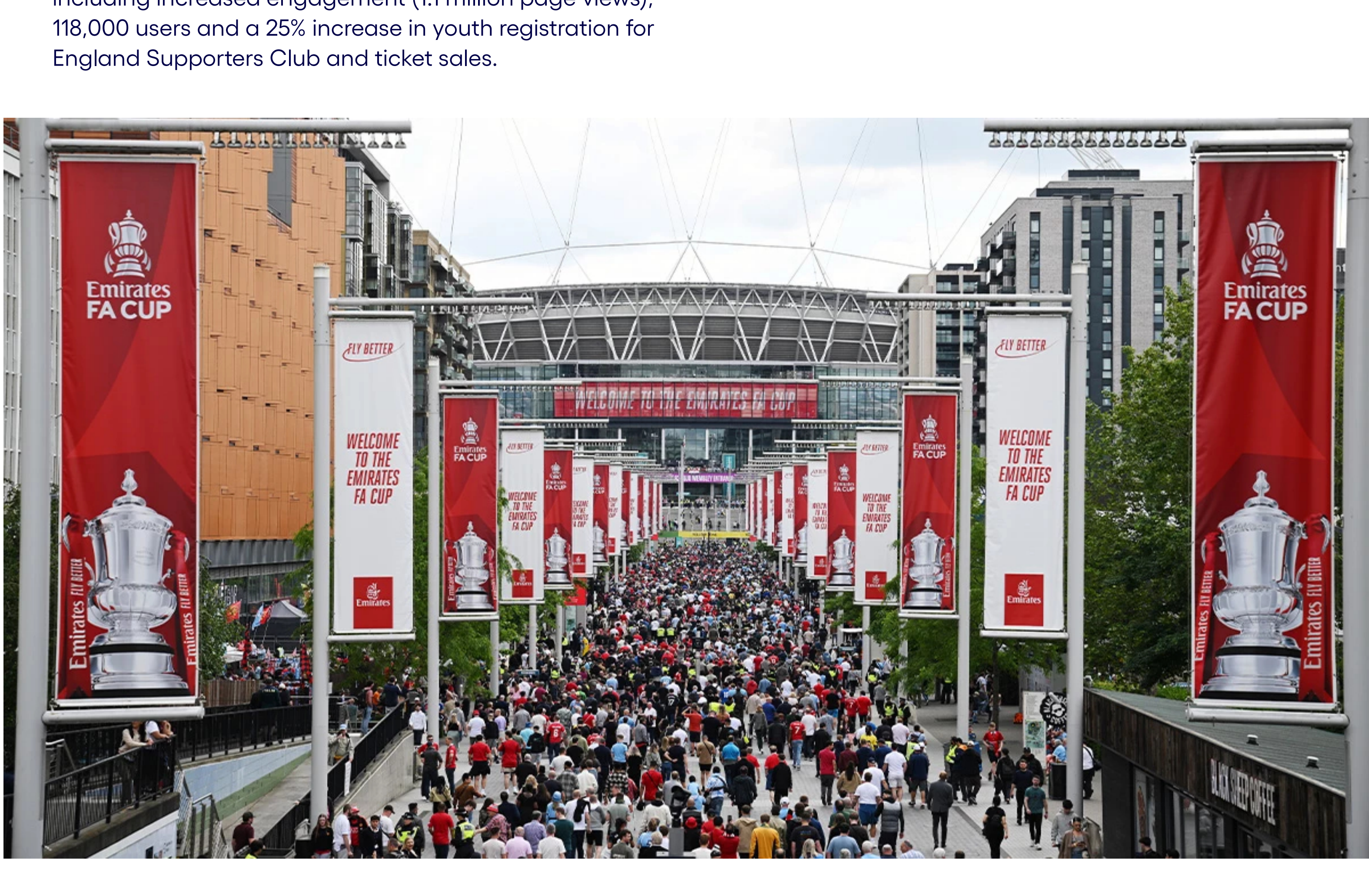
“For a digital transformation of this scale, it was crucial that we found a partner that had been there before. Cognizant have become a strategic ally, providing us with sports industry specialists to help shape our ambition as well as designing, building and managing the technology programs underpinning our entire organization.”

**Craig Donald, Chief Information Officer, The English Football Association**

## Business outcomes

As a result of Cognizant's ongoing digital transformation partnership with The FA, its mantra of 'Football for All' is reflected and realized through a digital-first, inclusive football experience. The digital engagement program has exceeded key objectives in multiple areas, including:

- **Englandfootball.com** comprehensively exceeded year one expectations, registering 9.5 million user interactions against a target of 3.8 million.
- **Matchday by England Football** now boasts 541,000 weekly game. Making it the biggest app with the accounts to take payments from over 80,000 players—double the expected target, saving hours of effort every week.
- **The England Supporters Club** has set records on all KPIs, including increased engagement (1.1 million page views), 118,000 users and a 25% increase in youth registration for England Supporters Club and ticket sales.
- **Fan engagement** with these engaging products The FA saw the number of active accounts engaging with The FA grow from 1.4 million to 6.1 million—an increase of 335%.
- **Customer satisfaction:** The FA's customer satisfaction ratings surged from 71% to 94% within 12 months—a record high for the organization.



## Ensuring 'Football for All'

Cognizant and The FA share a vision of making football easier to find, run and participate in for people of all genders, ethnicities, abilities and disabilities. Thanks to our digital transformation partnership, The FA's digital engagement program continues to reach and include more and more participants. By delivering relevant, personalized experiences to every fan, The FA can create moments and connections that ensure everyone feels part of the England Football story, no matter how they participate in the sport.

**335%**  
Increase in active accounts engaging with The FA

**9.5 million**  
User interactions in year one—250% of target

**94%**  
Customer satisfaction rating achieved

## About The Football Association

The Football Association is the governing body for football in England. For more information, visit [www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com).