

7 STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR SPORTS VIDEO CONTENT STRATEGY

**SPORTS ORGANISATIONS CAN ACHIEVE THEIR
CONTENT GOALS BY FOLLOWING THE RIGHT
STEPS AND CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOOLS**



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SPORT IS NOT JUST BIG BUSINESS

Sport is one of the uniting forces of modern globalisation. From the 232.6 million Americans who took part in sports and fitness activities in 2021, to the Premier League's total contribution of £7.6bn (\$9.9bn) to the UK GDP in 2019-20, the figures in play are mind-boggling, and entirely global in reach.

Given such a wide and distributed audience, it's no surprise that while teams, leagues and federations all have performance targets to hit, so do their content teams. These can range from driving engagement in established markets via social media and other channels to increasing loyalty and franchising opportunities, not to mention spurring greater brand awareness in overseas markets and developing new revenue streams. Ultimately, there's no shortage of potential targets for good content.

Getting that content to the right audiences was once a matter of promoting it in a handful of established analogue media channels. But as digital has become the mainstream, and reporting and performance metrics closer to 'real time', having a well-developed content strategy has become crucial. Not just to chart a course through the sometimes-confusing mass of channels and potential opportunities, but also to guide those 'real-time' activations and responses as well as possible.

Good content should always provide information, develop relationships, help build trust, and deliver new customers. However, without setting out specific goals and parameters, you run the risk of the content being released in an ad hoc fashion, untargeted, and without any clear holistic plan. This can be counter-productive, turning off fans and missing clear opportunities to stand out from the competition.



**232.6
MILLION**

**AMERICANS TOOK PART
IN SPORTS AND FITNESS
ACTIVITIES IN 2021**

**£7.6bn
(\$9.9bn)**

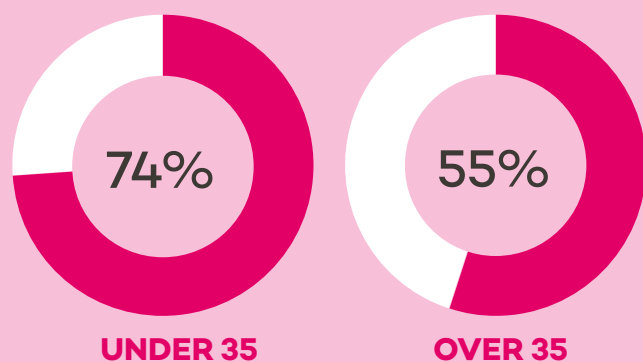
**PREMIER LEAGUE'S
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DEVELOPING A VIDEO CONTENT STRATEGY TO HELP SPORTS ORGANISATIONS

The objective of most sporting content is to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience. So, understanding what your audience wants to watch, and knowing which channels they frequent to consume it, is the first step on any strategic journey. Creating and distributing that content in the right formats is next. In short, a video content strategy guides you in 'what' to publish, and then 'when' and 'where' to publish it.



For example, according to a study by Capgemini, “74% percent of fans under 35 consume sports content on smart devices such as smart TVs, laptops, desktops, iPads, compared to 55% of fans over 35.”



Therefore, a media or content manager at a sport with a high percentage of fans under 35 would have a video content strategy that prioritises low-resolution, short-form content that works in social and other digital channels, and that can be pushed out before, during and after matches in near real-time.



STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES

Before endeavouring to formulate your sports video content strategy, you should consider your objectives, including questions such as:

- What are your goals?
- What end result are you trying to achieve?
- What are your key performance indicators (KPIs)?

Ensuring you know what a successful strategy looks like before you begin is vital. But don't feel that decisions have to be set in stone. A good tactic is to have a slightly broader 'end' goal but concrete smaller, shorter term steps that lead you in the right direction, along with milestone achievements along the way. This gives you the flexibility to test out new ideas and to follow your audience's needs, rather than being locked into a pre-set strategy that may not prove to be as successful as you initially thought. In other words, be prepared to iterate!

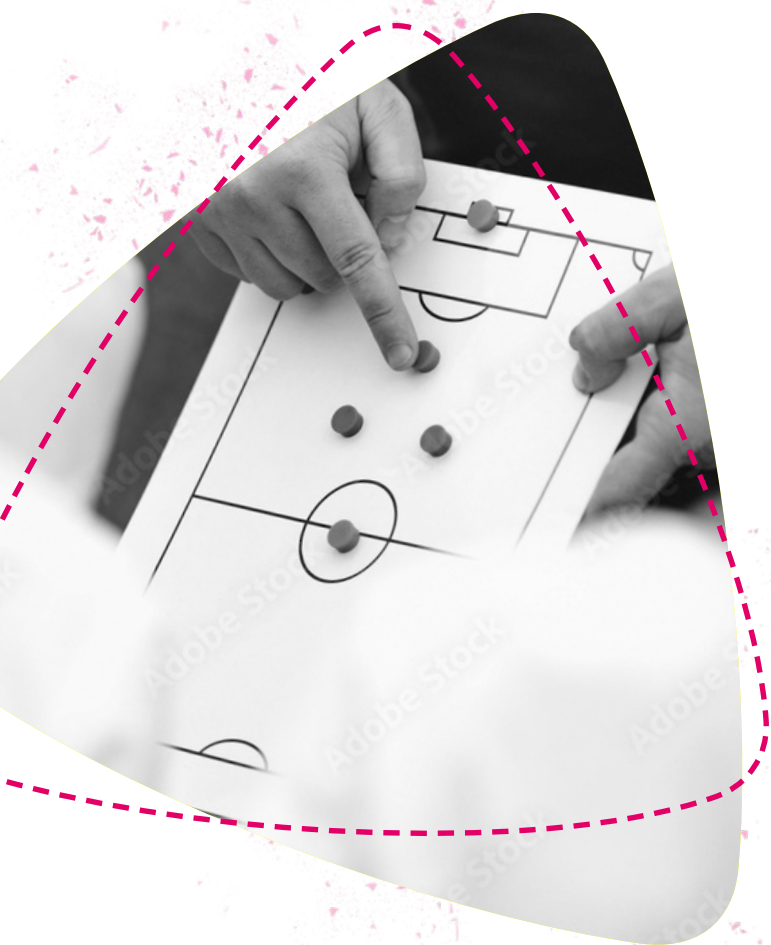


STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES

OTHER QUESTIONS TO ASK ARE:

What's the immediate aim? Is it raising the profile of your sport, getting more eyeballs on digital content, creating new OTT channels?

Try to define what areas you need to work on. Are you trying to simply raise your numbers, create more engaging material, or drive expansion into new markets? While they're not mutually exclusive, trying to do all three at once can dilute your efforts and the overall message. Where possible, isolate a specific metric linked to a KPI, then work to deliver improvement in this one area. Set a timescale, monitor progress, report and refine. There's no rule that says you can't change strategy if the plan has already succeeded or it isn't working as intended.



Who does your content service?

Think about who your content is aimed at, and also who actually engages with it today. Are they the same group?

Sport content tends to be created with one of three groups in mind - sponsors, broadcasters and fans - and they're very different consumers.



Broadcasters want content that will resonate with their viewing demographic, or help them easily create new, engaging experiences.



Sponsors will want brand amplification, so reach and dwell-related content that increases engagement directly or indirectly with their brand and brand values will be the first port of call.



Fans, meanwhile, are the target of rights holders, broadcasters and sponsors. In the case of sporting content, they'll be at varying stages of investment in the content, but will be willing to engage with the most compelling elements in an instant.

Another aspect to think about here is the best way of measuring success. It's no good having a specific set of goals if you never really know if you've achieved them.

It's not just about the 'vanity metrics' like visits, shares and search rankings; those rosy figures that make you look good but in no way help you to understand your own performance. Rather, you should be able to drill down into actionable things like the amount of revenue generated, customer lifetime value, churn rate and so on, that help inform business decisions.

STEP 2: KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

This almost goes without saying, because it's a vital factor in every business. But do you really know who your audience is? Indeed, some might go further and ask, do you understand your audience – their motivations, needs and wants, personalities, habits, likes, fears and frustrations? If you don't understand them, how can you give them content that appeals to them, in a voice they will respond to?

After all, there's a saying: if you try to sell to everyone, you'll end up selling to no-one.

There are lots of tools to help you do this, including various audience research methods – focus groups, questionnaires, in-depth interviews – and you can then use this information to create a customer profile or 'persona'. This is a documented, semi-fictionalised description of your ideal customer, and he or she will be the target towards which you will be directing your content efforts.

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STEP 2: KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

For example, one football persona might be the sort of die-hard fan who loves their club, goes to the stadium, watches full match replays, and buys the current shirt, wearing it every time they watch their team play. Another might be those distant fans who can't go to the games, but would love to. Supporting at a distance, they consume everything they can find about their team to make up for it – interviews, highlights, behind the scenes videos, etc. Having regular, digital access gives them that vital fan connection.

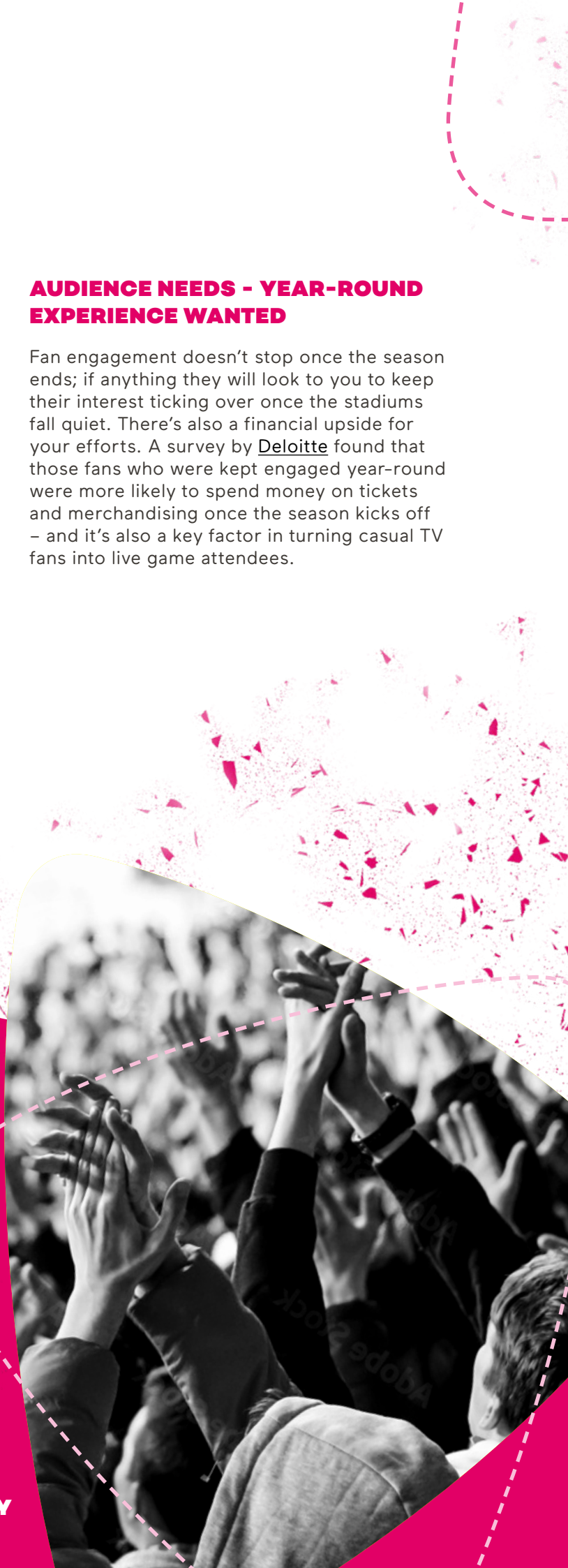
CONSIDER DEVICES, LOCATION AND AGE

Of course, you need to cover the basics: like the way in which your audience is engaging with the content; where they're located geographically; and general demographics. But it never hurts to ask specific questions of them via interactive polls on social media. In this way, you can discover what your fans want to see by explicitly asking them. Responses from the most engaged consumers will provide insight into the fanbase and deliver the kind of information you can use to inform future strategy.

AUDIENCE NEEDS - YEAR-ROUND EXPERIENCE WANTED

Fan engagement doesn't stop once the season ends; if anything they will look to you to keep their interest ticking over once the stadiums fall quiet. There's also a financial upside for your efforts. A survey by [Deloitte](#) found that those fans who were kept engaged year-round were more likely to spend money on tickets and merchandising once the season kicks off – and it's also a key factor in turning casual TV fans into live game attendees.

**IF YOU WANT TO
FIND OUT WHAT
FANS TOLD US
ABOUT THE
CONTENT THEY
WANT TO SEE,
DOWNLOAD OUR
REPORT: SWITCHED
ON SUPERFANS.**



STEP 3: CREATE ENGAGING CONTENT

With your strategy in place and your target audience nailed down, now it's time to get on with the task of generating the right kind of content. But that's easier said than done! Here are four areas to consider...



01 | RELEVANCE

You will no doubt know what is and isn't relevant to your audience – and metrics will quickly tell you which things aren't working. YouTube has long promoted its 'Hero, Help, Hub' framework, which is specifically designed to help businesses think about the material they publish.

This approach is designed to segment video content into three strands, and is often shown in pyramid form with Hero content at the top – this the most popular tent-pole content. Let's use an example from Wimbledon:

- The purpose of **Hero content** is to attract new fans, and may also be the most difficult/expensive to generate. At Wimbledon 2022, for example, high quality video interviews with celebrities and tennis greats were produced to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Centre Court.
- **Help content** sits in the middle – this is the regular, serialised content that's used for engagement, relationship-building and retention. Wimbledon 2022 hub content includes match analysis and behind the scenes info in the 'Wimbledon Uncovered' YouTube series, as well as 'Hot Shots' videos (a compilation of the best shots), and IBM Match Insights (powered by SlamTracker).
- And finally, **Hub content** sits at the bottom of the pyramid – this is the high value, low-budget content that is used to draw in people seeking answers to specific problems. Hub content for Wimbledon 2022 comes in the form of the packaged match highlights, player press conferences, clips, shorts and round-ups that serve the needs of people who missed the live action and want to catch up.



STEP 3: CREATE ENGAGING CONTENT

02 | PERSONALISATION AND LOCALISATION

The beauty of digital channels is the ability to localise and personalise the content to specific audience members. The benefits are obvious in building closer relationships, and delivering a more relevant experience. And it's especially relevant in competitive sports, which itself is underscored by tribal followings and rivalries. This is where all the work done in understanding your audience pays off.

03 | LOOKING BACK

If you have an archive of material, don't be afraid to use it. Old material still has value, you just need to find the right time to use it. For example the downtime between seasons is when you turn to highlights from previous games, videos of 'players to watch', and to share clips from pre-season training.

Find out how sports like Rugby Union did this during the South Africa Lions Tour in this [video interview](#) about emerging sports content trends with Nick Ashwin from Imagen.

04 | LOOKING FORWARD

It's not just about the main events itself, either. There's always demand for things like post-game interviews and match analysis, among the usual highlights.

STEP 4: DELIVER CONTENT TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE, FAST

When it comes to delivering your content, the most successful organisations use a centralised media asset management platform, like Imagen Pro. Because whether you're trying to manage huge volumes of video content, sending UHD quality clips to a production company, delivering a live feed for broadcast, or publishing content directly to social media, it's vital to be able to do this fast, efficiently and seamlessly.



PARTNERSHIPS/SPONSORSHIPS



If you have sponsors, broadcasters or other rights holders, who need constant access to your content, it's useful to be able to give them a dedicated area in your media asset management platform that is branded with their identity and where they can grab the video content they need easily.

One Imagen client that has found the creation of dedicated partner pages particularly useful is IMG Media, the world's largest independent producer and distributor of sports programming. Their partners can come into the IMG Media platform, find dedicated and branded partner pages, then grab the video content they need, in just a couple of clicks.

MULTIPLE CHANNELS



There are more channels for delivery than ever before, be it broadcast TV, OTT streaming systems, web video, social media clips and so on. A good media asset management platform can handle content in every format for every channel, at various quality levels and file sizes, with the minimum of fuss.

STEP 4: DELIVER CONTENT TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE, FAST

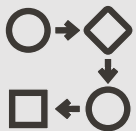
TIMELINESS



Speed is of the essence when it comes to content delivery – especially with sports, where fans demand up-to-the-minute information,

and near-live content needs to be shared immediately. That means whichever sport delivers what the fans want first, grabs the lion's share of the audience. That speed is based on the whole process, from having an easily searchable archive so users can find content quickly, being able to clip video instantly in a media asset management system, and the rate of delivery itself.

CONTENT WORKFLOWS



When it comes to fast and efficient content distribution, well-structured workflows are vital. These are the processes that ensure your content gets

to the third parties who need it, at the right time and with a media asset management platform, workflows can be automated. For example, it's easy to distribute huge video files without having to wait hours for them to upload and then download. As our client Louise Lawler from WTA Media says:

"Imagen has helped to build our perfect workflow, enabling broadcast partners to source the content they need in the fastest possible time."



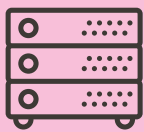
**FOR A DETAILED
OVERVIEW OF HOW MEDIA
ASSET MANAGEMENT
SOFTWARE CAN SOLVE
WORKFLOW PROBLEMS,
[CLICK HERE](#)**

STEP 5: MANAGE YOUR CONTENT ARCHIVE

You've defined your objectives, understood your audience, created killer content and got it out to the right people at the right time. Now you need somewhere to store and preserve it, in a place and in a format that can be found and re-used in the future.

And for that, as with your distribution, you need the right tools. Successful organisations use a [media asset management system](#) to successfully and efficiently manage their content archives. Why? Because the right solution...

INTEGRATES WITH YOUR EXISTING TECH STACK



A good platform will integrate with the software you already use, simplifying workflows and enabling speed of content creation as well as delivery. It will need to take content in and out – upstream from your editing suites, through to delivery downstream to your social, digital and OTT channels and 3rd party partners.

As Matthew Sutton, Head of Business and Media Systems, ATP Media says:

"Thanks to Imagen we're now able to offer broadcast clients secure, direct access to content through a platform that's intuitive and easy-to-use."

ENABLES SPEEDY CONTENT DISCOVERY



The sports industry is incredibly fast-paced, so your team needs workflows and tools that enable them to quickly respond to market trends and customer needs. Access to content needs to be rigorously controlled, and role or organisation-based but easy to administer. AI-powered automated metadata creation tools are absolutely crucial to the rapid discovery of content, especially archive content, which is of particular importance in sport. Properly tagged content can be found and re-used, delivering real return on the investment of creating it.

USES AI TECHNOLOGY TO SPEED UP PROCESSES



The reason speed is vital in sport content is not just that real-time action is the big sell – attention spans are ever shorter, in a world where social media content offers immediate, bite-size engagement.

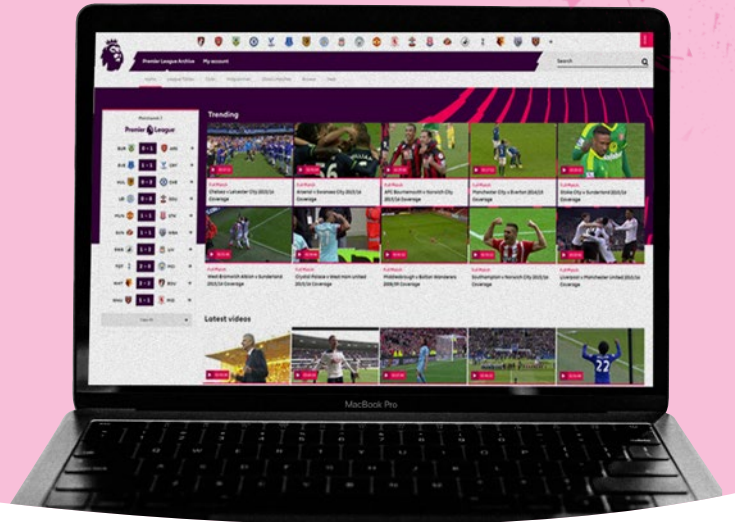
One Imagen client, [WSC Sports](#), the global leader in AI sports video technology, uses AI to create video highlights automatically and in real-time by analysing the action as it happens, indexing, cropping, and applying graphics to videos. This AI technology generates new content at both speed and scale, but it can also be used to help rights holders unlock the monetisation potential of their content archives.

STEP 6:

YOUR ACTION PLAN

Create a content plan and/or planner.

The plan and planner might be one and the same thing, depending on what format suits your business, and how you need to communicate and collaborate with other parts of the business. Smaller functions might find a simple spreadsheet the perfect solution, but larger, more distributed teams might need more sophisticated solutions.



STEP 7:

MEASURE

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - and what to do with them.

Revisiting those KPIs from Step 1 with a pile of metrics in hand should now be an interesting task. What went well? What didn't? Assuming the right KPIs were selected in the first place, a clear picture should now emerge, and some of it won't be pretty. Don't panic! Try and dig further into both the wild successes, and the dismal failures.

- Why did they succeed or fail?
- What can you learn from them both?

By documenting the results and analysing them, you can come up with a blueprint for improvement, highlighting areas to continue and perhaps invest in further, and areas where you can change up your tactics in order to improve performance.

ANALYTICS – ONE SOURCE



Ensuring that your analytics platform integrates tightly with your media asset management system is vital, especially when you're digging down into specifics.

The performance of each individual piece of content must be carefully assessed through the lens of the KPIs – although being blind to other metrics is obviously not ideal. Many hugely successful discoveries have been made by accident, so the fact that one type of content or style of sporting clip has failed to meet this set of KPIs, but has been astonishingly successful in another way should be noted and explored separately.

Imagen client, Tennis Australia, has been able to use the granular insights they've gained into which partners and broadcasters are accessing and downloading content from their media asset management platform, and enabled them to inform and adapt their content strategy.

HOW IMAGEN CAN HELP WITH YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY

Imagen Pro is the world's smartest cloud-based media asset management platform. Used by sports brands, media companies and enterprise organisations who own and manage large amounts of video content, it enables them to unlock the full value of their ever-growing content libraries.

All organisations face the same challenge: how to store, share, collaborate and distribute content fast across borders and boundaries. With Imagen Pro, businesses can create near-live, self-serve footage and get it out to stakeholders around the world with ease, even at huge file sizes. With lightning fast, secure and controlled cloud-based access to video content, brand assets and campaign content, Imagen protects the past and preserves media for the future.

Companies like BP, Aon, Reuters, the English Premier League, WTA, International Tennis Federation, St Louis Zoo, and the National Basketball Association use Imagen Pro to embrace the infinite potential of video.

Imagen's customers include Major League Baseball, the English Premier League, IMG Replay, Women's Tennis Association Media, Badminton World Federation, International Table Tennis Federation, International Tennis Federation, Chelsea Football Club and many more.

To learn more about how Imagen can help with your video content strategy, or for a demo of our MAM software, [click here](#).

WANT A MORE TAILORED CONTENT STRATEGY REPORT?

Just answer these simple questions.

1. How much content do you produce?
2. How frequently is it accessed or downloaded?
3. What type of content do you have?
 - a. E.g. live, near-live, archive
4. Do you produce content in-house?
5. What is your goal?
 - a. awareness, increase sponsorship, etc.
6. How easy is it to find your content?

Answer these questions in our [ROI calculator](#) and find out how much more efficient you could be!

