CBS Sports Case Study

Number 1 source for all MLB, NBA, NHL, NFL, MLS, PGA, and NCAA sports news is the first in the $20.6 billion industry to launch a live-streaming application across over-the-top (OTT) streaming platforms.

Challenge

CBS Sports' executive team wanted to disrupt the 24/7 sports news industry and get ahead of their competitors by providing easy and free access to sports news. CBS chose to build and launch their Sports HQ app across the largest OTT platforms — Roku, Apple TV, and Amazon FireTV — in order to reach a wide audience and attract them to their channel. However a a few complexities emerged:

+ Challenges in supporting legacy hardware and older OTT devices.

+ The Roku software development kit (SDK) is limited in delivering delightful user experiences and demands either a simple user interface or custom engineering.

+ Overcoming and passing distinct and complex certification processes on all three platforms.

> *"This free CBS Sports Stream & Watch Live app goes considerably further.*
>
> - AMAZON REVIEW, FEBRUARY 2019
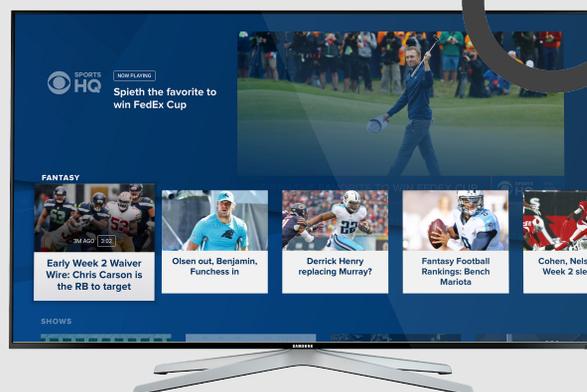
Solution

CBS Sports chose TribalScale for our reputation for industry intelligence, thought leadership, and communicative, iterative processes. But more importantly, for our expertise and proven ability to build across OTT platforms. Our prior experience working with OTT has given us an advantage in understanding the complexities of the platform and being able to integrate OTT applications with ads, third parties, and in building application programming interfaces (APIs). Highlights of our work with CBS Sports include:

+ **MARKET REACH:** Our Agile software engineers built, tested, and released polished applications across the three leading OTT platforms — Apple TV, Roku, and Amazon Fire TV — giving CBS Sports access to over 75% of US households with OTT streaming devices.

+ **MEETING DEMAND:** Building off our understanding of the multi-billion-dollar sports industry and its fans, we built the CBS Sports HQ app in such a way that gives viewers 24/7 access to live feeds and talk show content, along with curated on-demand video.

+ **MODERN TOOLS:** To build a modern and native OTT application for each platform, we used the latest SDKs and worked around limited SDKs. To do so, we initially used a straightforward user interface and then iterated on the application based on user feedback to ensure a delightful and functional user experience.

+ **MONETIZATION:** CBS Sports wanted to make their sports content widely accessible and opted to create a free channel, supported by ads. We integrated video and banner ad APIs, along with live-content and video-on-demand content APIs. Ad-based monetization along with on-demand and live content streaming allowed CBS Sports to get ahead of its major competitors, who required cable subscriptions and premium bundles.

+ Apple TV: Swift

+ FireTV: Kotlin

+ Roku: BrightScript

Outcome

All three OTT applications were successfully launched across the United States in time for Super Bowl LII, which saw a record-breaking 5 million-plus users live streaming the event.

By travelling to CBS Sports' offices and pair programming with their engineering teams we were able to assist them with the engineering itself and support them through the application certification process to ensure success beyond the handover.

Shortly after launch, industry analysts and critics began to review the app, all of which were very positive and cemented CBS Sports as leader in sports industry innovation.

The number of viewers of CBS Sports HQ continues to climb and it is now a go-to platform for fans watching all of CBS' key sporting content and events, such as the NFL regular season and the Super Bowl, the Masters Tournament, major league drafts, and more.

*"**CBS Sports HQ** is for fans who want more coverage of the game. Sports fans can now get the news and highlights they want in a true, round-the-clock sportscast on any device, where and when they want. As with CBSN, which continues to attract a growing audience of digital consumers, we also think there's a tremendous advantage in being first to market with this type of service in a crown jewel category."*

- JIM LANZONE, CEO,
CBS Interactive and Chief Digital officer, cbs Corporation, Press Release

TRIBAL SCALE

TribalScale is a global innovation firm that helps enterprises adapt and thrive in the digital era. We have years of experience in digital strategy, design, and multi-platform engineering and through agile practices, we transform teams, build best-in-class digital products, and create disruptive startups.

Whether we're righting the ship for another company or creating a fresh end-to-end solution, we innovate for a better tomorrow.
Contact us at: contact@tribalscale.com

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