



Case Study

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# RACING POST

Racing Post extends subscription platform with roll-out of eSuite's advanced churn management services

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## Overview

Publishers are taking note of the changes to the industry as print plateaus, with 27% of publishers planning to invest most heavily in digital memberships and paywalls in 2017.<sup>1</sup>

Racing Post, the UK and Ireland's primary source of horse racing and sports news and statistics, launched one of the first paywalls in the market in 2000. Selling digital editions of the newspaper and race cards online, the publisher reaches an average of 1.2 million unique digital consumers per month.

Racing Post currently offers consumers a choice of packages, from a single copy to weekly, monthly and annual digital subscriptions. The publication also features an online shop, which sells horse racing merchandise and horse owner equipment as an extension to its digital business.



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<sup>1</sup> The State of the Media 2017, The Media Briefing, October 2016. [Source](#)

## Project Requirements

To provide an enhanced service to its consumers, grow subscriber numbers and collect greater insight into its audience, Racing Post saw an opportunity to re-launch its innovative paid content strategy.

Racing Post were previously using a bespoke subscription management platform which had been developed in-house. While this met the initial needs of the business, as time went on it became apparent that the platform was lacking functionality which could enhance operations and services, such as voucher code technology and improved security.

Following a full-scale analysis of all IT systems in use, Racing Post concluded that it would be beneficial to bring in a third-party subscription management platform. This led the publisher to MPP Global and eSuite, an advanced eCommerce platform empowering publishers to monetise digital content and physical publications. MPP Global were chosen due to their attitude to implementation and the innovative functionality available, including eSuite's access management and decisioning technology, as well as providing the tools to successfully connect with their readers, be they anonymous, loyal or highly engaged readers.

To ensure it was maintaining and continuing to drive revenues, Racing Post also understood the necessity of retaining its customers. To achieve this, the publisher sought subscription retention and recovery functionality, which effectively identifies, manages and reduces subscriber churn.

## The Solution

To successfully connect with each of their reader profiles, Racing Post required a platform to identify and engage with its readers, as well as successfully manage the subscription lifecycle.

Leveraging eSuite, Racing Post now have access to cutting-edge functionality, when compared to traditional subscription management platforms, enabling the publisher to advance its digital services.

With project managers from both sides of the partnership, Racing Post benefitted from a seamless process throughout the integration project.

The secure migration of all customers' data into eSuite provides the publisher with complete visibility within the platform. For Racing Post, this was a significant development from previously only using the customer's email addresses, with account ID's being generated following the implementation.



Racing Post staff administrators found the new back-office systems easy to use, providing enhanced navigation and improved access to data and statistics when compared to the previous system. Customer service notes, activity logs, subscription and payment histories along with any service credits, are all fully visible from eSuite HQ. Racing Post now has a complete single customer view of all subscribers and their information, enabling the publisher to monitor and track all customer data from its digital services. The new functionality also provides self-care capability, enabling subscribers to manage their own account and purchases, including the ability to upgrade and downgrade their subscriptions.

One of the vital reasons Racing Post implemented a new subscription management platform was to have access to voucher code functionality. Leveraging eSuite, the publisher is able to execute campaigns with offers, promotions and incentives across multiple channels. Racing Post can create and set-up a range of voucher codes to attract users and encourage them to buy products or subscriptions, which are key for growing subscriber numbers.

Since implementing eSuite, a key area Racing Post wished to develop was to reduce the number of churning subscribers; in particular, the number of involuntary cancellations due to subscribers whose card payments were failing. Leveraging eSuite's Retention & Recovery module, Racing Post now has access to a range of features to ensure revenues do not decrease due to churn. Implementing configurable multi-layered, time-based retry rules, suppression windows and card

updates services, the publisher can monitor and make sure it is taking payment at the right time to ensure success.

*“As publications across the media industry aim to understand their customers like never before, this customer-driven model will enable the Racing Post to strengthen its digital content strategy. With a greater insight into its customers, Racing Post can remain the leading horse racing and lifestyle newspaper in the UK and continue to grow its loyal readership.”*

James De Wesselow, Head of Subscriptions, Racing Post

## Project Goals

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### Flexible Subscription Management

Essential to the project, Racing Post desired a subscription management platform which would include flexible functionality not previously available in its bespoke in-house platform. The publisher required innovative functionality to create a range of products and packages, as well as vouchers, which would appeal to Racing Post's audience and help to grow subscriber numbers.

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### Recurring Revenues

To streamline business operations so Racing Post can focus on providing a truly customer-driven service, a platform which could effectively manage recurring revenues was required. With eSuite, the publisher benefits from a platform which takes payments seamlessly and monitors recurring revenues, requiring limited involvement from the Racing Post team.

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### Metering & Access Management

With data playing a crucial role in publishers' businesses today, Racing Post saw the necessity in having metering and access management functionality. It was essential for the Racing Post team to be able to set access rules for the website, while the metering functionality will enable the team to collect additional insights about its audience to increase profiles. This level of information enables the publisher to continue to develop its customer-driven approach to digital services.

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### Improved Security

One of the key reasons behind the project, which needed developing outside of the in-house platform, was to have improved security. With a partner like MPP Global, Racing Post benefits from their security measures, policies and procedures, which is further supported by the Level 1 PCI-DSS Compliance MPP Global maintains.

## The Results

This project was a significant move for the Racing Post as it continues to develop its digital services with an innovative subscription management platform. The customer-driven model enables the company to attract and retain customers with services which are tailored to suit their needs.

Since implementing eSuite, Racing Post has provided its readers and subscribers with an enhanced experience through the payment journey and billing area. Working together, Racing Post and MPP Global are focusing on checking and amending systems to continuously improve processes.

Racing Post are looking to launch a responsive website, with new data functionality to generate insightful audience and subscriber profiles. These new analytics will enable the publisher to create and promote new packages, helping to grow the number of subscriptions.

The implementation of the new platform and the subsequent deployment of broader eSuite features has resulted with Racing Post increasing its subscription volumes, with this set to continue following the launch of its new website. This latest roll-out is expected to see Racing Post's subscriber numbers increase by 30% for the year ahead.

## The Client Said

*"This project enables Racing Post to make that next step towards truly innovative digital service strategies. Leveraging eSuite, Racing Post can better understand who our customers are and their usage habits, have the necessary tools to increase acquisition and most importantly reduce churn."*

James De Wesselow, Head of Subscriptions, Racing Post

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