

# CASE STUDY ● Free swim Initiative – in IT at the deep end



## DC Leisure gets the lowdown on 81,000 Free Swimmers with Xn Leisure's

Starting only three months ago in April this year, the Government's FreeSwim initiative has attracted over 81,000 registered participants through the 41 qualifying sites in DC Leisure's portfolio of 95 sports and fitness facilities. DC Leisure Management Limited (DCLM) develops and manages leisure facilities in partnership with local authorities throughout the UK. The company helps Council clients optimise the performance of their public leisure centres, thereby not only serving their local community more effectively, but achieving economic and social objectives as well. DC Leisure reflects the FIA's mantra of 'More People, More Active, More Often'.

### Crunching the numbers: just the job for Dimension

When you're dealing with up to 300 applications an hour at peak times and want to crunch the data on 81,000 registered members, you need a very powerful software system. Phil White is the Head of IT for DCLM, and he's worked in partnership with Xn Leisure in developing its Dimension software over the last four years. This time and investment is really paying off with the FreeSwim initiative, as several different bodies – Managers, Local Authorities, Government and Sport England - want the data on the FreeSwim participants sliced and diced in different ways. While it's still early days for substantial analysis and reporting, Phil can already answer all sorts of data questions in a couple of clicks.

While a big spike was expected in the number of joiners in the first month of FreeSwim's operation, the numbers for April through May show there's a constant influx of people registering and using the swimming pools. Of the two main target audiences of FreeSwim, the 16s and under and the over 60s, there has clearly been a big take-up by the over 60s, but they have also tended to be starting from a much smaller base of users, whereas the 16s and under are more likely to have been using the swimming pools prior to the launch of the initiative. If you ask Phil how many people have joined in June to date, with Dimension he can tell you the answer in a few seconds: "Just over 6,500 people across 41 sites!"

### Putting it all into perspective for the customer

The value of FreeSwim is equivalent to creating a cross-client and Local Authority global membership product for DC Leisure, those who register can swim at any of the DC Leisure sites participating in the free swim scheme. As an example, someone living in Wolverhampton and using their local DCLM-managed pool could visit friends in Farnborough and go for a free swim at the DCLM managed pool there, and do so by simply swiping their FreeSwim card at either site.



### The IT Department

To put things into perspective for the IT department and managers, this means that Xn Leisure's Dimension software had to manage 41 sites involved with the FreeSwim initiative, and at its peak able to handle up to 300 applications an hour across all of them.

The details collected includes name, address and postcode plus additional marketing questions. These questions establish if they swim currently and if they use any of the DCLM facilities anywhere else, along with their responses to ethnicity and disability. This means that DCLM's FreeSwim registration is not merely used to gather basic information about someone, but as a profile and valuable market research for DCLM to analyse as it looks to the future of facilities for these types of customers.

Moreover, their FreeSwim membership swipecard has to be ready for the customers to pick up within 24 hours or the next time they visit, and ideally made ready while they are there at the pool. At some sites within DCLM's portfolio, this has meant up to 3-4,000 people registering for swipecards, while most sites have been dealing with approximately 1,000. Nonetheless, these are substantial numbers and amounts of data for DCLM's reception staff, their IT department and Xn's software to cope with.

Xn Leisure's centralised Dimension product wasn't designed to deal with such an influx of new joiners in such a short space of time and in the early stages of the initiative showed the strain put upon it. Xn Leisure were very responsive and worked extremely closely with DC Leisure and made the tweaks necessary to ensure Dimension coped with the pressure it was under. Phil White states "Dimension is now a market tried and tested product and because of the enhancements made with some of the challenges we faced in adding so much data in such a short time frame has benefited the long term future of Dimension in making the product extremely robust, and I have every confidence whatever we throw at the system in the future it will manage very effectively"

### Dimension, DC Leisure and Xn Leisure: a very effective partnership

There's no doubt the Government will be delighted with the 81,000 people who have joined FreeSwim at DCLM's 41 sites. For Phil White, the delight is having a tool which aids site management so well combined with helping their software partner, Xn Leisure, to develop such an effective software application. The adoption of 'More People, More Active, More Often' is great not just for DCLM's PR and marketing people, but now with Dimension fully up to speed, for Phil White and his IT team as well.



### About Xn Leisure

Xn Leisure is a leading provider of Leisure Management Solutions (LMS) to the leisure sector.

Xn Leisure has over 28 years' experience in the leisure market and over 5,000 deployed LMS licenses – users cross all four sectors of public, private, facilities management and education. Xn Leisure has a portfolio of turnkey PC and web-based membership and bookings solutions for the leisure industry including software, hardware, project management, training and a raft of skills one would

associate with a robust, rapidly expanding technology business.

Xn Leisure's ongoing investment in strategic product development continues to support customers with feature and benefit-packed innovations setting industry standards and reinforcing the company's position as the leading solutions' provider. The business' culture reflects the friendly, people-orientated nature of the leisure sector whilst stimulating innovation and focused performance amongst Xn Leisure project and service delivery teams.



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