



Free Swim: the value of extending the data captured

When you've got to identify all those over 60 and 16 and under using the Government's Free Swim initiative in your local authority region, and there are potentially tens of thousands of them, you might be tempted to think that's a big enough challenge in itself. But if like some of Xn's clients you're both socially aware and a lateral thinker, you will also want to know if people living in the socially deprived areas are taking up this unique opportunity as well. While you're at it, you could use the data to assist you with those quality sports time KPIs, and then there's all those NEETs to think about as well...

Identifying the take up of Free Swim in socially deprived wards

Craig McAteer is both the MD of Link4Life in Rochdale and Chairman of Sporta, and is keenly aware that 16 of the most socially deprived wards in the UK are in his region. Young people living in these wards tend to make significantly less use of public facilities, so when his team were working out how to capture the data required for the Free Swim initiative, it became obvious that there might be more value in the information if they could also identify the schools in the socially deprived areas,

and the degree to which the Free Swim initiative was being taken up by 16 year olds and under living in these wards.

Knowing this information would then be invaluable for other arms of Rochdale's progressive local authority management, such as their Sports Outreach teams whose challenge is to encourage higher rates of sports participation amongst school children in the socially deprived areas. All the Rochdale team would need are the school databases to identify the children, cross match them with Free Swim users, do some data crunching and check the usage rates of the ones in the more deprived wards.

Key Performance Indicators for quality sports activity time

In addition, there are certain local authority Key Performance Indicators or KPIs that need to be dealt with, such as those relating to quality sports activity time. Specifically these require that every child achieves 5 hours quality sports time a week, comprising two during school hours, and three outside. As Craig saw it, Xn could design software to collect the KPIs, and compare them with national and local targets. This adds further value to the Local Area Agreement targets.



Extend Free Swim to the NEETs

In addition, by extending the Free Swim initiative to the 524 NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in the Rochdale area, even more data could be captured and that much more value could be gained out of the one original initiative.

So with the schools database information, Craig, Rochdale and Xn saw a relatively easy route to developing a new software system that could do so much more than deal with Free Swim statistics, and provide the borough with an immense amount of valuable data, the net result of which could be a significantly higher uptake of public facilities by those in socially deprived wards.

However...

But like all good ideas, there's usually a problem and in Craig's case, it's the challenge of the Data Protection Act which will prevent access to the schools' databases until various approvals can be gained. But now that they've understood the potential of extending the data capture capabilities needed for the Free Swim initiative, Craig and Xn are already working on an alternative strategy in pursuit of the same goals by capturing the postcodes of the Free Swim users.

Craig: "It'll be considerably more laborious to record individual data and postcodes analysis would provide the ideal intelligent data. We will still be able to add 84 schools into Xn's software, and it'll serve our purposes for now until such time as we can get access to the schools' databases. It's an issue, but not an insurmountable one. It's more a matter of having to take more time while using a less convenient route to the same information."

Xn and Rochdale exploit IT intelligently

"The point for us is that by expanding the Free Swim data we can capture with Xn's systems, we can for relatively little extra effort, get so much more value from the same exercise of identifying the Free Swim users. It would have been much easier and quicker if we'd had access to the schools' databases, but with partners like Xn we'll find other ways of achieving the same objectives."

"That for me is what IT's all about, and why I like the relationship we've got with Xn exploiting technology intelligently to achieve much more value for the people living in the Rochdale region."



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.



Xn Leisure Systems Limited

115M Milton Park
Abingdon
Oxon
OX14 4RZ

Tel: +44(0) 870 80 30 700

Fax: +44(0) 870 80 30 701

email: info@xnleisure.com

Web: www.xnleisure.com