

Hosted**Solutions**

# Case Study

## **Company:**

Carolina Panthers

## **Core Competency:**

Professional Sports

## **Challenge:**

Increase Online Presence

## **Service Solutions:**

Hosted Solutions' Hi-Touch<sup>SM</sup> managed and dedicated servers, Server Monitoring, OS Management, Patch Management, Storage Services, Security Services, Backup Services, and Network Monitoring

## **The Company:**

The Carolina Panthers franchise is one of the most well-recognized and most respected football organizations in the National Football League. Their front office is widely considered one of the most forward thinking and sound in all of professional sports. Their eye for talent has exalted them to the forefront of the NFL. The team is committed to providing an online experience for their fans that equals the effort of the entire organization. Their website ([www.panthers.com](http://www.panthers.com)) features news, multimedia, games and other interactive functionality to give fans the most innovative and entertaining online experience available.

## **The Business Challenge:**

With this site redesign came some new revenue opportunities. Carolina was experiencing significant growth year after year in online merchandise sales, and they wanted to be on the forefront of this trend to capitalize on some of the \$3.2 billion dollars in NFL worldwide merchandise sales. The Panthers needed a reliable host to maintain their traffic to their online store and maximize this revenue stream.

Another opportunity that the Panthers recognized was site fluctuations. The number of online users that visit the Carolina Panthers website on any given game day is greater than the capacity of the entire Bank of America stadium. In 2004, David Monroe, Internet Content Coordinator for the Carolina Panthers, realized the potential pitfalls behind having such heavy web traffic fluctuations, and initiated the search for a provider that had the breadth and depth of experience that would allow the Panthers to grow their online presence without increasing IT resources. Gameday, Super Bowl runs, NFC Championships, and acquisitions can multiply viewers to the site immensely. Monroe and his team were dedicated to not only managing these spikes, but also incorporating new interactive features to their website to offer a one-of-a-kind virtual fan experience. As part of this experience, the Panthers wanted to offer a finely tuned front page and a real-time game day



experience for online users that would raise the bar for NFL team sites.

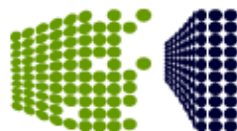
Choosing a managed service provider was critical to the growth strategy of the Carolina Panthers. Because the organization is continually enhancing the website to provide users with a superior experience, up to date team information such as free agent acquisitions and trades, and a new revenue opportunity from merchandise sales, they wanted a partner that was able to provide the agility necessary to grow with them. With all of this knowledge and traffic came other challenges such as load balancing, storage, and security. Additionally, they were looking for a local provider that offered reliable and timely services that would ensure the success of the website project. They also had the forethought to know that power consumption and other environmental factors would need to be factored in the design because of the site's planned growth.



**“Hosted Solutions team understood our objectives for the site and our commitment to our fans. Hosted Solutions had experience working with the applications and databases we were using and were able to fully tackle our online initiatives...”**  
Mark Richardson- President- Carolina Panthers

### **The Solution:**

After reviewing several providers, the Carolina Panthers partnered with Hosted Solutions, a local Carolina based hosting and enterprise solutions provider. The decision allowed the Panthers the ability to deploy quickly and effectively, and to proactively begin managing the Carolina Panthers website at Hosted Solutions secure SAS 70 type II certified Charlotte data center location. The Carolina Panthers' fully scalable enterprise infrastructure consists of Hosted Solutions' dedicated servers and managed services including network, operating system, database, and server administration that frees up their internal IT team's time for their web initiatives. Enterprise class load balancers, web front end caching, content replication, application acceleration, performance tuning, weblog analyzer, and database replication provide for premier site functionality. Patch management, backup, storage, and redundant firewalls provide a fortified environment for their site's residence. “The Hosted Solutions team has exceeded our expectations and has helped us grow our website as a prominent online destination

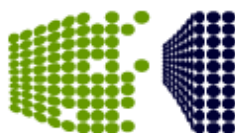


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without adding any internal resources. As members of the Charlotte business community both of us feel a responsibility to do the best work we can do – that is a true partnership,” said Mark Richardson, President of the Carolina Panthers.

“The Hosted Solutions team understood our objectives for the site and our commitment to our fans. Hosted Solutions had experience working with the applications and databases we were using and were able to fully tackle our online initiatives. Hosted Solutions’ extremely positive experiences with professional sports organizations gave us the peace of mind of knowing we were not the only top professionals involved in this partnership. Hosted Solutions partnered with us to develop a more scalable, reliable, and efficient solution while keeping in line with our fiscal initiatives,” quoted Monroe. “Hosted Solutions provided the servers and network platforms that drove the rapid growth of the Carolina Panthers website by extending it’s redundancy and ensuring it had the necessary scalability and support to sustain the heavy usage the site receives. The platform allowed our developers the freedom to create solid applications while Hosted Solutions’ experts maintained the network allocation while allowing scalability for future growth. With Hosted Solutions as our provider, we receive expert system administrators that give us exceptional support and real time monitoring and management. Their exceptional service supports our aggressive goal to create one of the leading NFL team websites for both our fans and the league,” retorts Monroe.

With Hosted Solutions as its local hosting partner the Carolina Panthers met their three criteria for success. Their increased online presence has allowed them to successfully take advantage of the global merchandising market, they have freed up their local IT staff’s time to focus on their business critical objectives, and they utilize a fortified enterprise infrastructure. The organization has developed a sophisticated but user-friendly online game day experience. Panthers.com is now fully integrated with the Panthers’ comprehensive marketing strategy and gives fans a platform to experience the team online. Hosted Solutions’ experience and technical expertise has allowed the Panthers to leverage this experience to increase the revenues of the organization and establish the website as a secure and solid online destination. “This solution has been instrumental in the success of the Carolina Panthers website. Hosted Solutions full product suite allowed us to address every issue and concern we had with our site, and to have a specialized expert to consult on every aspect of the solution,” quoted Richardson. “Our decision to choose Hosted Solutions as our managed hosting provider has paid dividends toward our online growth, and their dedication let’s us know our enterprise infrastructure is in the hands of true professionals.”



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