



## Media & Entertainment case study

# Kick It Out's digital rebrand tackles discrimination in sports

A new online presence launched by Kick It Out supports anti-discrimination in sports with an online capability for reporting offenses.



## The challenge

Since 1993, Kick It Out (KIO) has been at the heart of the fight against discrimination in football, leading the charge for positive change. Moving forward, Kick It Out will explore supporting other sports, provided these are funded independently of football. In January 2022, Kick It Out announced an exploratory partnership with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), to identify and address issues of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within cricket, and work in this area is ongoing.

The hate, abuse and inequality in sport persists, and as long as discrimination exists, so will Kick It Out.

KIO's website is key to engaging members and inspiring its audiences. However, data from the existing website showed that visitors had trouble finding information, using key functionality, like downloading educational resources, and submitting discrimination reports. As KIO prepared to expand its reach with a relaunched brand, the need to transform digitally became apparent. Ultimately, these new changes would allow KIO to offer an improved user experience on its website and provide a dedicated digital learning platform.

## In search of a like-minded partner

With few internal resources to spare, KIO needed to find a like-minded partner with expertise in website consulting and technology project management to help design, build and deliver a new website and learning platform.

## At a glance

**Industry**  
Sports

**Location**  
United Kingdom

**Challenge**  
Deliver an integrated website and digital learning platform to support Kick It Out's new strategy and brand.

**Products and Services**

- Consulting services
- Project management
- Experience design
- Visual design
- Architecture definition
- Infrastructure provisioning
- Build and deployment

**Success Highlights**

- Future-proof transformation to support new strategy and brand
- Encouraged early engagement with new features and resources
- Seamless integration with Salesforce CRM
- Gained cost efficiencies via Microsoft Azure Cloud hosting

## The approach

After inviting pitches from potential partners, Cognizant was chosen for the project. Hollie Varney, head of brand, communications and marketing at KIO, says, “We knew Cognizant shared our vision and values, and they already worked with our partners, like Sky and the Football Association. Their pitch to us showed they had the right digital transformation expertise, too.”

Jack Eatherley, participation lead at Sky Sports, says, “We are committed to working side by side with Kick It Out in the fight against discrimination in sports, and we are thrilled to have supported them to reach an even wider audience.”

## Digital transformation for the future

Cognizant set out to build the website and digital learning platform that would reflect KIO’s new brand and support its aim to engage with more stakeholders effectively across more sports.

We delivered an interactive website that offers KIO information and resources, as well as reporting capabilities that are easy and intuitive to use. The website project involved collaboration with Sky, using their graphic design expertise to create KIO’s new logo and brand identity.

To adhere to cost goals, Cognizant recommended Microsoft Azure Cloud as a suitable platform for the Drupal-based website and a cost-efficient solution that allowed KIO to take advantage of Microsoft’s pricing for non-profits.



“Digital transformation is a big part of our strategy for the next three years. The new website and digital learning platform are strategic assets that make us a bit more future proof. We’ve also had a lot of enquiries about our resources, which is another big aim of ours—getting people to interact with the new brand and download our materials.”

Hollie Varney, head of brand, communications and marketing, Kick It Out



## Business outcomes

Regular meetings between KIO and Cognizant ensured the projects progressed smoothly, with any issues being swiftly addressed. “We’ve had a lot of added value from Cognizant. They have gone above and beyond,” says Hollie Varney.

The implementation delivered the full roster of benefits that KIO hoped to achieve, including:

- Seamless integration with Salesforce CRM to enable KIO to respond rapidly and effectively to inquiries and reports of discrimination made via the website
- Development of a digital learning platform that delivers KIO’s resources and tools on a wide range of issues, from educational pieces on topics like LGBT inclusion, sexism and the history of race and intersectionality to interactive quizzes and modules that schools can use in lessons
- A robust, secure and scalable cloud environment for the two new platforms.
- Program management expertise to support KIO’s business goals.

Michael Wignall, Azure business lead at Microsoft UK, adds, “Azure Cloud gives Kick It Out a stable, reliable and secure external-facing platform, enabling them to focus on raising awareness and taking action on reported incidents of racism in football.”

## Encouraging early results

The new KIO website went live in July 2022, with the digital learning platform scheduled to go live in September. While the non-profit was not expecting to see a significant impact until the 2022-2023 football season was fully underway, initial results have been encouraging:

- High visitor rates: 50,751 page views in the first month after go-live, from 36,364 unique users.
- Increased donations: 35 new donations with the majority being on a recurrent schedule.
- New incident reporting functionality: 54 instances of discrimination were reported in the first month across the professional and grassroots games as well as online, which supports the important step of following up on reports of discrimination.
- Strong interest in downloading resources ahead of KIO’s marketing of the new functionality.

As Kick It Out gears up to take its anti-discrimination message, tools and resources to new audiences in football, cricket and other sports, the new website and digital learning platform will play a central role in its success. By partnering with Cognizant and Microsoft, KIO has achieved a future-proof digital transformation that will support its strategy for the next three years and beyond.

## About Kick It Out

Kick It Out is a charity with a mission to put an end to all forms of discrimination within sports. For more information, please visit [www.kickitout.org](http://www.kickitout.org).



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