Looking for an
Athlete Management System?

Key Factors to Consider.

KINDUCT

Executive Summary

Thanks to advancements in the science of human performance, coaches, trainers and sports scientists have never had so many ways to monitor athletes' health and fitness.

Although most monitoring and tracking devices, applications and platforms can provide potentially useful information, it is not always easy to make that data meaningful and actionable. As a result, a growing number of teams, leagues and organizations have opted for an Athlete Management System (AMS) to organize, analyze and visualize all their data within a single, integrated platform. An AMS acts as a centralized data hub where all your athlete information is consolidated and accessible in one place.

In this white paper, you will find out what the right AMS can do for you and how to choose the system that will be the best fit for your organization, now and in the future. You will also learn best practices to increase the chances that your AMS implementation will be successful.

How to select the right AMS for your organization

Greater data integration means better insight

Members of specialized staff like coaches, trainers and nutritionists look for specific insight to help them do their part to keep athletes healthy and ready to perform at their peak. It often means relying on a variety of measuring tools and monitoring devices for data, which is then stored in different repositories and spreadsheets.

Over time, this disparate information becomes isolated and its inherent value starts to diminish because the data cannot provide the cohesive insight it could if it was brought together with other variables. An AMS brings all that data into one centralized platform, making it easy to correlate information and putting everything you need to collaborate and make informed decisions at your fingertips.

At least 10,000 elite athletes in 35 countries wear fitness tracking devices as part of their training. [1]

If you ask strength and conditioning coach Bill Burgos why he likes using an AMS, his answer is simple: it makes his life easier.

"I'm a practitioner, so I'm always busy coaching and that takes a lot of time. I don't have time to run around looking for information," says Burgos, who works with the NBA's Orlando Magic. "With the AMS platform, I can centralize all my athlete information and if I need something, it's easy to find. And everyone is able to access information in the same place, so it's made our jobs easier and more efficient."

He also likes having the ability to define and highlight the specific metrics that are important to him and his team.

Key benefits of using an AMS to centralize data:

Save time: Input data automatically and create reports on the fly. You can also quickly distribute reports to the right people, delivering information exactly when they need it.

Identify injury risk: Get a 360° view of your athletes to understand their status and determine the best training or recovery programs.

Get more meaning from data: Show correlations, comparisons and trends visually through graphs, charts and tables that can pull metrics together in one display.

Make informed decisions: Gain better insight by accessing and analyzing information in one place. Quickly see where there are gaps or opportunities to improve performance.

Key questions to consider before you purchase an AMS:

What do you want to achieve?

It seems simple enough, but one of the most critical questions organizations should ask themselves before buying an AMS is why they need one. It is important to know what you want from using a centralized data management platform and what your focus is going to be. Will it be on rehabilitation, performance or strength and conditioning? Once you determine that, you should drill down into the specific things you want to accomplish and prioritize what you want to achieve first. Hayden Landry, VP, Human Performance, suggests identifying the "lowest hanging fruit" – the questions whose answers will deliver the biggest benefit for the least amount of effort.

When is the right time?

Timing can have a huge impact on how much value you get from an AMS. For some teams, it may be more difficult to effectively implement an AMS mid-season when everyone is busy. In other cases, it may be easier to adopt an AMS during the season when all the necessary staff are together and on point for the implementation. Conduct an evaluation of your team's schedule and related resources to help you decide the best time for an implementation and ensure your AMS provider can meet your requirements.

Questions to ask an AMS provider

Once you have completed your research and are ready to make a decision, consider asking your AMS provider these questions before signing on the dotted line:

1. **Which third-party tracking devices and monitoring applications does the AMS integrate with?**

   Like other data-minded sports organizations, yours has probably invested in one or multiple tools or applications to collect athlete data. Third-party data can include player movement, body composition, FMS movement screen, force plate, heart rate and in-game statistics. You want to ensure your organization gets the most from its investment. So, when choosing an AMS, consider the breadth and depth of the integrations it has with the devices you are using now and the ones you may want to use in the future.

   The type of integration matters too. You want to get data into the system as easily as possible so ideally, you are looking for application program interface (API) integrations, which make importing data seamless and automatic. If a third-party device does not have an API, you still want to be able to transfer the data you have collected into the AMS, so it is important to find out if it provides data import capabilities with any tools you use now or plan to use down the road.

   Also ask about the company's integration roadmap so you get a good understanding of where it is going and its overall commitment to innovation. For instance, do they have a team dedicated to expanding and maintaining their third-party integrations or are integrations something they work on along with other product development activities? You want a provider that is committed to constantly learning and improving. You also need a company with the size and capacity to support ongoing innovation so you can be confident the system will grow with you.

2. **Does the system offer flexible data visualization tools?**

   The AMS you choose should be capable of visually displaying data in a variety of tables, charts and graphs. Simplifying data into easy-to-digest visuals is ideal for conveying information quickly and can help coaches, trainers and performance staff make informed decisions more quickly. Being able to see averages and standard deviation and other types of statistical analysis in a basic graph is much more effective than wading through a page of numbers on a spreadsheet.

   You will also want the system to have enough processing power to quickly complete calculations and then automatically represent them visually. These visual reports provide useful points of discussion that make collaboration easier and more effective.

3. What kind of privacy and security protection does it offer?

Protecting the privacy and security of data is extremely important because the personal information collected on pro and elite athletes is highly sensitive, as is the private information about the organizations they work for. There are also government rules and regulations that govern how data management companies operate.

You need a system that has the ability to segregate sensitive data and control access through roles and permissions. For instance, you do not want everyone within an organization to know an athlete's medical condition or emotional state. That type of information is best kept within the scope of a particular group. So, while you want the AMS to bring all your data together in one centralized location, you want to be careful about how that information is accessed and shared.

4. What level of customer support is provided?

An AMS is a powerful software platform, so members of your team will likely have many questions on a variety of topics as they become more familiar with its capabilities. Since the technology is relatively new, coaches and trainers may need help understanding the value of a specific calculated metric or the benefits of running a particular report.

Your team members may also require a high level of service and support to ensure they are getting what they need from the system. They likely already work extended hours in a highly competitive environment and should not have to figure everything out on their own. The AMS provider should have someone your organization can rely on to walk people through things so they do not have to spend hours learning the system up front. It is important to be eased into the learning curve to ensure the platform is attaining the value your organization requires at a pace that is manageable. "What you don't want is a company that drops the technology on your doorstep and says, 'Good luck,'" says Frank McKinnon, VP, Strategic Initiatives at Kinduct. "

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An AMS provider should understand your organization's objectives and suggest the best approaches for the implementation. You want a company that is committed to keeping its clients up-to-date about new features and enhancements, and is willing to listen to their ideas on product advancements. It should also provide access to resources for training and support, including a knowledge base and step-by-step instructions on how to use available features.

Implementation

Six tips to get your implementation started on the right track

1. **Know your data**

   Before you get started, it is important to get a clear understanding of all the data you have. This includes historical data, the metrics being captured now and the data you want to collect in the future. You should have a good sense of where that data is and what you plan to bring into the platform in the short, medium and long terms. The more you understand the metrics that matter to your organization, the better chance there is that you will get an implementation plan that addresses your priorities.

2. **Assemble the right team**

   Implementing an Athlete Management System provides huge benefits but it takes a collective effort and a solid governance model. Deciding who in your organization will control and manage the system during implementation and beyond is an important part of making it successful. Consider the key roles you want on your team and the people who will need access to the platform. They can include:

   Executive sponsor – Who is your AMS champion in the front office? A successful implementation requires someone who can stand up at an executive level and say, "This is what we are committing to and this is why it is important."

   Administrator – Who will administer the site on a daily basis on behalf of the organization? This individual will be the go-to person and the key point of contact for the AMS provider. The choice of administrator is one of the most critical decisions, so it is important to choose wisely. This person should have the time to become the internal expert on using the AMS and have a full understanding of the aims of the organization.

   Power users – Who will be using the AMS every day to do their work? These people need to be identified early so they can be fully supported and trained.

3. Get buy-in and a commitment

It takes a commitment of time, money and effort to implement an AMS. Everyone in your organization is already busy, so they do not want to waste time on something with little or no value or ROI. With organizational buy-in, you can design a practical implementation plan that will ensure the AMS is populated frequently with high-quality data, which is key to making it useful. If data is missing or inconsistent, general buy-in and adoption of the AMS will suffer.

If you plan to have your athletes use the system, it is important to get buy-in from them too. Help your athletes understand that an AMS is not about monitoring or keeping a close eye on them. It is about helping them perform better by giving staff more insight into how they are doing. Kinduct's Jeff Johnson, a former pro-football player himself, suggests finding a "champion in the locker room" who can help you communicate that message to the rest of the team.

4. Take it one step at a time

The capabilities of the leading AMS technology platforms are significant. But it is best not to go too far too fast. Start with small steps and identify what you need most from the AMS and lock and configure the system to that specifically. Also, identify who the power users are and make sure they have the information and training they need to get started with the platform before rolling it out to other teams and departments.

One of the main reasons some implementations are successful and others are not goes back to pre-planning and setting the right expectations about what is achievable. It is a bit like walking before you run. It does not often work out well if organizations try to do too much and introduce too much change too quickly to too many people.

5. Consider your end game

Your success will ultimately depend on your expectations. What outputs are you looking for? What types of reports do your coaches and trainers need? Make sure your AMS supports the robust reporting and detailed analysis you need and provides data visualization so it is easier to communicate results with team members and other people in the organization. Identify the meaningful metrics you want to capture and which third-party tools you need the AMS to integrate with to collect that data.

6. Build a relationship with your AMS provider

Working with your AMS provider should feel more like a partnership than a sales transaction. You will want to have regular contact so your teams can stay up-to-date on new features and get tips on using the system to its full potential and getting the most value for your organization.

Ideally, you will have an assigned account representative or Client Success Manager (CSM) to act as a quarterback for your athlete performance team. It should be that person's job to understand what you need and help configure the system to draw out the insight and results required to achieve your goals. You want someone who is involved in the onboarding and training, and regularly provides insight into how to increase the value you are getting from the platform.

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Steps in a Kinduct implementation

STEP 1
Kickoff
A CSM or account representative is assigned to lead onboarding of the new client and the AMS platform is branded and configured to specific requirements.

STEP 2
Discovery
Client goals, key stakeholders, important metrics, third-party integrations, and programming and reporting needs are identified.

STEP 3
Onboarding
Clients are provided with hands-on support to get the software up and running. This includes adding roles, users and permissions.

STEP 4
Adoption
Clients receive help incorporating the AMS into their day-to-day operations. New data sources and reports are added and new features are adapted to existing processes.

STEP 5
Ongoing support
The CSM provides ongoing support and access to up-to-date information in a knowledge base.

Commit to the long haul

"In the end, you only get out what you put in," says Kinduct's Frank McKinnon. That is why organizational buy-in is important because reaping the benefits of an AMS is going to take some work. Organizations with successful implementations have a few key things in common. They have a clear governance model, a high level of engagement with their AMS provider and an unwavering commitment to updating data so the information is always current and accurate.

There are no shortcuts when it comes to choosing the right AMS for your organization. The stakes are too high. So, after educating yourself about the choices and nailing down which capabilities you need most, ask AMS providers for client references – people who actually implemented the product and use it every day. Speaking with a customer may give you the confidence you need to select the right AMS to deliver the most value to your organization and your athletes.

If you would like to learn about what Kinduct's Athlete Management System can do for you, please contact us for a demo at info@kinduct.com.

About Kinduct Technologies

Kinduct is a leading provider of software that uses intelligence to shape human performance. Our secure, cloud-based Athlete Management System turns rich data into powerful insights that deliver tangible results to help coaches, trainers, teams and athletes perform better. Find out how to use your data to gain a competitive advantage at www.kinduct.com.

Sources

1. Gartner, "Top Strategic Predictions for 2016 and Beyond," October 2, 2015.

https://www.gartner.com/binaries/content/assets/events/keywords/symposium/sym26/gartner_top_strategic_predictions_2016.pdf

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