

Betcenter is right on target with Combella Cloud

The Belgian group Betcenter, one of the major providers of sports betting in our country, opted for Combella in 2017. “We have been growing intensively since 2013. In addition to retail, online is an important priority. Therefore, we were looking for a partner that could easily keep up with our growth rate”, according to Win Cox, online director at Betcenter Group. In the run-up to the World Cup 2018, an interactive app also provided a smooth introduction to online betting.

With over 120 employees and more than 100 sales outlets in Belgium, Betcenter has become a permanent fixture in the sports betting market. Before and during the matches, sports fans can place a bet on the result and the course of more than 150,000 sporting events – in more than fifty different national and international sports. In

addition to its own ‘Betcenters’ in Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, Charleroi, Genk, Ghent, Liège, Mechelen and Mons, the company also has mixed sales outlets in newspaper stands.





As a bookmaker officially recognised by the Belgian Gaming Commission, the group focuses on efficient ICT support to significantly simplify the job of the shopkeeper. Customer management is essential with this, for example to protect vulnerable persons against themselves. “In the last three, four years we have continuously opened new offices. This also involves a lot of work in terms of ICT”, says Wim Cox, online director at Betcenter Group. “In addition, we see a rapid growth in online and mobile betting. We were looking for a partner who could support us with this and we got this from Combell.”

“We immediately noticed how well everything was organised. The great expertise of Combell was clearly noticed during the migration. They immediately suggested some improvements to our applications, in terms of performance and reliability. What is more, the service is impeccable. When required, the right people are always there for us.”

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Shooting penalties with friends

In the spring of 2018, Betcenter chose the same building blocks as basis for a brand-new mobile application, an online football game. “The World Cup is the biggest sports tournament in the world.

Everyone suddenly becomes a football fan. Meanwhile, the pure advertising market for sports betting is completely saturated. During big tournaments like the World Cup and even beyond, competitors are in each other’s way during the commercial break. An ‘advergame’ like Shootout 2018 was the opportunity for us to widen our target audience and to cautiously offer education about sports betting”, Wim Cox continues.



The game runs in real-time. We obviously wish to offer everyone a smooth gaming experience, without any disruptions.”

It is a free interactive football game for mobile phones, available for Android and iPhone in Belgium, Germany, Austria and Denmark. Before and during the World Cup, the app was in the top five of the most popular apps in the ‘Sports’ category for weeks. “You can either shoot penalties or try to save them. Both gaming options allow you to earn points and prizes, which you can redeem at Betcenter. Ethics are essential in our sector. This is a pure introduction, without any revenue model.”

“The game runs in real-time. The prizes are awarded ‘live’. Plus, you can play against your friends or other players who are online at that moment. We obviously wish to offer everyone a smooth gaming experience, without any disruptions. And the huge

popularity of the game may of course not have a negative impact on the players.”



Confident about a virtual rush

Via the app, new and existing customers find their way to the Betcenter website. An absolute rush was expected for the 2018 World Cup. “We typically have several peaks during autumn, for the Champions League games. But during the World Cup, the rush was of course even bigger”, according to Wim Cox.

“Combell engineers monitor our system 24/7. They probably know the characteristics of our traffic better than we do. This is a huge asset for us.”

Combell supported Betcenter with a number of stress tests, to be absolutely sure that the infrastructure was robust enough for major visitor peaks. “The Internet is a vital sales channel where massive bets are placed shortly before the game. We do not know in advance when the peak moments will occur. If the technology does not work at that moment, your customers actually stand in front of a closed door. And when the game has been played, it is all over!”

“We have all confidence in the people at Combell. Their expertise has helped us, they really know what they are talking about. To be honest, we did not have any problems. When there was a small issue, the response time was excellent. They are always available and professional. They also ensured smooth coordination with Firewolf Studios, the developer of our World Cup app. We received great reviews, fantastic comments and above all no complaints about the performance!”



“Combell informs us when it is necessary to add capacity, or to reduce this after a peak period. So we keep the right size.”

ustafa Kara, Project & ICT Manager, Betcenter Group

Betcenter uses virtual servers with VMware HA Cluster as basic technology, for the web store and the CRM environment of the offices. This includes fully redundant hardware whose computing power, memory and storage capacity can be expanded. “Combell informs us when it is necessary to add capacity, or to reduce this after a peak period. So we keep the right size.”

Virtual servers and a strong SLA

Betcenter went for Combell Cloud with an SLA Pro, which offers the highest protection level available. This means that the Combell engineers monitor the systems 24/7 and intervene proactively when necessary. “They plan the capacity for us. They can add or remove hardware, depending on the expected traffic volume. They probably know the characteristics of our traffic better than we do. This is a huge asset for us”, evaluates Mustafa Kara, project & ICT manager at Betcenter Group.

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