

# CONSOL Energy Center Energizes Fans and Sponsors

The NHL's Pittsburgh Penguins fuel new fan experiences and revenue growth with Cisco StadiumVision

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Pittsburgh Penguins/CONSOL Energy Center

- Industry: Sports and Entertainment
- Location: Pittsburgh, PA U.S.A.

### CHALLENGE

- Create more engaging experiences for technologically sophisticated fans
- Increase advertising and sponsorship revenues
- Improve operational flexibility and efficiency

### SOLUTION

- Cisco StadiumVision
- Cisco Connected Stadium

### RESULTS

- 200% increase in the number of advertisers
- 300% increase in concourse advertising and sponsorship revenues
- More memorable and impactful brand experiences – 80 percent of fans retained the digital content they viewed.

## Challenge

The state-of-the-art CONSOL Energy Center opened in October 2010 and is home to both the National Hockey League's Pittsburgh Penguins® professional ice hockey team and the Pittsburgh Power of the Arena Football League. More than two million fans come to approximately 170 ticketed events per year, 50 of which are Penguins games. With a young, highly connected fan base, the Penguins have embraced technology to deliver a brand image characterized by energy, drive, and innovation.

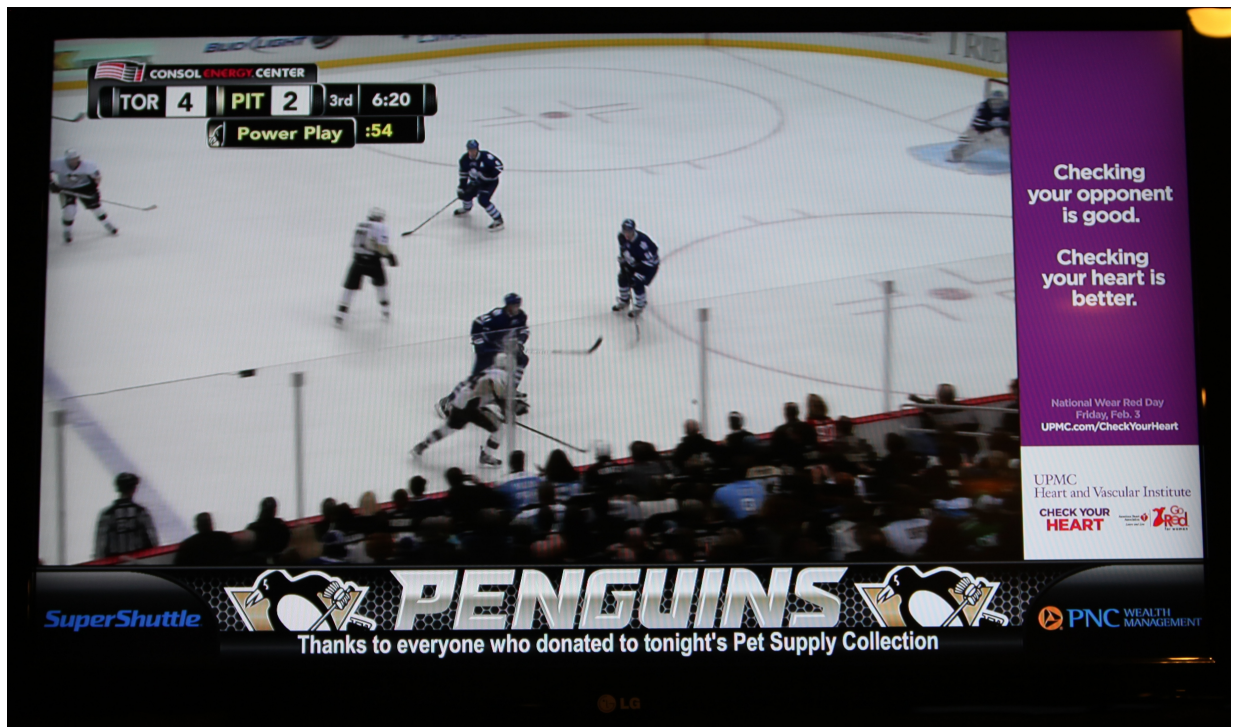
As the CONSOL Energy Center was being designed, the team wanted to enhance that energy and innovation by creating a highly immersive and branded experience for fans. The new arena had to engage fans with unique content, keep them centered around the action everywhere in the arena, and provide them with memorable experiences.

In addition, advertising and sponsorship offerings are essential to a successful franchise, and the venue wanted to implement the most

advanced technology available to help drive revenue. The Pittsburgh Penguins and CONSOL Energy Center recognized a great opportunity to use innovative technologies to provide sponsors and concessions with new, highly targeted promotional capabilities and new ways of interacting with fans. The fixed, static advertising and signage in the old arena limited the number of advertisers and the amount of exposure that their ads received. The static medium was also difficult and time-consuming to change between events. As a result, the Penguins and CONSOL Energy Center required a flexible, technology-based solution that would allow them to transform the venue efficiently and effectively to meet the unique needs of each event.

The Penguins and CONSOL Energy Center chose to embrace technology as a strategic and integral part of its business model and brand enhancement initiatives. The technology solutions selected, therefore, would have to meet the needs of the Center, teams, fans, and partners now and for years to come.





## Solution

The Pittsburgh Penguins and CONSOL Energy Center selected and invested in Cisco StadiumVision™ and the associated Connected Stadium infrastructure to provide fans with an immersive, interactive, and high-definition (HD) experience. Cisco® StadiumVision delivers HD video and digital signage capabilities that are highly flexible and customizable. It can broadcast game or event footage, targeted promotions, and real-time information everywhere in the stadium.

The CONSOL Energy Center implemented 781 HD screens and 44 digital menu boards displaying content managed by Cisco StadiumVision across its 18,000+ seat venue.

Changing the look and feel of the stadium can be accomplished in a matter of minutes from a central console. This flexibility allows the venue to easily brand itself for the event taking place and customize merchandising and concession opportunities anytime before, during, or after the event.

In addition, branding and promotions can be customized with full-screen video, full-screen signage, unique combinations of video and signage, and digital menus. All updates are made quickly and easily from a single, centrally located, on-site command center. The Penguins and their partners now can deliver campaigns to an individual display, targeted zones, or associated with a specific moment in time. For example, exclusive ads can take over all displays during a key moment in the game, such as a goal or time-out.

“Cisco was a strong IT partner,” says Erik Watts, Senior Director, Technology, Pittsburgh Penguins. “The Cisco Connected Stadium converged network platform enables us to use Cisco StadiumVision as a complete, integrated solution. We can efficiently and effectively manage the solution and support new technologies over time as we adapt to create new fan experiences.”

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Initially, the Penguins and CONSOL Energy Center intentionally launched the Cisco StadiumVision solution utilizing a select set of its capabilities to create an obvious and well understood value proposition for advertising partners and sponsors. From that point forward, the CONSOL Energy Center continues to exploit additional features as its business needs and fans' desires require.

"Starting out slowly simplified our deployment and the initial experience for our sponsors and partners," says David Peart, senior vice president of sales and service for the CONSOL Center. "Our initial deployment was highly successful, and now we are building from that successful foundation."

"The value that we are receiving from Cisco StadiumVision far outweighs just a financial investment. We can easily justify it financially, but the value to our brand identity is immeasurable. We can demonstrate to sponsors and fans that they gain a far better experience, and there is not a more effective way to do it."

– David Peart, Senior Vice President of Sales and Service, CONSOL Energy Center

## Results

"Cisco StadiumVision not only met our defined requirements, it is indispensable to driving sponsorship, revenue, and creating buzz," says Peart. "The solution has completely changed the dynamic of almost everything we do."

With the CONSOL Energy Center, the Penguins now have one of the most state-of-the-art arenas in the world. With Cisco StadiumVision and 781 HD monitors, fans are immersed in the action wherever they are. The ability to brand the venue for individual events with Cisco StadiumVision has also made the CONSOL Energy Center an ideal location for concerts, family shows, and marquee sporting events, such as the 2012 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's Basketball Championship.

Cisco StadiumVision has also changed the business of selling ad space for Penguins and the CONSOL Energy Center. Prior to engaging Cisco StadiumVision, ads were sold based on their size and specific location within the venue. Some concourse spaces were a tough sell. Now with Cisco StadiumVision, advertising can be priced and sold by units of time, as well as by zone, time periods, and packages of logo placement with landmark sponsorships. The Penguins also sell advertising for Moments of Exclusivity, where advertisers can take over all of the screens in the venue at a specific moment in time, such as goal scoring. The new pricing model has not only significantly increased revenues, but it has made concourse ad space the leading attraction for sales to sponsors and advertisers.

Ads reach more fans as they are distributed across hundreds of monitors throughout the entire building instead of the traditional one or two fixed locations. Sponsors can choose a specific group to advertise to, a time period, or exposure for all events in the CONSOL Energy Center. As a result, the Penguins and CONSOL Energy Center doubled the number of advertisers and tripled total revenue for concourse and arena signage.

"Sponsors love the pervasive nature of digital signage and feel like they are getting more value for their advertising dollars," says Peart. "They are embracing the system's flexibility that enables them to segment advertising to specific targets, and they routinely customize advertising to premium levels instead of delivering a one-size-fits-all message."

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"We understood the capabilities of Cisco StadiumVision when it was purchased," says Watts, "but it completely changed our way of thinking to 'now what else can we do with it?' The more interactive we become with the StadiumVision system, the more often new things come to mind. Advertising is a moving target, and the Cisco StadiumVision system gives us the ability to innovate at a more rapid pace over time."

The industry has recognized and rewarded these innovations. In 2011, the CONSOL Energy Center was voted the Best National Hockey League Arena by readers of the *SportsBusiness Journal* and was a finalist for Facility of the Year at the 2011 Sports Business Awards.

## Looking Ahead

Listening to fan feedback is important to the CONSOL Energy Center. Peart and Watts bring suggestions from fans to share with Cisco and collaborate on new ideas and capabilities. Cisco embraces customer-led innovation and collaborates with the Penguins and CONSOL Energy Center teams to provide the best possible experience for Penguins games and other events.

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## For More Information

To find out more about Cisco StadiumVision visit: [www.cisco.com/web/strategy/sports/StadiumVision.html](http://www.cisco.com/web/strategy/sports/StadiumVision.html).

To learn more about the CONSOL Energy Center, visit [www.consolenergycenter.com](http://www.consolenergycenter.com).

This customer story is based on information provided by the CONSOL Energy Center and describes how that particular organization benefits from the deployment of Cisco products. Many factors may have contributed to the results and benefits described; Cisco does not guarantee comparable results elsewhere.

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