

HOW THE CHICAGO FIRE TRANSFORMED OPERATIONS WITH BLINKFIRE INVENTORY MANAGER

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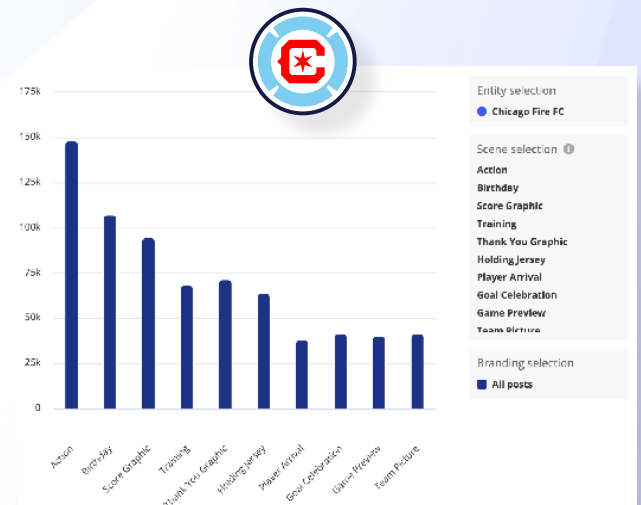
OVERVIEW

Founded in 1997, the Chicago Fire are prominent in American soccer history. Competing in Major League Soccer (MLS), the Fire have carved out a place in the passionate sports town of Chicago, representing the city's first major soccer team. Over the years, the team has secured top-tier talent and found success with four US Open Cups, a MLS Cup Championship in 1998, and a Supporters' Shield in 2003. As one of the founding members of MLS, the Chicago Fire hold a special place in the hearts of soccer enthusiasts and continues to contribute to the growth and popularity of the sport in the United States.

The **Chicago Fire partnered with Blinkfire in 2020** to leverage SaaS tools for sponsorship inventory management and tracking. The team boasts a social media following of 979,868 as of September 30, 2024 and is one of the most innovative clubs on social media. The Fire's sponsorship sales and marketing departments use Blinkfire's advanced analytics and sponsorship CRM to increase sales and organizational efficiency.

CHALLENGE

The Fire's partnership marketing team **previously relied on manually tracking** sponsorship fulfillment using numerous decentralized, static Excel files. This fragmented approach hindered stakeholders' ability to monitor deployment status and provide timely updates to partners regarding the completion and performance of assets. Additionally, frequent changes within the department made it difficult to review historical data to identify successful strategies and areas needing improvement. This **manual process consumed valuable time and resources**, highlighting the need for an efficient solution. The team sought a method to track sponsorship deal assets through various stages of the sales cycle and aimed to **automate this process to enhance efficiency and effectiveness**.



Social Media - Cinematic Match Recap		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - General Promo Support		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Team Walk in New City		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Win Creative Graphic		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Photos of the Night		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Talent endorsement		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Player Milestones		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Matchday Graphic		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Kickoff Graphic		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Apple TV - TBD		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Arrival Videos		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Schedule Drop		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Stoppage Time		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Warmup Photos		Social Manual	Content Series
Social Media - Team Travel		Social Manual	Content Series

The team aimed to improve several key areas related to asset fulfillment and monitoring:

- Limited visibility of partnership assets during various sales stages across departments
- Inefficiencies in inventory tracking and obtaining accurate counts of available assets
- Absence of a central portal for partnership fulfillment, pacing statuses, and performance
- Lack of a system to review past successes and shortcomings to develop best practices

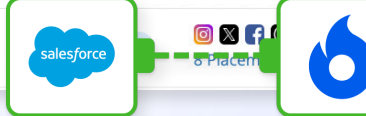
SOLUTION

The Chicago Fire now use **Blinkfire Inventory Manager (BIM)** for their partnership asset tracking and sales process needs. This **all-in-one sponsorship CRM tool** allows multiple departments to effectively manage inventory on sponsorship assets, offering sales stage transparency in near real-time.

The Fire are invested in Salesforce, with virtually all revenue-generating departments utilizing the CRM to handle their respective books of business, making a bi-directional sync between BIM and Salesforce imperative.

Blinkfire's Salesforce integration **has significantly reduced the need for switching between platforms**, enabling users to operate seamlessly within both. Blinkfire's two-way sync has provided the Fire's partnership marketing and corporate partnerships teams with real-time updates on fulfillment statuses and asset-level pacing for each deal. This comprehensive view is **a first for the team**, streamlining their operations and enhancing their ability to manage partnerships effectively.

Line Item	Entities	Category	Placements
Action		Social Scene	11 Placements
Goal Celebration		Social Scene	8 Placements
Game Preview		Social Scene	7 Placements
Training		Social Scene	10 Placements
Score Graphic		Social Scene	7 Placements
Holding Jersey		Social Scene	7 Placements
Supporters Section		Social Scene	10 Placements
Player Arrival		Social Scene	8 Placements



Nick Moreno, Director of Business Strategy & Analytics, Chicago Fire

“Through BIM and its two-way Salesforce integration, the partnership team now has an all-in-one tool to sell, activate, track, and assess the performance of all assets. The team can swiftly identify available inventory, track deal progress, and optimize sales strategies.”

CONNECTING BLINKFIRE INVENTORY MANAGER

The integration of BIM within the Chicago Fire's organization resulted in notable improvements across various operational aspects, heightened efficiency, streamlined delivery and reporting processes, and increased sponsorship engagements and deals.

Nick Moreno

“Blinkfire's inventory management tools transformed our partnership operations, optimizing sponsorship processes for assets, proposals, and fulfillment tracking. Plus, the integration with Salesforce is a game-changer, enabling better communication and collaboration across teams.”

The Fire's sale process and operational efficiency became more streamlined for tracking partnership asset stages. This allowed the sales team and partnership marketing team to work hand-in-hand throughout the entire sales process. **Blinkfire's pacing and fulfillment automation saved time for multiple departments at the Fire** — where they used to track asset status and fulfillment manually.

Blinkfire is the leading business intelligence & marketing analytics platform to evaluate sports, esports, media, and entertainment sponsorships across social media, digital, and Advanced TV. Using artificial intelligence, machine learning, and proprietary computer vision technology, Blinkfire measures media value and impact – allowing rights holders, players, influencers, agents, and brands to better engage their fans and sponsors across multiple platforms.

To learn more about Blinkfire, email at marketing@blinkfire.com or visit www.blinkfire.com.

