

Optimizing Business Results with Subscription Visibility

Learn how the social media company turned to Aria Systems to expand its business with subscription services – signing new deals via promotions and trials and gaining a comprehensive view into business performance, market trends and customer activities.

The Company

HootSuite (www.hootsuite.com), provider of the market-leading social media management system, enables organizations to collaboratively execute campaigns across multiple social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Via the company's web-based social media dashboard, organizations can quickly launch marketing campaigns, manage and measure social media traffic, identify and grow online audiences, distribute targeted messages and manage and measure social media traffic – optimizing brand visibility across multiple channels.

The Challenge

HootSuite had built an impressive business around a baseline product that was free of charge, but saw an opportunity to introduce additional, value-add features and services. So, the company decided to transition to a freemium model, enabling customers to subscribe to individual HootSuite packages to support evolving social media strategies.

Moving from free to paid subscribers was a big shift for the company and required a solution working behind-the-scenes to securely manage transactions – automating invoices, handling credit card payments and safely storing customer data to ensure PCI compliance. Plus, HootSuite needed the ability to easily roll out multiple plans, and “mix and match” prices appropriately, to appeal to its two target audiences – SMBs and enterprises.

“We had aggressive plans to expand our business and needed a solution that would not only keep pace, but help enable our future growth,” said Daniel Mathews, Optimization Analyst with HootSuite. “We’re always trying to anticipate what our customers want to do next with our products, and wanted the power to rapidly introduce new services to capitalize on the next wave of opportunities.”

HootSuite was focused on going to market as quickly as possible, so building an in-house billing platform wasn't an option. The company evaluated several vendor offerings, primarily focusing on three requirements: rapid deployment, tight security and support for any type of price and plan.



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Optimization Analyst
HootSuite



The Solution

According to HootSuite, the Aria Subscription Billing Platform was the clear front-runner as its functionality went beyond just billing capabilities to support and manage the company's key subscriber activities. The company decided to deploy the Aria Platform to capture key data across its "Pro" (SMB) and "Enterprise" customers to drive ongoing, recurring revenue.

To allow customers to make secure, online credit card payments right out of the gate, HootSuite took advantage of the Platform's payment connectors – integrating the solution with PayPal Express and Chase Paymentech. Now, the Aria Platform oversees invoicing and payment processes of more than 100,000 transactions monthly, accurately tracking and calculating plan add-ons for items such as enhanced analytics and HootSuite University. Plus, with customers located around the world, HootSuite takes advantage of the Platform's multi-language support, translating its statements and event notifications into users' preferred languages.

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Through the Aria Platform, HootSuite pushes out special promotions to scale its business. For example, SMBs can take advantage of a 30-day trial, automatically moving to "paid" subscriber status once the trial is complete. HootSuite cites the ability to quickly roll out and refine campaigns as "the beauty of the Aria Platform" – adjusting pricing and plans as needed to boost customer loyalty in line with market demands. The Aria Platform is able to evolve with the company so that HootSuite's growth is not limited by its internal systems.

And one of the biggest perks of the Aria Platform has been improved visibility into HootSuite's overall business, with multiple departments relying on detailed account data to support their daily responsibilities. From the company's finance department pulling the latest accounts receivables and aging reports; to the service and support teams gaining a full view of account histories to troubleshoot inquiries; to its business analysts pulling reports to analyze conversion and churn trends, the Aria Platform is a core component of daily operations.

"We wanted a comprehensive billing platform and we got so much more," said Mathews. "The Aria Platform is working behind-the-scenes 24x7, capturing the data our staff needs to grow our sales potential, market share and customer accounts."

The Results

As a result of deploying the Aria Platform, HootSuite was able to rapidly implement their freemium model, rolling out new services faster and more effectively than the company could have done on its own. The company has demonstrated impressive growth since the implementation – growing its customer base by more than 40 percent over the past six months. Plus, the company has increased its roster of prospects by being able to test and fine tune various promotions, coupons and trials.

"Our business is completely integrated with the Aria Platform, which showcases its versatility," said Mathews. "We put great value on our subscription metrics, monitoring them very closely to understand how and where to strategically grow our company and the Aria Platform helps us tremendously."

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HootSuite



Headquarters

Aria Systems, Inc.
274 Brannan Street, Suite 602
San Francisco, CA 94107
Phone: 415-852-7250
Fax: 415-852-7251
Sales - Toll Free: 1-877-755-2370
www.ariasystems.com

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