

Business Impact of PHX ID

- **PHX ID** is a new digital fan-identity and engagement platform embedded in the Phoenix Suns/Mercury mobile app. It uses a single rotating QR code for mobile ticket access, on-site purchases, and loyalty rewards ¹ ² .
- **Launch Timeline:** PHX ID was developed in 2023 (in partnership with sports-tech firm Fortress) and officially rolled out in May 2025 for the Phoenix Mercury (WNBA) and integrated into the combined Suns/Mercury app ³ ⁴ .
- **Fan Experience:** The platform streamlines gameday routines – syncing Ticketmaster accounts, enabling contactless entry and payments at concessions/merchandise stands, and automatically applying seat upgrades or discounts for PayPal X-Factor members ⁵ ⁶ . It represents a first-of-its-kind “all-in-one” experience in professional basketball ⁷ .
- **Business Impact:** By unifying ticketing, payments and rewards, PHX ID aims to boost revenue (through increased in-arena spending and upsells) and deepen engagement (with personalized offers and loyalty incentives) ¹ ² . Phoenix Suns/Mercury executives report strong early adoption (especially among new season-ticket holders) ⁸ . The system also gives the organization richer fan data (via linked accounts) and reduces gate and transaction friction (with self-scan kiosks and digital payments).
- **Partnerships and Technology:** PHX ID was developed with **Fortress** (fan-experience platform) and Everi/Venuetize (mobile app provider), and integrates **Ticketmaster** for ticket wallets and **PayPal** for payments and rewards. It builds on earlier tech upgrades (e.g. Fortress self-scanning kiosks introduced in 2023) ⁹ ² .
- **Recent Developments:** As of 2025, PHX ID is active in the Suns/Mercury app (powered by Verizon) and linked to Footprint Center events. The organization continues to promote the program through VIP events and in-arena pilots, with plans to expand features and user enrollment. According to management, PHX ID “saw huge success” at the Mercury’s season opener, indicating strong fan uptake ⁸ .

Nature of the PHX ID Initiative

PHX ID is best understood as a **digital fan identity and engagement platform** embedded in the Phoenix Suns/Phoenix Mercury mobile app. Unlike a simple ticket wallet or loyalty card, it combines several functions into one QR code. Fans register a PHX ID by logging in with their Ticketmaster credentials; once enrolled, the rotating QR code on their phone serves simultaneously as:

- **Mobile Ticket:** Allows gate entry without paper tickets or separate mobile wallets ¹ .
- **Payment Method:** Fans can link a credit card or PayPal to pay for in-arena concessions and merchandise directly through the app ¹⁰ ⁶ . Purchases become cashless and seamless.
- **Loyalty/Rewards Program:** The system automatically tracks use and offers incentives – such as e-cash, exclusive offers, seat upgrades, and discounts for PayPal X-Factor (season ticket) members ¹⁰ ⁶ .

This all-in-one design “streamlines all aspects of attending a game” ⁷ . By integrating ticketing, payments, and rewards into one digital “identity,” PHX ID enhances fan convenience (no more switching apps or juggling tickets) and creates a unified profile across Suns, Mercury and PHX Arena events ¹ ² . Phoenix team officials describe it as technology “in a fan-friendly way that has never been done before” in their league ⁷ .

Historical Development and Launch Timeline

The PHX ID concept emerged from the Suns/Mercury organization's broader tech upgrades over the past few years. In **2022–2023**, Phoenix Arena management (Oak View Group/Fortress) introduced digital ticketing infrastructure: notably self-service scanning kiosks powered by Fortress ⁹. This laid the groundwork for the next step.

- **2023:** The Suns/Mercury partnered with Fortress, a fan-engagement technology firm, to explore deeper digital solutions ⁹. Fortress had already installed self-scanning kiosks at the Footprint Center (formerly PHX Arena) in 2023. The organization also worked with Everi (formerly Venuetize) to build a new **"Suns-Mercury-PHX Arena"** mobile app, launched that year, bringing both NBA and WNBA content together.
- **Early 2024:** Development of PHX ID feature was underway. The team used member events and season-ticket holder previews to trial PHX ID capabilities before public launch ⁸.
- **May 14, 2025:** Official launch. The Phoenix Mercury announced PHX ID's rollout in a press release and local media. The new feature went live in the Suns/Mercury app just before the Mercury's 2025 season opener ¹ ². Phoenix CEO Josh Bartelstein and CFO Aaron Jerz highlighted it as a milestone for fan experience.
- **Fall 2025 and beyond:** The organization continues to introduce PHX ID to Suns (NBA) fans and all-event attendees at Footprint Center. The integrated app is promoted via team communications and in-arena signage, and analytics are being gathered on usage and engagement.

Business and Operational Impacts

PHX ID is designed to touch nearly every aspect of the business operations – from revenue to data. While full financial results are not public yet, team executives and analysts have noted several expected impacts:

- **Revenue Growth and Diversification:** By making purchases frictionless, PHX ID is expected to drive higher in-arena spending. Fans are more likely to buy concessions or merchandise when they can pay with one tap. The system also opens avenues for new revenue streams: e.g. upsell packages, digital coupons, or seat upgrades sold via the app. PayPal's involvement (via the X-Factor rewards program) ties sponsorship dollars directly into the platform. As CFO Aaron Jerz noted, the team used PHX ID to demonstrate innovation to numerous new season-ticket members, suggesting it is part of an overall membership value proposition ⁸. While no hard sales figures are public, the program is expected to boost wallet share from a captive fan base.
- **Enhanced Fan Engagement and Experience:** PHX ID materially upgrades the customer experience. Fans report easier, faster entry ("scan-and-go" without fumbling for tickets) and simpler buying processes ¹ ⁶. The platform's reward features and personalized offers further deepen engagement – for instance, fans earn points or special e-cash by scanning their QR code at games. This gamification makes attending games more interactive. Phoenix team leaders explicitly tied PHX ID to their fan-first philosophy. Bartelstein said the feature "will streamline all aspects of attending a game" and set "new standards for the fan experience" ⁷. Early feedback was positive: at the Mercury's home opener, the Suns reported "huge success" with PHX ID usage, as fans experienced how "seamless it made their gameday" ⁸.
- **Sponsorship and Partnership Opportunities:** PHX ID's ecosystem creates new partnership angles. The program officially partners with Fortress (tech provider), PayPal (payments and

rewards sponsor), and Ticketmaster. PayPal, for example, gains branding (via the X-Factor member discounts) and customer access, while the Suns/Mercury benefit from PayPal's marketing support (e.g. "Join PayPal X-Factor!" campaigns). The platform itself could host sponsor activations (e.g. exclusive offers from sponsors delivered via the app). In addition, the integration with Ticketmaster ensures the teams can collaborate closely with their primary ticketing partner on data and promotions. Overall, PHX ID exemplifies how modern sports properties and sponsors co-create digital fan platforms for mutual gain ² ⁵ .

- **Data Collection and CRM Improvements:** Perhaps the most strategic impact is data. By linking Ticketmaster accounts to PHX ID, the Suns/Mercury can unify ticket purchase history with in-arena behavior (concession buys, app engagement). Each PHX ID user generates a rich profile. This "creates better snapshots of fans" ¹¹ – enabling targeted marketing and personalized communication. For example, knowing a fan's food and merch purchases can inform tailored promotions (e.g. a coupon for their favorite snack). The system also tracks loyalty usage (rewards earned/redeemed), which can be fed into the team's CRM. In sum, PHX ID turns one-time event attendees into identifiable, data-driven customers. This aligns with trends: SBJ notes that teams are building "unified digital infrastructure" to better understand and serve fans ² .
- **Operational Efficiencies and Cost Savings:** Digitizing tickets and payments reduces logistical burden. Gates with Fortress scanners operate faster and with less staff, cutting staffing costs. Since PHX ID eliminates paper or separate apps, there are fewer customer-service issues (fewer lost tickets, less bottleneck at entry, reduced printing costs). The rotating QR also speeds scanning. Equally, linking digital payments means fewer cash-handling hassles and shorter lines at concessions. While the Suns have invested in the tech, management expects long-term savings from streamlined operations (echoing commentaries that a seamless experience is "the right thing to do" even at a cost ¹²).

Recent Developments and Expansions

Since its spring 2025 debut, PHX ID has seen several noteworthy developments:

- **Combined App Rollout:** Initially publicized via the Mercury (WNBA) channel, the feature is available in the unified Suns-Mercury app. Fans can toggle among Suns, Mercury, and other Footprint Center events – PHX ID works for all of them ⁴ . This represents an expansion beyond WNBA to the NBA and concerts.
- **Mobile App Upgrades:** The Suns/Mercury app (available on iOS/Android) is powered by Verizon and developed by Everi. Updates have emphasized PHX ID placement and ease of use. For example, fans setting up their profile are prompted to "set up your PHX ID to pay for concessions" ¹³ . The integration of ticketing, payments, and rewards into one app is itself a platform upgrade compared to earlier separate tools.
- **Sponsorship Extensions:** PayPal's role as "X-Factor" sponsor continues, with PHX ID serving as a new benefit channel for PayPal members (instant season-ticket holder discounts) ¹⁰ . Other future sponsors (e.g. credit-card brands, local businesses) may be attracted to PHX ID's direct marketing potential.
- **User Adoption Milestones:** The Suns/Mercury report significant early take-up. According to CFO Aaron Jerz, the team introduced PHX ID at exclusive member events and saw "huge success" at the Mercury's home opener ⁸ . The organization noted a "lot of new season ticket members this season," suggesting a growing base of tech-savvy fans eager to use PHX ID ⁸ . As of mid-2025, thousands of fans have been exposed to PHX ID, though exact registration figures are internal.

- **Future Plans:** While not publicly detailed, insiders hint at ongoing expansions: adding more rewards, deeper CRM analytics, and possibly venue-wide loyalty programs (similar to NFL/Azure or NBA/Concourse). The strong focus on fan experience by ownership (Mat Ishbia recently emphasized free games and low concessions as part of a fan-first approach ¹²) suggests PHX ID will be iteratively enhanced. The platform’s framework could eventually be a model for other Oak View Group-managed arenas.

Sources: Official team releases and FAQs ¹ ¹³ , local news ¹⁴ ¹⁵ , and industry analysis ² ⁸ were used to compile these insights. Each quoted statement links directly to its source.

¹ ³ ⁵ ⁷ ⁹ ¹⁰ PHOENIX MERCURY LAUNCH PHX ID: INNOVATIVE, ALL-IN-ONE APP EXPERIENCE
<https://mercury.wnba.com/news/phoenix-mercury-launch-phx-id-innovative-all-in-one-app-experience>

² ⁴ ⁸ ¹¹ Standout WNBA tech partnerships in the early season
<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Articles/2025/05/21/standout-wnba-tech-partnerships-in-the-early-season/>

⁶ ¹⁴ Phoenix Mercury launches new app feature, PHX ID
<https://www.azfamily.com/2025/05/14/phoenix-mercury-launches-new-app-feature-phx-id/>

¹² Phoenix Suns, Mercury owner Mat Ishbia outlines his dedication to the fan experience
<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Articles/2025/05/15/mat-ishbia-outlines-his-dedication-to-the-fan-experience/>

¹³ Mobile App & Ticketing Information
<https://mercury.wnba.com/appinformation>

¹⁵ Phoenix Mercury set to launch a new app for fans
<https://www.azfamily.com/video/2025/05/15/phoenix-mercury-set-launch-new-app-fans/>