



Dallas Cowboys drive innovation with AT&T connectivity

Business needs

High-speed connectivity and network security to help power and protect operations, communications, and data; professional consulting and expertise to enhance network infrastructure

Networking solution

AT&T Business Fiber®, AT&T Dedicated Internet, AT&T Business Wi-Fi, AT&T 5G, AT&T Internet Air® for Business, AT&T Dynamic Defense®, AT&T Cloud Voice, AT&T Consulting and Professional Services

Business value

Fast, reliable connectivity helps streamline operations, expand capabilities, and enhance fan experience; built-in network security helps secure business assets

Industry focus

Sports and entertainment

Size

1,500+ employees; up to 10,000 employees during major events

About the Dallas Cowboys

The Dallas Cowboys are a professional football team based in Frisco, Texas, playing games at the 80,000-plus-seat AT&T Stadium in nearby Arlington. In addition to the stadium, surrounding parking lots, and 91-acre Star headquarters, its footprint includes merchandising and retail facilities, and pre-season training camp activities in Oxnard, California.

The situation

The Cowboys rely on the latest connectivity solutions and sports innovation to ensure the team stays competitive and entertaining for fans. The Cowboys and AT&T Business have worked together since 2009, continually adding solutions to stay in-step with fan and operational needs.

Solution

Working with AT&T Consulting and Professional Services, the Cowboys are in constant contact with AT&T consultants, engineers, and product teams. Doing so enables the team to leverage products, solutions, services, and expertise that enhance operations, safety, security, and fan experience across its business and events.

A range of excitement

The moment you step into AT&T Stadium you can feel it. The energy. The excitement. The connection. It's an experience unlike anywhere else. And none of it happens by chance.

From high-stakes, gridiron action on the field to interactive fan experiences like Pose with the Pros to mobile ordering and in-seat delivery, everything at AT&T Stadium is bigger, better, and always improving.

As one of the most successful brands in sports and entertainment, the Dallas Cowboys organization takes pride in the experience it delivers, continually exploring what's possible. With help from AT&T Business, the Cowboys rely on the latest connectivity and innovation, ensuring AT&T Stadium remains a thrilling, must-visit destination year after year.

A lasting relationship

The bond between the Cowboys and AT&T Business began in 2009 with the opening of Cowboys Stadium.

From the beginning, the team knew they wanted to do things differently. Epic in design and execution, the stadium was born representing a clear vision for the future. One where every fan has a great view. And every experience is made as seamless as possible to keep pace with new technology.

"We were the first stadium that was built with a technology-first approach. And we set the standard," said Chief Information Officer Matt Messick. "The fans were walking into our building with powerful devices in their hands. So we became the first stadium to deploy Wi-Fi for a Super Bowl (in 2011)."

In 2013, the stadium officially became AT&T Stadium, furthering an era of innovation that was well underway. Said Chief Brand Officer and Co-Owner Charlotte Jones, "We learned early on that we knew exactly what we didn't know. And what we didn't know was how to innovate around technology and how to really drive us closer to our fans. That's what we look to AT&T for."

Today, connectivity in AT&T Stadium powers everything from ticket scanners and ushers' mobile devices to fan-facing Wi-Fi and back-of-house operations.

Multiple AT&T Business Fiber inroads make high-speed connectivity possible, helping ensure reliability and redundancy for solutions like AT&T Dedicated Internet and AT&T Business Wi-Fi. AT&T Stadium also relies on one of the largest Distributed Antenna Systems (DAS) in the world to maintain wireless continuity should an unplanned outage occur.

Celebrating and sharing

Each year, the Cowboys host 10 games between pre-season and the regular schedule. In the offseason, AT&T Stadium also plays host to some of the biggest events outside of football, including concerts, international soccer matches, and pro wrestling.

With AT&T Business connectivity built into nearly every operational aspect, it's critical that it performs under pressure—and performs well.

A fan may have one chance to attend an event with their favorite team or artist. Many times, that includes sharing the experience over mobile devices with friends or on social media. There's no second chance to deliver in these high-visibility, high-traffic moments. Especially when tens of thousands of others are doing the same.

"We hosted one of the largest sporting events in the world, and during that process one of those players made record-setting goal that set the world on fire," said Jones. "Over 25.9 terabytes of data was transmitted in those two hours alone. That doesn't happen everywhere, but it does happen at AT&T Stadium."



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Matt Messick
Chief Information Officer, The Dallas Cowboys



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Charlotte Jones
Chief Brand Officer and Co-Owner
The Dallas Cowboys

Expanding event possibilities

More recently, the stadium has begun hosting events in the surrounding parking lot, enabling it to attract fans of open-wheel racing, country music, and Texas barbecue, among others.

With help from AT&T Business, AT&T Stadium uses 5G network* slicing technology to power wireless ticketing devices beyond the reach of Wi-Fi.

Network slicing enables AT&T Business customers to receive their own "express lane" on the 5G network highway separate from other traffic. "You could have thousands of fans all around you competing for 5G connectivity," said Messick. "(The devices) will be able to reach back and connect to your network to where you can do all of your ticket scanning and everything works fine."

If a vendor only has access to Wi-Fi-capable devices, portable AT&T Internet Air for Business routers can connect to the AT&T 5G network, converting signals into Wi-Fi to create a fixed wireless network for ticketing, retail, and other use cases. "That's just another tool we have in our toolbox to be able to support any event," said Messick.

Jones too is impressed with how well AT&T Business connectivity performs, inside and out. "What is so great is when you don't hear from anybody, that means everything is working," she said. "And because of our great relationship with AT&T, we don't have to worry about that. It can hold whatever we want to throw at it and more."

Connectivity that drives success

Thirty miles away from AT&T Stadium at The Star, the Cowboys' world headquarters and entertainment campus, AT&T Business solutions power everything from operations to team activities to local retail.

"Just like with AT&T Stadium, The Star was built on that same foundation," said Messick. "It was built on that foundation that we need to be prepared for any type of event that's going to come our way."

The Star is also home to the Cowboys training facility, with coaches and players relying on wireless connectivity and tablets to deliver feedback during practice. "Sometimes getting Wi-Fi to the middle of the football field is difficult," said Messick. "But we can switch over to 5G and be able to integrate with our network and pass video through into areas that traditionally you just couldn't do before."

Adding to an already lengthy list of solutions that includes dedicated internet and Wi-Fi, the Cowboys recently deployed AT&T Cloud Voice across The Star, AT&T Stadium, and its merchandising facilities.

Cloud Voice delivers voice and data traffic over a single Internet Protocol (IP) platform, enabling the organization to make voice and video calls, chat via text, and hold meetings via a single, cloud-based solution.

The fact that Cloud Voice works with mobile and desktop devices and integrates with existing equipment gives organizations like the Cowboys the freedom to connect however they see fit. "When you have a physical device that could fail, that could take all of your phones out in a single instance, that's not ideal. Especially on a game day," said Messick. "And so moving over to AT&T Cloud Voice has enabled us to have that flexibility."

*AT&T 5G requires compatible plan and device. Coverage not available everywhere. Learn more at att.com/5Gforyou.



Support at home and on the road

The Cowboys and AT&T meet on a weekly basis to keep everyone informed on upcoming events or connectivity challenges, as well as new solutions or features that stand to enhance the team's operations.

In the case of Dynamic Defense, Messick learned about it through the AT&T Consulting and Professional Services Team before it was available to the public. Having early access enabled Messick and his colleagues to suggest features that made the solution better suited for enterprises like the Cowboys.

In one instance, Messick needed to ingest security logs from Dynamic Defense into a separate data analytics platform to compare against network data from other sources. Although the feature wasn't yet available, AT&T Business engineers went to work immediately. Two months later, it was ready.

"They just committed right then and there and made it happen," said Messick. "Working with AT&T to solve issues to meet the customers' demand in a very tight timeline was just absolutely essential to being able to protect our organization."

Another example is the Cowboys annual trip to Oxnard, California for training camp. Aside from players, coaches, and staff, half the corporate office travels, too. Players' families also attend, as do thousands of fans. "One of the greatest things about teaming up with AT&T is that they

follow us everywhere," said Jones. "When we go out to California, we have that same confidence and that same trust that all the things that we need to deliver are going to work."

That trust and confidence includes optimal wireless connectivity in an area where signal strength via traditional cell towers is a challenge.

To fix this, AT&T brings in a mobile cellular tower called a Cell on Wheels, or COW. "We can deploy that and provide 5G robust connectivity for a month out of a year into this one tight area, and it enables all of our players to stay connected," said Messick. "AT&T solving that problem for us was huge."

A future of intelligent data

Much like other teams and venues, the Dallas Cowboys rely on high-speed connectivity to inform decision making across the business. That's something fans don't often see or notice.

"I think a lot of people don't realize how data-driven our operation is," said Jones. "From how the coaches call the plays to the data that we receive off of the training field, all of that requires the support, the reliability, and the dependability on a backbone of infrastructure."

On the stadium side, Messick is constantly using data to improve the fan experience, analyzing everything from parking lot and entrance flows to bathroom lines, concessions, and Wi-Fi traffic. Of course, timing is key. And having the ability to process and analyze information in the moment enables operations teams to adjust resources and make everyone's day more enjoyable.

Fan safety is another aspect where the Cowboys are always seeking to improve. "One of the areas that we're looking at, is leveraging AI and video intelligence, and basically making all of your security cameras, all of this media that we're collecting, intelligent," said Messick.

Using AI analytics, the Cowboys are looking at ways to train AI using video footage to identify things like spills, falls, trespassing, or confrontational gatherings. Ultimately, stadium camera feeds would flow into an AI video analytics dashboard that would send alerts to the right teams so situations can be handled as quickly and safely as possible.

"You need to know exactly what's happening in the moment, where you're not having to worry about decisions that need to be run up the chain," said Messick. "If you have the data, you can enable people to make decisions much faster."

Delivering every day

Jones and Messick know fans have many entertainment choices. And that, for some, attending an event takes time, money, and effort.

That's why the Dallas Cowboys organization continually strives to create an atmosphere that makes every moment worth it. Working with AT&T Business helps enable the team and AT&T Stadium to deliver on that promise.

"The connection to our fans is so important. Everything is based on that infrastructure and that backbone that AT&T provides," said Jones. "Regardless of where we are, at AT&T Stadium, at The Star, or out in California, they are there to make sure that we have the best experience possible."

"Connectivity is at the heart of what it takes for us to support the entire AT&T Stadium."

Matt Messick
Chief Information Officer, The Dallas Cowboys

