



Customer Stories:

AMB Sports + Entertainment



AMB Sports + Entertainment scores big with fans with an assist from AT&T Business

- **Business needs** - The large sports and entertainment group needed cutting-edge technology to deliver a world-class fan experience.
- **Networking solution** - An array of AT&T services in an advanced 5G environment enable new levels of fan engagement at games, concerts, and other events.
- **Business value** - One-of-a-kind experiences, increased guest satisfaction
- **Industry focus** - Sports and entertainment
- **Size** - 1.5 million fans and guests attend events in the Mercedes-Benz Stadium each year

About AMB Sports + Entertainment

AMB Sports + Entertainment (AMBSE) is a subsidiary of AMB Group LLC. It's composed of the National Football League's Atlanta Falcons, Major League Soccer's Atlanta United FC, Mercedes-Benz Stadium, and PGA TOUR Superstore.

The situation

AMBSE set out to build a new venue for the Falcons and Atlanta United that would deliver a world-class, one-of-a-kind fan experience. The organization needed a powerful and scalable infrastructure to support the technology required to surpass fan expectations.

Solution

AMBSE chose the AT&T 5G environment and an array of AT&T services to give each fan the best possible experience. AT&T 5G is fast, highly secure and reliable, and it delivers the bandwidth fans need to enjoy immersive experiences. What's more, AT&T 5G creates the future-ready foundation for exciting new capabilities.

“There is no finish line”

AMB Sports + Entertainment operates on a common set of core values defined by owner Arthur M. Blank: Put People First, Listen and Respond, Include Everyone, Innovate Continuously, Lead by Example, and Give Back to Others.

The values serve as a moral compass for the way AMBSE does business and how it treats its associates and the fans who support the Atlanta Falcons, Atlanta United, and Mercedes-Benz Stadium, where the teams play.

Arthur Blank’s motto is, “There is no finish line.” Like its Chairman and owner, AMBSE continuously strives to surpass each success to create extraordinary experiences for its fans, customers, and associates.

Building a world class fan experience

Danny Branch, CIO for AMB Sports + Entertainment, joined the organization 15 years ago, when technology wasn’t an important aspect of sports and entertainment venues.

“At the time there were still cash boxes in the concession stands and technology was usually limited to a network connection in the press box,” Branch said. “There was no need or expectation of connectivity, on either the operational or fan side.”

That has changed dramatically in the past decade, beginning with business operations and eventually coming to redefine the fan experience. When Blank decided to build a new stadium for the Falcons and Atlanta United, he envisioned a venue that would make

Atlanta proud, bring meaningful change to the city’s struggling Westside neighborhoods, and create a fan experience that is second to none.



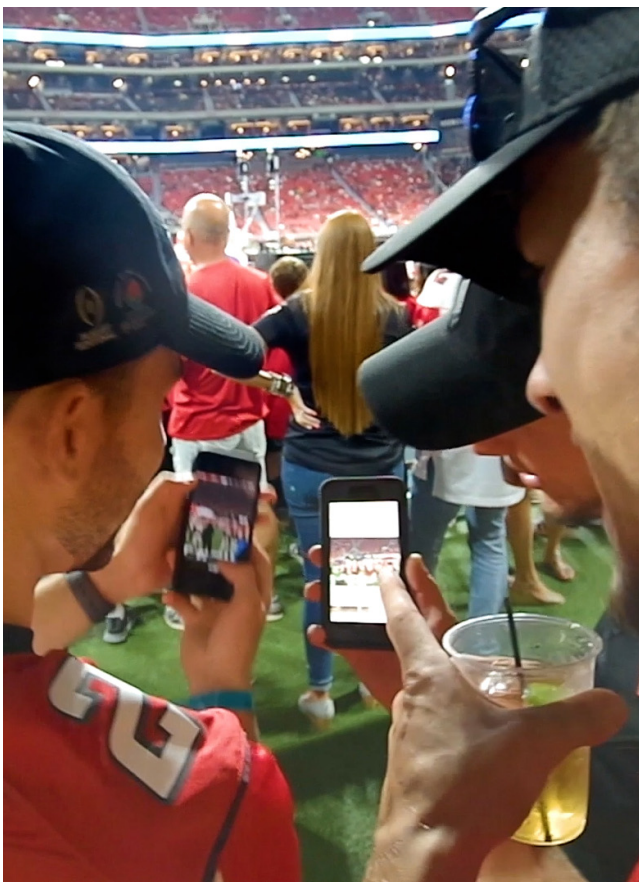
Investing in a community

Improving life for Westside residents was an important aspect of Blank’s vision for the stadium, said Steve Cannon, CEO, AMB Sports + Entertainment. “Arthur’s Foundation has been focused on the Westside for a long time,” Cannon said. “When we decided to build a stadium, it was imperative that we have the blessing of the Westside communities because it directly impacted them.”

Blank and his team met with community leaders to fully understand what the communities wanted. Based on those meetings, The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation helped to fund Westside Works, a free trade program that teaches job seekers on the Westside skills to successfully obtain jobs that can turn into lifelong careers.

AMBSE's commitment to its community extends beyond just the Westside. Mercedes-Benz Stadium Community Vaccination Center began operating in January, 2021. The White House named Mercedes-Benz Stadium a Federal Pilot Program Community Vaccination Center, the largest in the southeast, in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Georgia Emergency Management Agency, Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency, Fulton Board of Health, and the Department of Defense.

Within three months, more than 100,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine had been administered. "Our goal is to get as many people as we can vaccinated so we can return to a way of life we all are striving for—including fans in stands and cheering on their teams," Cannon said.



Supporting a digital immersion

Designing an infrastructure to support the new stadium was a complicated task. "One of my biggest challenges as CIO has been putting together the systems when we started to build the stadium," Branch said. "Sports fans have come to expect abundant connectivity. If they can't connect and interact socially with the venue, they're not going to go."

But many sports arenas struggle to deliver enough bandwidth to satisfy tens of thousands of fans. And some organizations found that fans' demands quickly exceeded even state-of-the-art stadiums' ability to keep up.

Branch and his team understood they had to surpass the extravagant technology that many fans have at home. "We realized we had to change the game here to focus on the fan experience. "When a guest comes in, we want them to be digitally immersed."

AMB Sports + Entertainment began to search for ways to enhance every trip to the venue. "The networks had to grow with us to support the digital immersion throughout the stadium," Branch said.

Improving relationships and technology

In addition to enhancing the fan experience, AMB Sports + Entertainment looked to build an infrastructure that would create business efficiencies. Branch and his team worked to understand the organization's challenges and find ways to automate some of them.

He understood that the architecture should be as unique and inventive as the new venue. “Arthur has always been an advocate of leveraging technology where it could address business challenges and optimize operations,” Branch said.

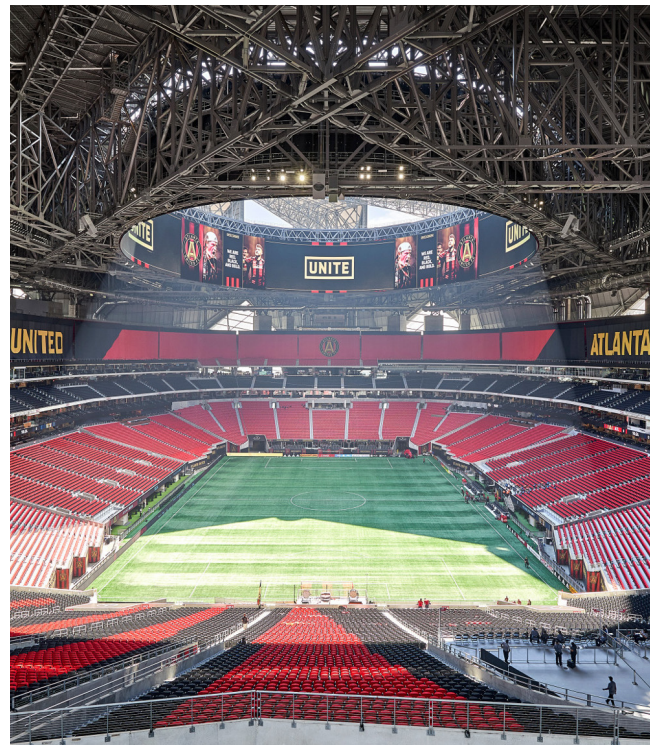
The rapid evolution of technology means that no venue can be future proof, but he was determined to build a network that could nimbly adjust as needs changed. “It had to be future-flexible, which means it can adapt and grow as the demands of the business and the fans change,” Branch said.

This required a seasoned technology provider. “We wanted to go with companies that were going to challenge the norm and use their technology and innovation to help us create a future-flexible environment,” Branch said.

Teaming with the best and brightest

AMB Sports + Entertainment chose an array of services from AT&T Business to provide the connectivity fans need to thoroughly enjoy each trip to Mercedes-Benz Stadium and support the staff of the stadium, the Falcons, and Atlanta United FC. “We’ve got great relationships with companies like AT&T who bring capabilities to the table,” Branch said. “And we talk about how we can use our vendors and technology to help address business challenges.”

“The demand for content, interaction, and differentiation that our fans are looking for drove us to AT&T Business,” Branch continued. “Look at the hundred-plus years of innovation from AT&T and consider that it’s the largest telecommunications provider. These were intriguing



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Danny Branch
CIO, AMB Sports + Entertainment

things that we could tap right into and work with some of the best and brightest.”

AMB Sports + Entertainment uses AT&T Switched Ethernet on Demand, AT&T Dedicated Internet, AT&T IP Flexible Reach and AT&T DDoS Defense. It also uses an AT&T purpose-built ecosystem, AT&T Global Video Solution, to deliver live event broadcast content to studios for contribution and distribution.

AT&T 5G provides enterprise-grade connectivity that enables AMBSE to deliver the innovative experiences its fans have come to expect. “The technology services and innovation have continued to score in the top quartile of all NFL stadiums, according to the NFL’s Voice of the Fan survey,” Cannon said. “That’s thanks, in part, to AT&T Business. We have a like-minded relationship with AT&T because we both care about what our customers’ experiences are and how we can deliver a world-class product to them.

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Crucial redundancy and capacity

Thoughtful technology choices have created a world-class, fan-first experience. The 58-foot-tall Halo Board, the largest video board in professional sports, encircles the stadium to deliver 63,000 square feet of HD live action and video highlights.

Mercedes-Benz Stadium wanted to break all the records for Wi-Fi utilization at the time when it hosted football’s biggest game several years ago. “That’s a tribute to our relationship with AT&T Business that we could provide that bandwidth,” Branch said. “They built

the redundancy and capacity into its internet service and that was crucial for us.”

Fans appreciate their experience with the Mercedes-Benz Stadium network. AMBSE’s partnership with AT&T Business has resulted in immersive, groundbreaking experiences to entertain fans and create exceptional value above and beyond the price of admission. The technology ecosystem helps AMBSE connect with people along virtually every point of the fan journey. The result? In the NFL’s Voice of the Fan Analysis for the 2019 and 2020 seasons, the stadium ranked #1 in the NFL in Wireless Services (cellular and Wi-Fi).

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Technology also enhances the clubs, suites, and AT&T Perch—a gathering area with televisions and video walls airing other games. Concession areas are more efficient now with digital signage and a cashless environment. This NFL-first has streamlined and sped up the purchase process and helped to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Supporting the virtual draft

AT&T Business networking services have been beneficial to other AMB Sports + Entertainment businesses. “Our Wide Area Network through AT&T connects our data center hub, which is the stadium, and all our corresponding businesses. Whether it’s the Atlanta Falcons, Atlanta United or Arthur’s Foundation, they are all interconnected via AT&T connectivity,” Branch said.



The network became even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic. “We lived through our first virtual NFL draft last year,” he said. The Falcons’ general manager, head coach, and many more individuals were working out of their homes.

Branch knew the virtual draft would be a challenge but reached out to his account team from AT&T Business for help. “AT&T stepped up and helped put a SWAT team together so that we were able to support those individuals as they worked remotely for the virtual draft,” he said.

Services from AT&T Business are also vital in supporting the company’s day-to-day operations. “The draft was crucial, but it’s also crucial from a point-of-sale perspective that we have the connectivity to manage the volume we do in the stadium,” Branch said. “From a business perspective, our network is built on and we interact with our AT&T network.

A world without a finish line

Branch is proud to work for an organization that lives its values. “Arthur has really given back to the community and created a world-class venue,” he said. That venue may be getting some worldwide attention soon, as FIFA, the international soccer governing body, recently announced that Mercedes-Benz Stadium is under consideration as a possible venue for the 2026 World Cup Championship.

The stadium will be up to the challenge, Branch said. “We’re going to go through another evolution because technology is continuing to evolve,” he said. Demand will also grow, driven by fans and their expectations. “We will continue to create experiences that are one-of-a-kind. And I think by having a relationship with companies like AT&T Business we can tap right into that.”

Arthur Blank sees a world without a finish line. “That constantly pushes us to improve,” Branch said. “AT&T Business is a big part of how we’re doing it.