

United Direct Solutions

A direct marketer and personalized-print services provider boosts network speed, uptime and security—with room to grow

United Direct Solutions

www.udolutions.com

- Enabling meaningful communication since 1980
- Based in Louisville, KY, with a second site in Cincinnati
- Specializes in data-powered direct mail and digital marketing
- Clients range from SMEs to Fortune 500 companies



Challenges

- Quick turnaround times to meet service level agreements
- Cloud-based systems require reliable, stable internet
- Clients demanded high redundancy in addition to robust security

Solutions

- Lumen® Fiber + Internet in plants for highly reliable connectivity
- Lumen® Dedicated Internet Access provided scalable bandwidth for enterprise businesses
- Additional security via SD-WAN and SASE solutions
- Disaster recovery in two Lumen data centers

Results

- Fast and secure connections, with near 100% uptime
- Built-in, 24/7 redundancy through colocation
- Enhanced scalability as business and network demands grow



“ Lumen supported our future vision in technology by being able to grow with us. As the demand for data exchange and connections to diverse data sources increases, we are confident they will continue to provide the services and support we need to always stay available and online for clients.”

— Connie Burns
CIO, United Direct Solutions

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LUMEN®

Challenge

Establishing a fast, reliable, secure connection

After more than 40 years in business, United Direct Solutions (UDS) rebranded to reflect their data-powered direct mail, data analytics and personalized print services. They primed themselves for more business but their network posed a problem.

UDS has a broad client base and everyone expects a quick turnaround on projects. UDS's previous network slowed the company's pace and the rebrand necessitated a significant network overhaul.

"Our customers work with us by exchanging data," CIO Connie Burns explains. "If we can't receive that data, we can't provide them a service."

In addition to needing a fast, reliable network, many UDS clients work in industries — healthcare, insurance and financial services to name a few — with strict regulations around data security, availability and redundancy. When a new client came to UDS with a requirement of 24/7 uptime, UDS began searching for a solution with stronger disaster recovery options that would bolster their network too.

Solution

A knowledgeable partner demonstrates ways to meet every client demand

UDS first partnered with Lumen to solve their initial connectivity issues. "The first thing they did was to lay fiber optic cables straight into our plants," Bob Ackermann, VP of Technical Services, says.

Then, UDS leveraged Lumen's Dedicated Internet Access for enterprise alongside SD-WAN and SASE solutions. With this combination of solutions, UDS achieved the network speed, reliability and security they needed to meet service-level agreements (SLAs).

So when they encountered the new client's redundancy requirements, UDS took the request to their Lumen account manager, who presented several options. From these, UDS chose to move into two of Lumen's colocation (COLO) spaces, boosting redundancy and resiliency.

Lumen's personalized service continues to impress UDS: "We really enjoy working with our Lumen team,"

Burns says. "They are in tune with our needs, growth and expectations and are always available when we need them."

Lumen Solution Set

- Lumen® Fiber+ Internet
- Lumen® Dedicated Internet Access
- Lumen® Data Centers

Results and Future Plans

Near 100% uptime with room for future growth

Moving to Lumen has solved UDS's current needs: Their combined network solutions provide near 100% uptime. "Our service with Lumen has been fantastically stable," Ackerman enthuses. Having two colocation facilities ensuring 24/7 availability has also allayed the new client's concerns.

Burns notes that meeting SLAs ties directly to referrals and business growth: "In 2022 and 2023, we had substantial growth in revenue, and we attribute that to providing a 100% available service," she says.

She notes that Lumen's solutions have also laid the groundwork for future expansion. Energized by their successes, UDS is keen to explore how other services in the Lumen portfolio can provide everything they need to meet client requirements as they arise.

"What I see is the continuing need for more bandwidth, disaster recovery and data security solutions," Ackerman predicts. "If we grow, Lumen will be right there waiting with whatever we need."

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