Winning the Network Race

Churchill Downs® implements high-speed network solutions to optimize racetrack operations

Churchill Downs®

churchilldowns.com

- Operates in hospitality, gaming, and entertainment, located in Kentucky
- Established in 1875, known as the "Home of the Kentucky Derby®," the longest continually running sporting event in America
- Hosts premier Thoroughbred horse racing events, accommodating approximately 385,000 guests during Derby Week

Challenges

- Media outlets required low latency and high reliability for global streaming and betting operations
- The surge in visitors required massive bandwidth to handle increased traffic
- Managing temporary circuits for media and vendors was costly and time-consuming

Solutions

- Lumen® Network-as-a-Service (NaaS)
- Dedicated Internet Access
- High-density Wi-Fi & Smart Solutions

Results

- Enhanced network for quick, secure circuits and scalable bandwidth, improving operational efficiency
- Strengthened security for data, assets, and transactions
- Optimized costs, improving vendor relations and maximizing profits
- Improved service delivery to partners and patrons
- Enhanced customer experience with reliable, low-latency network

CHURCHILL DOWNS

~385K

Attendees during Derby week and 50 media outlets

200Gb

Supported daily

~600

Employees supported year long

LUMEN®

Challenge

Dynamic solutions for Derby Day

Every May, Churchill Downs hosts approximately 385,000 visitors for the Kentucky Derby®, causing digital demands to spike from 2-3Gb to nearly 200Gb daily. To manage this, they needed to upgrade their digital infrastructure for smooth connectivity for live broadcasts, social media, betting platforms, and point-of-sale systems.

"Everything nowadays is technology-based," says Mike Wood, Senior IT Director. "Mutuel operations, TV broadcast, Wi-Fi—all of these services are now done over networking." Managing temporary circuits for up to 50 media and vendor agencies depended on internet connectivity was costly and time-consuming.

The challenge was handling the sheer volume of data traffic while maintaining network integrity and reliability. With millions of dollars in assets, including horses and video feeds, latency and redundancy were paramount. Churchill Downs needed a solution that could dynamically adjust to fluctuating bandwidth demands, ensuring that every aspect of the event, from betting to broadcasting, ran smoothly and efficiently.

Solution

Harnessing high-speed solutions to meet high-stakes connectivity needs

To enable a flawless experience, Churchill Downs turned to Lumen Network-as-a-Service (NaaS) for secure, dedicated circuits and bandwidth. This solution provided the flexibility needed, with minimal delays and maximum reliability. The resulting seamless internet connectivity for media, vendors, and guests quickly turned a costly operation into a revenue-generating one.

When it comes to betting operations, "Latency is huge," says Mike. "With us, milliseconds matter." Churchill Downs required a reliable network solution with low latency to help ensure all viewers experienced the same content without interruptions. "We have been able to realize that with Lumen," he says.

Lumen NaaS also helped save costs, which were passed on to vendors and media outlets, making operations more efficient. The improved bandwidth and reduced latency delivered by Lumen NaaS provides a superior guest experience, reinforcing Churchill Downs' reputation as an iconic racetrack.

> **"** Our partnership with Lumen Technologies has brought cutting-edge capabilities to our IT operations."
>
> **— Mike Wood**
> Senior IT Director, Churchill Downs

Results and Future Plans

Seamless connectivity and innovation at the Kentucky Derby

With Lumen NaaS as their spur, Churchill Downs has hit the fast track to operational efficiency in their digital infrastructure. The increased networking capabilities provides seamless and secure internet connectivity for the Kentucky Derby and beyond.

Looking ahead, Churchill Downs is chomping at the bit to continue this digital journey with Lumen NaaS. "We're absolutely slated to use NaaS at the 2025 Kentucky Derby," says Mike. The ability to dynamically adjust bandwidth and provide secure, reliable connectivity will empower Churchill Downs to offer new and innovative experiences to their guests, keeping them at the forefront of the hospitality, gaming, and entertainment industry.

With Lumen as a trusted partner, Churchill Downs is not just racing towards the finish line—they're redefining what it means to win, one millisecond at a time.

Lumen Solution Set

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- High-density Wi-Fi & Smart Solutions

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