



Agility that breaks records, smashes boundaries

Transformation means no challenge is too big for Blue Star Operations Services and the Dallas Cowboys

When Blue Star Operations Services took a fresh look at its digital strategy, it unlocked massive value for the Dallas Cowboys and more than 150 other business ventures run by its owner, president, and general manager, Jerry Jones. By building its private cloud, the company created the agility it needed to launch itself into new business ventures, unify technology silos across the organization, and deliver a high-performance video platform for players and coaches.

A big brand in a small world

American football is more than just a competitive sport. Some fans are so invested that they see their home team as an extension of themselves. But there's one team that transcends that common wisdom as much as it crosses state lines.

They've been called **America's Team**, and they're more than just the most popular team in the National Football League (NFL). With a valuation of \$8 billion, they're one of the top sports brands on the planet.

The Dallas Cowboys have set so many standards and broken so many boundaries that the concept of the modern fan experience wouldn't exist without them.

Free-range entrepreneurs

A lot of that credit goes to the entrepreneurial spirit of the company that owns it: Blue Star Operations Services. Presided over by famed team owner Jerry Jones, the company has always chosen its path with the Cowboys and more than 150 additional businesses under its umbrella.

If it seems surprising that the company would be such an innovator both on and off the field, just ask its CIO. "I don't know how many times I've showed up at a technology conference and had people say to me: Oh, the Dallas Cowboys. What are you doing here?" recalls Matt Messick, CIO of the Dallas Cowboys.



Industry: Sports and entertainment

Country: United States

Vision

Innovate at a faster pace across more than 150 businesses

Strategy

Build an on-premises private cloud to scale as needed

Outcomes

- Powers the launch of a massive new business initiative in 30 days
- Delivers a cloud experience across the enterprise that brings agility and flexibility to operations
- Enables a portable, high-performance video storage solution for players and coaches

But Messick is there because his business is involved in everything from energy management (ProStar Energy) to medical imaging (Blue Star Imaging) to strategic investments (Blue Star Innovation Partners). Noticing a trend? “If it has a star in its name, it’s probably a part of our company,” Messick jokes.

Doing it right

But when it comes to innovating quickly, breaking into new markets, and shaking up concepts of business as usual, it’s no laughing matter. As large as its football brand looms in the sports world, the company itself is lean.

“We aren’t actually a big company. When I’m at a conference sitting next to the CIO of CVS or something, we’re nowhere near that scale,” Messick says. “We have just enough resources to get into a space and make sure we’re doing it right.”

In fact, Blue Star relies on big technology partners to innovate. “We built our stadium with AT&T, and we leveraged their expertise in 5G to bring the fan experience to the next level,” Messick relates. “We welcome those kinds of partnerships, and we lean on big partners to help us solve problems and contribute to our success.”



In a very short period of time, we basically delivered an entire brand loyalty platform. This would have been unthinkable before we had HPE GreenLake.”

– Matt Messick, CIO, Dallas Cowboys



Upgrades vs. transformation

When it time came to rethink its digital strategy, Messick and the team knew they needed a new model to drive innovation. “We were in the middle of a pandemic, and we knew we couldn’t afford to just replace everything we had with next-generation infrastructure,” Messick recalls. “There was no way I was going to get approval to write a multimillion-dollar check—but if I could make it happen incrementally, or with a monthly payment, that’s a different story.”

Blue Star has a long history with Hewlett Packard Enterprise and has relied on the consistent performance of its HPE ProLiant servers for years. “We’ve always had a good relationship with HPE, but it used to be much more transactional—buying servers, having them installed, refreshing things every three years,” Messick says.

When HPE GreenLake was first announced, Messick reevaluated that relationship. “The obvious benefit was being able to refresh the data center with an OPEX cost model,” Messick says. “But the possibilities for business agility are transformative.”

Private cloud dreams

Blue Star built its private cloud with HPE GreenLake—an on-premises platform including HPE Nimble Storage, HPE ProLiant DL325 Gen10 Servers, Brocade network switches, as well as VMware vSphere® and VMware vCenter® licenses. Along with advisory and migration services from HPE, Blue Star was able to perform an upgrade via HPE GreenLake that wasn’t otherwise possible.

“HPE GreenLake is giving us that on-prem, cloud-like experience—from day one. Now, we can move really quickly. We can flex. We can grow on demand. And we’re only just scratching the surface,” Messick explains.

In fact, Messick and his new platform would be asked to do the impossible almost as soon as the migration was complete.

Dressed for success

The Dallas Cowboys have always bucked trends. While most NFL teams outsource their merchandise to other manufacturers, the Cowboys have designed, manufactured, and sold their products since Jones bought the team. The company even makes the team’s uniforms.

Over the years, it has taken on apparel projects from AT&T as well as Sam's Club. "It's not an easy business—you've really got to earn it," Messick relates.

Not long after adopting HPE GreenLake, a chance conversation between Cowboys' leadership and one of the country's largest brick-and-mortar retailers turned very quickly into a massive business opportunity. "We went from a casual conversation about designing and manufacturing new uniforms to completely outfitting every worker at Walmart," Messick explains.

It put Blue Star and HPE GreenLake to the test. "You talk about being nimble, and the concept of being able to expand really fast, and here it is on our doorstep. Our sales team is out there selling, and in this case, they sold something that doesn't really exist yet—anywhere," Messick says. "They come to us and say: Hey, you have 30 days to develop this custom solution for the biggest retailer in the country."

At the end of the day, Messick and team delivered—not just new uniforms,

but an e-commerce solution where employees can use reward points to customize everything from polos and jackets to hoodies and quarter-zips. "In a very short period of time, we basically delivered an entire brand loyalty platform," Messick says. "This would have been unthinkable before we had HPE GreenLake."

The future is HPE GreenLake

With early victories under their belts, Messick and the team are looking for new projects to bring into the Blue Star private cloud. But they won't have to look too hard. "Other departments are seeing what we can do now, and they want the same agility and flexibility that we have," Messick says.

Coaches and players rely heavily on video to track and improve performance. Until recently, the video team has been in its technology silo. "We built up a relationship with them because we knew we could make their lives a lot simpler. We brought in HPE to design a storage solution specifically for them and their unique needs," Messick recalls.

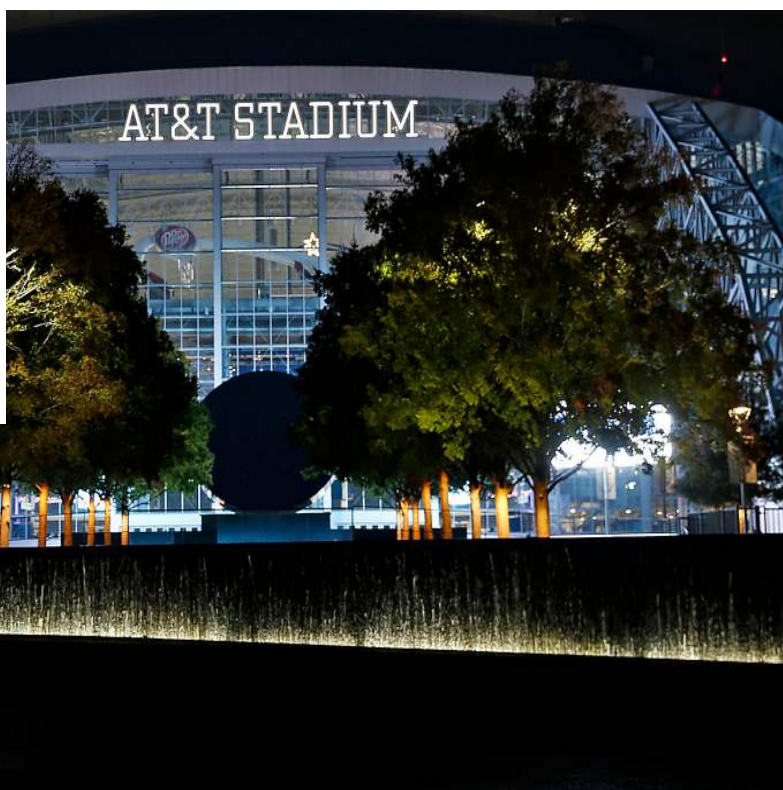
The Cowboys needed a very high-performing storage solution that could travel with the team without losing performance. "The HPE engineer comes in and says: Yeah, we have a Formula 1 team that does this across the globe," Messick says. "Video is king for the team. Being able to fold that into our HPE GreenLake platform with replication to an off-site location really opened their eyes."

For Messick, it's just another example of the value of the longstanding relationship with HPE. "Now, our relationship has changed to a true partnership with HPE helping us solve problems on the fly," Messick explains. "The sports world is all built on relationships and partnerships, and for me, that's what HPE GreenLake means: a partnership."



Video is king for the team. Being able to fold that into our HPE GreenLake platform with replication to an off-site location really opened their eyes."

— Matt Messick, CIO, Dallas Cowboys





HPE GreenLake is giving us that on-prem, cloud-like experience—from day one. Now, we can move really quickly. We can flex. We can grow on demand. And we're only just scratching the surface."

– Matt Messick, CIO, Dallas Cowboys



Explore [HPE GreenLake](#)

Solution

HPE GreenLake

- HPE Nimble Storage
- HPE ProLiant DL325 Gen10 Servers
- Brocade network switches
- VMware vSphere and vCenter licenses

Services

- Advisory and Professional Services
- HPE migration services



Chat



Email



Call



Updates

© Copyright 2023 Hewlett Packard Enterprise Development LP. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The only warranties for Hewlett Packard Enterprise products and services are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. Hewlett Packard Enterprise shall not be liable for technical or editorial errors or omissions contained herein.

VMware vCenter and VMware vSphere are registered trademarks or trademarks of VMware, Inc. and its subsidiaries in the United States and other jurisdictions. All third-party marks are property of their respective owners.

a50008315ENW, Rev. 1