When the Golden State Warriors set out to transform fan expectations for sports and entertainment, the team built an 11-acre campus that connects guests before they ever set foot inside Chase Center. Now, the team is taking next steps to innovate ticketing, travel routes, wayfinding, custom food ordering, and even interactive scoreboard sharing — all through a mobile app that drives engagement while eliminating friction.

**Experience is king**

Any professional sports team that builds its own arena is in the process of transforming its business model. For the Golden State Warriors, it was a paradigm shift. Instead of just basketball, the focus had to expand to encompass a broader set of experiences for guests. “First and foremost, we wanted to create the best fan experience possible, and that’s obviously a very high bar and could also be interpreted in many different ways,” says Daniel Brusilovsky, vice president of technology for the Golden State Warriors and Chase Center.

When the arena opened in 2019, Chase Center was already ahead of the curve. And during the worst of the pandemic, the team’s focus on safety and contactless transactions was trendsetting. Now that in-person games and concerts are back, it was time to take things to the next level. That meant new investments in technology.

“Technology is an enabler for our business and is incredibly important for us to deliver an experience for our fans and the community. We took a look at every stage of our customer’s journey,” Brusilovsky recalls. “Our goal is to create a frictionless experience, and we see that in a few different ways. One is, how do we help you plan for your journey to Chase Center in the most seamless way possible?”
Let your data be your guide

To bring it all to life, the team has spent years developing and fine-tuning its mobile application. “The Chase Center + Warriors mobile application is like your remote control for your experience,” explains Brusilovsky.

It starts with ticket purchase and extends to travel routes to and from the venue with real-time transit information. “It all lives in the app. All the content that you need to get ready for the game, your food and beverage ordering, your wayfinding with over 800 beacons that provide turn-by-turn navigation, that’s all delivered through the mobile app.”

Delivering all that frictionless functionality requires massive amounts of data at the edge — from fan-facing data to all the systems that run the facility and keep events on schedule.

From an internal perspective, the team is managing security systems, point of sale systems, and an IPTV system. “We have thousands of devices that are connected to our network when there’s not a single person in the building. You need a really robust network to be able to support all those devices,” Brusilovsky explains.

On a game day, it’s another story. “Suddenly you have 18,000-plus fans who are coming into the venue in a fairly condensed amount of time connecting to a Wi-Fi network. You can’t do that without great connectivity.”

Building on success

With the network collecting data from the edge, the team was able to identify exactly where it wanted to target its next upgrades. “You’re only as good as the data you get,” Brusilovsky says. “And for us, it’s all about using this data at the edge in real time to make better business decisions.”

In the four years since opening Chase Center, the team has collected enough data to gain an understanding of what its customers really want. “We learned a lot around fan behavior,” Brusilovsky relates. “And our experience has gone far beyond what we even expected.”

One thing the team discovered is that even with all that real-time data, there are still some things that can’t be changed in the moment. But that doesn’t mean there isn’t room for improvement. “We always ask ourselves: How do we get 5, 10% better in between events?” Brusilovsky explains. “We can look at the data, look at our customer satisfaction scores, and use that to make the next time better.”

So Brusilovsky turned to the team that helped the Golden State Warriors build the technological heart of Chase Center. During discussions with HPE Aruba Networking, he learned that Wi-Fi 6E technology was market-ready. It turned out to be exactly what Chase Center needed.

“Wi-Fi 6E has completely changed the game for a venue like Chase Center. To provide a high level of bandwidth and low latency data in a very condensed area, that is a total game changer.”

— Daniel Brusilovsky, Vice President of Technology, Golden State Warriors and Chase Center
Nothing but network

“HPE Aruba Networking came to us and said, ‘What do you think about Chase Center being one of the first large public venues in North America to launch with this technology?’ And we thought it was a perfect way to elevate our game,” Brusilovsky recalls.

The team wasted no time in upgrading more than 250 access points (APs) in the arena’s seating bowl to deliver a full Wi-Fi 6E experience. The Warriors chose HPE Aruba Networking 600 Series APs for their configurability, speed, and IoT-friendly options. The new APs allow the arena to centrally configure and automatically enforce role-based policies across the wired and wireless networks. Additionally, the APs are IoT-ready with integrated Bluetooth Low Energy and Zigbee support to make it easier to deploy and manage IoT, including asset tracking, security solutions, and sensors.

“The more devices we have on the network, the better,” Brusilovsky explains. “We can be not only delivering a better network experience but also delivering that experience at the edge. So when you’re sitting in your seat in the middle of the lower bowl we’re able to deliver a much better experience because of Wi-Fi 6E.”

Data that stays in its lane

As new fan experiences continue to drive engagement, network traffic management becomes even more crucial for the Golden State Warriors. It’s why the team relies heavily on Aruba ClearPass Policy Manager to dynamically segment and secure network traffic at Chase Center.

“Aruba ClearPass is one of the most critical pieces of our network stack,” Brusilovsky explains. “During events, the number of devices that connect to our network is sometimes 20,000-plus. And all of those devices have different rules set to them. For example, our POS network needs to have a certain level of security compliance because of the payments that we’re dealing with. That traffic needs to be segregated from a fan’s device, or an IPTV device, or even a digital display.”

Because the network understands the traffic that flows through it, users don’t have to think about it. “We don’t want our fans or media or even staff to have to think about what network they’re connecting to,” Brusilovsky says. “We rely on the entire HPE Aruba tech stack to make sure that our network is segregating traffic to the right place at the right time by the right device. That’s how we deliver a seamless experience.”

Connected to what comes next

In addition to everything the team offers fans inside the arena and outside at its sprawling Thrive City Plaza, the network upgrade is a step toward what comes next. “It’s going to help our business. When people are able to connect, they’re going to be able to engage with our app more. They’re going to be able to make more food and beverage orders or retail orders, or engage with content, or whatever it may be.”

One of those things is a new interactive experience that allows fans to tap into the arena’s scoreboard screen in real time. “You can scan a QR code that enables you to share a live video feed from your smartphone camera. And then we moderate it and it shows up on our scoreboard — the largest LED centerhung in the NBA,” Brusilovsky says. “We call it the HPE fan cam, and fans love it. They can see themselves on the scoreboard in front of 18,000 people.”

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None of this is possible without the advanced technology of today. “Ten years ago, we couldn’t have offered the HPE fan cam or express pickup for mobile food orders. Wi-Fi 6E has completely changed the game for a venue like Chase Center. To provide a high level of bandwidth and low latency data in a very condensed area, that is a total game changer.”

Wi-Fi 6E also opens the door to new technologies that aren’t yet ready for prime time. “Whether it’s augmented reality or virtual reality, it requires low-latency, high-bandwidth connectivity. We’re going to be able to deliver those experiences because of technology from the entire HPE Aruba Network stack.”

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**Software**
- HPE Aruba Networking Central
- HPE Aruba Networking ClearPass Policy Manager