

Lit Communities Accelerates Time to Market—and Return on Investment—With Calix Professional Services

CHALLENGE:

Lit Communities was established in April 2019 with the mission of helping municipalities across the United States provide “better broadband” to unserved and underserved communities. Lit Communities’ founders saw a huge opportunity to help communities escape the broadband gap. Their vision was to work with towns to build advanced, fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) networks that deliver high-speed Internet connectivity and support an array of smart home and smart city services.

In consultation with local governments, Lit Communities conducts in-depth “community assessments” to understand a town’s requirements and determine the best approach to bring fiber to the area. In some cases, communities will build their own networks while in other situations, Lit Communities will establish a local Internet service provider (ISP) to develop and operate the network for the municipality.

In February 2021—less than two years after its founding— Lit Communities secured the initial capital investment to build its first community network in Medina County, Ohio. Lit formed Medina Fiber, a locally-operated ISP, and immediately began construction of the new fiber access network, which will span more than 400 miles of fiber and bring FTTH to 45,000 homes and businesses across Medina County within three years.

Lit Communities’ executives brought decades of experience developing innovative infrastructure projects in the United States and abroad for some of the world’s largest telecommunications and technology companies. However, their previous work had primarily been in outside plant, design, and construction, so they needed to expand their expertise in areas such as access technology, customer ISP operations, and marketing, among others. Lauren Bender, co-founder and president of market strategy at Lit Communities said “We wanted to stay nimble and small as a company and I think one of the biggest challenges was the fact that we were so small. Most of us on our team came from outside plant design and construction-related backgrounds, and we needed help on the technical aspect.”



Lit Communities

COMPANY

Lit Communities

COMPANY TYPE

Competitive Local Exchange Carrier and Internet Service Provider

WEBSITE

<https://litcommunities.net/>

LOCATION

Birmingham, Alabama

SERVICES

Consulting and network development for municipal broadband deployments

Further, with a very lean team, Lit Communities needed a comprehensive solution that provided not only next-generation technology but resources that would augment their capabilities and accelerate their time to market.

SOLUTION:

Lit Communities selected Calix as its deployment partner for the Medina County community network because only Calix could deliver the unique combination of leading-edge broadband infrastructure solutions and extensive professional services. Lit Communities put the Intelligent Access EDGE and Calix AXOS® E7-2 Intelligent Modular System at the foundation of its broadband network, giving them a flexible, highly scalable solution that simplifies operational processes and future-proofs their business. With the E7-2, Lit Communities is perfectly positioned to deliver 10G XGS-PON/GPON services to residences and businesses as demand arises, while adding 100G transport flexibility. Lit Communities has also implemented the comprehensive Calix Revenue EDGE platform to offer subscribers a premium managed Wi-Fi service, including enhanced services for home network security and parental controls.

The key differentiator for Lit Communities, however, was the partnership with Calix Professional Services, particularly Calix Deployment Services, which are geared to BSPs who need assistance designing and deploying their Intelligent Access EDGE network solution. Working with Calix Professional Services, BSPs can deploy and expand their networks up to 75 percent faster, with lower risk and guaranteed results. “The biggest challenge from my end was choosing how we were going to lay out this network. And Calix Professional Services was a huge help in that,” shared Bender.

Lit Communities purchased the Accelerator Bundle, which combines Network Consulting, Deployment Enablement Services and other essential Professional Services and Education Services resources to help BSPs plan, rapidly deploy, expand, and upgrade their broadband networks.

Lit Communities also took advantage of further Calix Services including Premier Success for Marketing, Premier Success for Customer Support, Educational Services, and Premier Support. With this comprehensive combination of Calix Services and Calix Program Management, Lit Communities was able to leverage

“The technical piece that we lacked, Calix really stepped in and held our hands through the process of trying to identify what technologies we were going to use to set up our core network.”

**Lauren Bender –
co-founder and president
of market strategy, Lit
Communities**



“The thing that most appealed to me about Calix was the comprehensive solution. You guys are not just equipment vendors. You also have a very competent arm that does deployments. You’ve got solutions to help us with marketing to understand the ISP business. It’s a really comprehensive solution. You’ve got everything under your umbrella, and you can offer that to your customers, which was very helpful for us as a startup. It was and it still is a very good relationship.”

Chris Skelton – chief technology officer



industry best practices to accelerate the deployment of the Medina Fiber network and bring advanced broadband services to the community. Moreover, their entire team gained vital knowledge on building, operating, managing, and marketing broadband networks.

RESULTS:

Working together with Calix, Lit Communities was able to plan, design, and build out the initial phase of its cutting-edge broadband network and turn up the first subscriber in a remarkable seven months. The Lit Communities-owned ISP, Medina Fiber, is already monetizing the network, offering residents a range of services including high-speed Internet up to 1

Gbps, premium managed Wi-Fi, video streaming, and voice to residential and business subscribers. The network also opens up the opportunity to deliver municipal services such as telehealth, smart street lighting, smart water meters, smart waste management, and even public Wi-Fi in town parks.

The partnership with Calix enabled Lit Communities to dramatically accelerate its time to market. Lit Communities was able to instantly scale their operations with the world-class expertise of Calix Professional Services. Working alongside the Calix team, they gained valuable knowledge and practical experience in every aspect of network development. Perhaps the most important result is how Lit Communities has already exceeded the expectations of the investors that funded the Medina

Fiber community network, as well as the subscribers Medina Fiber serves across the county.

“It proved out to be really nice to lean on the Calix team to project manage the whole project through and through,” said Bender. “Calix Services really stepped in and held our hands through the process of trying to identify what technologies we were going to use to set up our core network, the access, and inside the subscribers’ homes. It is really exciting to see this relationship continue to develop and learn what Calix can provide to us as we stay good at what we do and lean on Calix for what they excel at!”

You can find out more about Calix Professional Services solutions by going to the [Calix Services web page](#).