

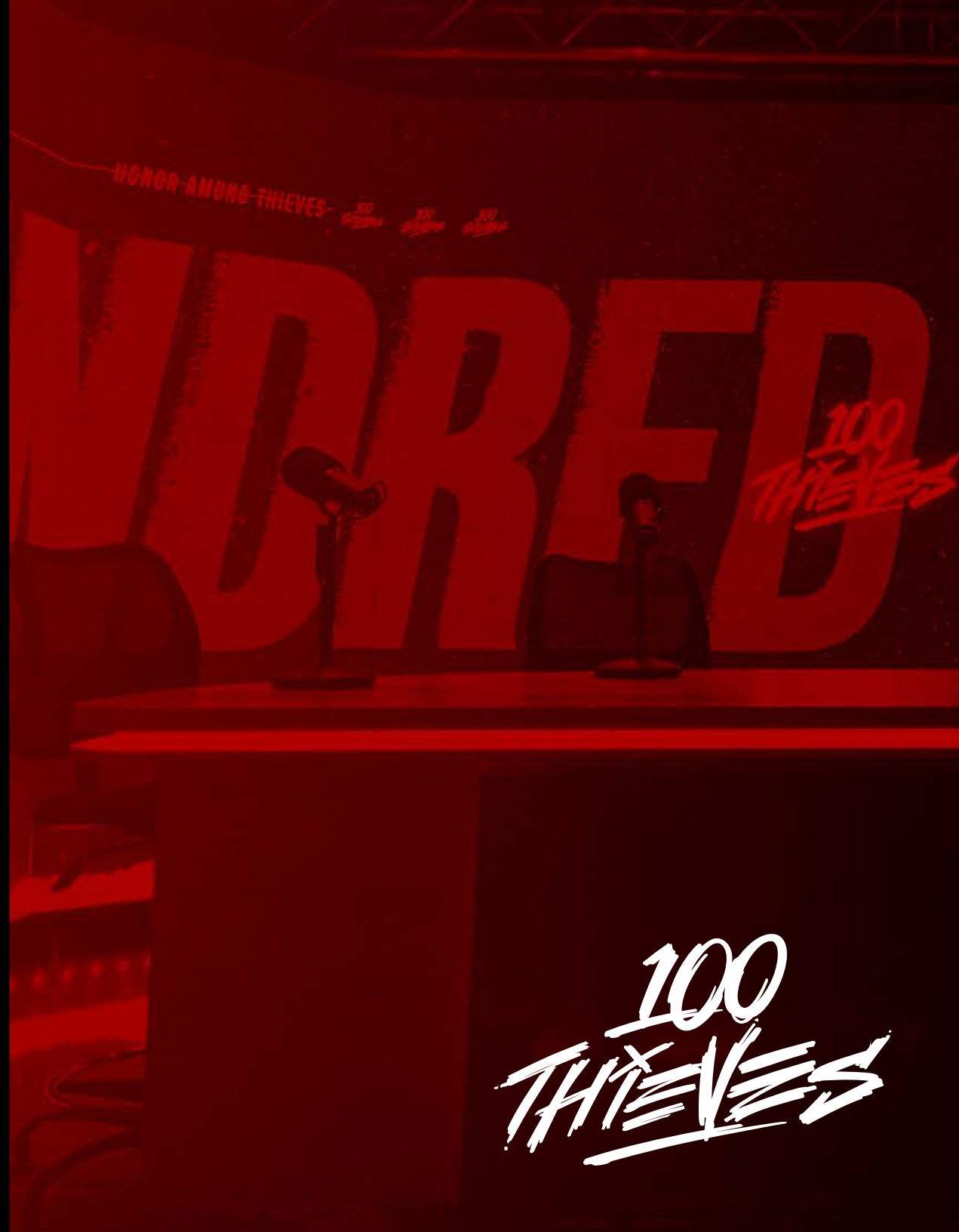


# THE ART OF GAMING

How 100 Thieves leverages content to strengthen their brand

## Thriving Not Just Surviving

The year 2020 will not be remembered as a kind one to most businesses. With a global pandemic, business-stifling lockdowns in response to the pandemic, and political and cultural upheaval in the US and abroad, most companies threw out the old measuring stick of business success—increasing their market share, growing their revenue, and achieving greater profits—and instead embraced sheer survival as the only measurement that really mattered. As the year wound down, continuing to meet payroll and attempting to carry out some semblance of business as usual was a marker of success.



Other companies might say that 2020 presented some pretty harsh challenges, but some organizations point out that those obstacles actually morphed into very real and long-term business opportunities. In truth, only those flexible businesses which could rapidly pivot, realign, and learn to thrive under these new conditions using cutting-edge technology can now make such claims. These include adaptive and resilient companies such as 100 Thieves, which has proven that the key to getting ahead in a worldwide crisis is having an IT group that is hyper-responsive to rapid change and that is constantly finding ways to support the business.

### The 100 Thieves Business Model

100 Thieves is a case study in effective cross-pollination between internal business units. As a well-financed gaming organization—their investors include the likes of Scooter Braun, Drake, Sequoia Capital, and Marc Benioff—they have professional teams competing in a number of different games, including League of Legends, VALORANT, Call of Duty and Fortnite Battle Royale. Being at the forefront of eSports and gaming, 100 Thieves has been able to translate the best of the gaming culture into a prominent lifestyle brand. And with all the gaming talent and activity in-house, they've been able to harness and promote their talent with an equally successful content production wing. Each of these business units helps to drive the success and expansion of the other two in an envious display of strategic balance.



All of this organizational synergy comes together in the 100 Thieves Cash App Compound and is stitched together with a top-notch IT department. Part esports training facility, part apparel fashion house, and part production studio, the 15,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility in Los Angeles also serves as the 100 Thieves corporate headquarters. Opened before the pandemic lockdowns in Spring of 2020, the facility has continued to tie together all corporate activities, especially the content creation unit, and has provided much-needed technical capabilities to keep their multiple businesses moving along while the lockdowns have threatened to disrupt business.

### The Power of 100 Thieves' Content Engine

Prior to relocation into the Cash App Compound, 100 Thieves operated out of shared co-working facilities nearby. Those facilities didn't quite enable the level of cross-pollination of ideas and collaborative effort—either from a logistical or technical perspective—that would lead to the next evolution of content from the business. Terence Deutsch, Senior Manager of Video Operations and Technology at 100 Thieves, observes that an enormous

amount of ideation went into determining the IT requirements for their content production facility at the Cash App Compound, especially given how important content creation was becoming to the overall business.

Not only did they need to co-locate the different parts of the organization into a single facility, but they also needed to ensure a technology infrastructure capable of rapid content production, post-production, and distribution in a highly collaborative environment. A vital part of this capability was a new shared storage solution to replace outdated and ineffectual methods of data storage. At times, their workflow prior to the move even included using portable drives to move files around during post-production. "It was really an accident waiting to happen so we decided to find a way to share our projects without worrying about losing something valuable in a coffee spill," says Deutsch. The new workflow needed to promote seamless recording in their new ground-floor studio directly to high-performance shared storage, enabling the projects then to be "elevated" to second-floor edit bays for sound and color finishing. They needed flexible and scalable enterprise storage that was easy to use and could help them outperform.

“Content is such an important part of the success of our company. We’re now at a point where anything and everything we do as a business needs to be captured and shown to our growing audience. When our eSports or apparel people have something to say, it goes through our content production team. We’re very proud of the engaging content we’re putting out to our fans, and naturally we have a very robust content calendar moving forward.

### **OpenDrives Provides the Optimal User Experience**

100 Thieves made sure to do their due diligence when looking for a storage vendor. Deutsch admits that they had a lot of different options available to them, but when it came down to it the reputational aspect of storage vendors helped them narrow the selection down quickly. Among the things they heard about OpenDrives, several factors stood out: the high-performance nature of our solutions, the ease of implementation and simplicity of use, the quality of support, and even the location in relation to their facility. Deutsch also points out something pretty rare to find that they actually discovered with OpenDrives storage. “In the tech space, people can always find one or two things about a vendor’s product that can be improved or tweaked. But with OpenDrives, the entire solution was top to bottom ideal. We all felt this unanimously.”

### **Pivoting in Response to the Pandemic**

Having relocated to their new Cash App Compound, complete with a new storage infrastructure including an OpenDrives hybrid SSD/HDD system—powered by Atlas, our intelligent data management software platform—the early part of 2020 saw Deutsch and the IT team refining their processes and dialing in the best workflow for their growing content business. Then, in March they received their first work-from-home order.

Rather than panic, their leadership, especially their founder Matt “Nadeshot” Haag (former OpTic Gaming Call of Duty team captain and 2014 Esports Athlete of the Year), took a different and much more circumspect view. Pointing out that this was a once-in-a-lifetime situation to cope with, Haag stressed concern but recommended that the company show sensitivity and caution. This allowed the entire team to slow down, reorganize and reset, and determine the best way to continue business under less-than-ideal circumstances.

Deutsch knew that their technology and OpenDrives storage solution at the Cash App Compound could underpin the entire company’s shift to remote work. So he took the opportunity the first few weeks of the stay-at-home order to reorient the content team, engage in more one-on-one tutorials to find ways to be more innovative and more productive, and adapt their workflow where necessary to keep content production moving forward. Unlike other companies, which Deutsch says just couldn’t be flexible enough to keep the lights on, 100 Thieves played it very safe for the first four weeks of lockdown, finding ways to make their remote and work-from-home processes more COVID-safe, and also figuring out ways to utilize the facility and the infrastructure much better through the strength of their new IT infrastructure as work began to pick up through the summer.



**Matthew “Nadeshot” Haag**  
100 Thieves  
Owner and CEO

## The Real Value of Flexibility

One of the outcomes that OpenDrives storage provides on which Deutsch puts a premium is time efficiencies and savings. He observes that the content team at 100 Thieves has more of it, and that it's the most valuable resource they could have. Because of the improved workflow, facility, and storage infrastructure, their editors have an extra half day or even full day to go beyond just completing a project—they have time to make it special and unique. "Some of our people can't put their finger on what it is, so I've pointed out that with this extra time they're able to make their projects special because they could start working on it literally 10 minutes after recording. Before, we just couldn't do that."

Another benefit of their OpenDrives solution includes the ability to have content readily available, even if it's from earlier in the season. No more

digging around on portable drives to find the segment that one of the talent has just referenced. "Now we can access anything, anytime, whenever it's needed without a delay."

And of course, one of the biggest benefits goes back to their rationale at the beginning of all this, to create a shared space to ideate, collaborate, and produce more compelling content. OpenDrives facilitates that shared space, whether everybody is in the Cash App Compound, working remotely, or some combination of the two. No matter how 100 Thieves must adapt moving forward—no matter what the future throws at them—they know they can continue to pivot and adapt. And OpenDrives will adapt with them, allowing for simple, flexible, and scalable enterprise storage.

**"We have not been slowed down the way other companies have been. Our company spends well and spends smartly. We figured out smarter virus protocols, and then began encouraging our staff to utilize the facility and all our tools safely. Our "Crash the Compound" series actually was a very quick turnaround and a success in the middle of all this upheaval. When this all ends, I don't know if we all go completely back to the way it was, but this facility and the infrastructure is here whenever it's needed."**

—Jason Ton, Chief Financial Officer, 100 Thieves

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