

NHC Kicks Auto Dealer's Network Into Overdrive

The Gurley Leep Automotive Family is a large, multisite auto dealer headquartered in Mishawaka, Indiana and serving the greater Michiana region. Founded in 1973, Gurley Leep has emerged as one of the area's top dealerships for new and used vehicles. Today, the company has over 36 automotive retail franchises spread across 22 dealership locations, and the organization is still growing.

As any dealer will attest, sales teams sell more than just vehicles to customers during the sales process. They also sell an experience.

Customers are more apt to go to dealers that are easy to work with, reliable, and efficient. There's also a psychological element at play during an auto sale. From the customer's perspective, their experience with a dealer is a prelude to what they can expect after the sale — both in the quality of the automobile and in the service they will receive.

Ultimately, the dealer experience sets the tone for the ongoing customer journey. If the customer experience during the sales process is positive, then the chance that the customer will purchase the next vehicle from the same dealer is strong. According to one study, 85% of highly satisfied customers would buy from the same dealer again. 72% would visit dealerships more often if the buying process was improved. And 54% would buy from a dealer that offers their preferred experience.



This is where connectivity comes into play.

The network is one of the first things a customer will experience when working with a dealership. The interaction may start several weeks – or even months – before a customer walks into a facility to look at a car. Dealers with slow or inefficient networks may lose customers before they even walk in the door. After all, customers want a quick and easy buying experience. They lack the patience that previous generations had.

Customers also expect flawless on-site connectivity. This is important for a variety of tasks, whether it's checking email, conducting last-minute research, or setting up a child with a mobile game to keep them occupied. A customer will continue using the network throughout their buying process for anything from accessing financial records to engaging in multimedia such as sales videos to viewing augmented and virtual reality presentations using smartphones and tablets.

Consider as well the importance that connectivity will play as more connected automobiles come to market. It's difficult to sell a car with onboard connectivity and automated features when the dealer's own network is experiencing performance issues. This issue raises an automatic red flag for the customer – reinforcing natural biases about automation.

In today's digital world, dealers must have a strong digital foundation in place — both for customer-facing and back-office processes. Dealers that fail to provide connectivity send the message that they are out of touch with the latest technologies and services to both customers and sales associates alike – leading to missed sales opportunities and high turnover.

Gurley Leep recognized that their network was behind the curve, and something needed to be done to improve their operations.

Challenge: Modernizing Gurley Leep's Network

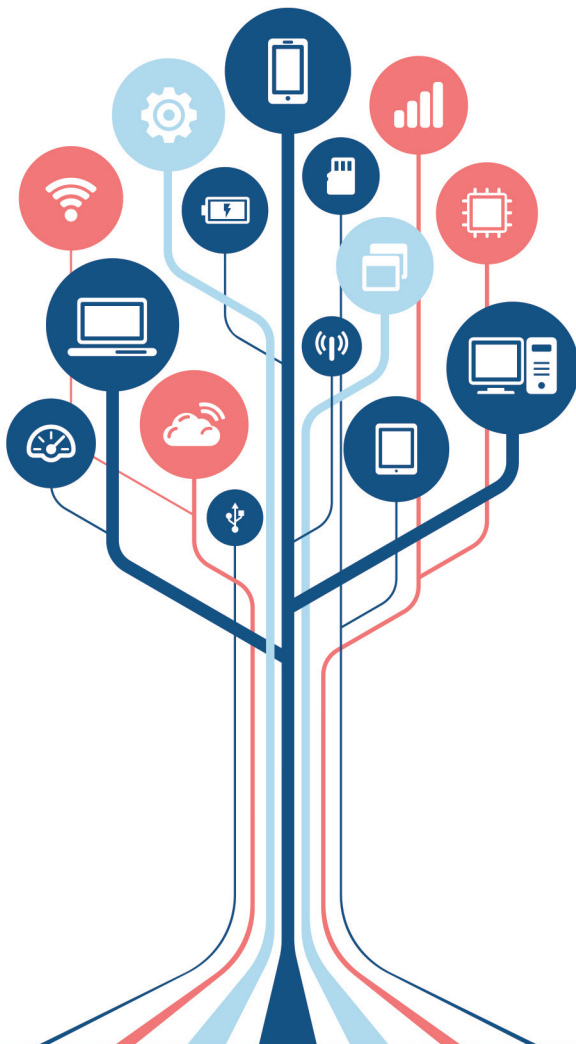
Gurley Leep was leveraging legacy telco services for connectivity using copper and POTS lines across all its dealerships.

These telco services worked fine a few decades ago. As time went on, more and more devices and processes came online — placing a heavy burden on their outdated network.

It was clear that the company needed a new way to establish connectivity. Gurley Leep needed to migrate its legacy voice service off copper and establish redundant access outside of its LEC footprint.

"The LEC ordering process was very slow, which was impacting our business," explained Mike Gordon, Director of IT at Gurley Leep.

"In addition, we were having a tough time managing legacy technologies from multiple providers. Making matters worse, our telco providers weren't much help when we needed it. We needed a new approach, and we needed it fast."



Solution: Gurley Leep Turns to NHC

To streamline connectivity and modernize their network, Gurley Leep turned to New Horizon Communications (NHC)— THE Communications STACK Provider.™

First, NHC deployed a redundant access layer – reselling LEC fiber and cable broadband to the organization. NHC then deployed SD-WAN for guaranteed QoS across all of their branch locations – replacing the core network function of their WAN with an overlay network of private tunnels to cloud gateways.

In addition, NHC further streamlined Gurley Leep's network with a managed WAN service – improving their network while eliminating the hard work of having to manage and maintain it. Now NHC handles all of Gurley Leep's backend network processes while keeping them in the loop through NHC Ops and a dedicated customer portal that delivers real-time communications and alert notifications for any network event.

Gurley Leep also benefits from application prioritization – an active-active state for all access types and proactive monitoring.

What's more, NHC was able to completely migrate Gurley Leep's voice network off of copper using NHC's new Voice Native SIP service, which routes calls over an internet connection granting seamless, reliable, and cost-effective VoIP communication.

Result: A Cutting-Edge Network Environment

The team at Gurley Leep made the decision to prioritize their network – a decision that will pay dividends over time.

By working with NHC, Gurley Leep was able to implement a secure, virtual, and managed network for all its branch locations. As a result, the company is benefitting from clearer calls and improved system uptime.

“Thanks to the help of NHC, we were able to take copper out of the equation,” said Mike Gordon. “Our service has been noticeably better, and we haven’t suffered from any unplanned network outages or dropped calls since the migration. In fact, several members of our sales team have confirmed that call quality is clearer and richer than it was in the past.”

Mike Gordon also commented on the improved customer experience.

“There’s nothing more embarrassing than trying to process a car loan or exchange information with headquarters and encountering a slow and inefficient network. It’s a bad look for the business. Thanks to NHC, we now have ultra-fast connectivity and enough bandwidth to stream resource-intensive presentations like video for customers.”

An added bonus: Gurley Leep can now correspond with customers via SMS – enabling convenient mobile dialogue between sales and service representatives — a key customer service factor in today’s ultra-connected market.

“Customer communication has never been stronger,” concluded Mike Gordon. “We’re proud to work with NHC as our official provider of voice, video, data, and managed services, and we look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with them.”

