

TOYOTA/VOLVO/HONDA/HYUNDAI OF KEENE

Problem

The dealership must work with computer systems that are incompatible and cause constant problems. Can EMF free management and employees from technology issues so they can concentrate on business?

Solution

EMF granted the dealership's biggest wish: they made the technology work, with a simplified network configuration, consistent and reliable hardware and software, and a unified approach to IT. EMF deals with everything from 3am emergencies to strategic planning for the future.

For Fenton Family Dealership (also known as Toyota/Volvo/Honda/Hyundai of Keene), success in the automobile industry came naturally. Success with information technology required the expertise of EMF. The dealership's CFO, Chris Joyce explains: "In the automobile industry, computer networks have only become commonplace in dealerships in the last five to eight years. Each car manufacturer designed what they thought their dealers needed, and some actually imposed their system. We were ahead

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of the curve on that. We already had our own network when the manufacturers started installing *their* networks. This created a big problem with compatibility."

With at least four incompatible computer systems to reckon with, the dealership's employees soon felt overwhelmed. Technology issues took far too much of everyone's time. Several years ago, when Joyce bought some PC workstations, he asked the hardware supplier to recommend someone to install the system. They recommended EMF.

"As we expanded our network, we would use EMF each time," Joyce recalls. "We gave them more responsibility as the years went on." Finally, they handed the entire IT function over to EMF. Joyce says, "We couldn't operate without that function, and it's far more cost-effective to have EMF

be our support system. We couldn't find one individual who brings us all the resources of EMF."

When EMF first assessed the dealership's information systems, they found that none of them were designed to work with each other. In fact, in some cases, they were deliberately designed to prevent cooperation. None of the vendors wanted to talk to each other to resolve problems and none of them provided support, even for implementing their own system changes.

During a technology walk-through of the site, EMF interviewed key employees in every department of the dealership. Tom Bielecki, EMF's Director of Professional Services, found that all the employees had the same wish list. "They wanted to use the technology and not have to bother with the problems that go with it. We asked, 'If we had a magic wand, what would you ask for?' They said, 'Just make it work.'"

EMF's recommendations included ways to minimize the total cost of ownership, simplify network administration and

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TOYOTA/VOLVO/HONDA/HYUNDAI OF KEENE

Technology

- Network security
- Internet load balancing
- Microsoft Server, Exchange Server
- LAN/WAN connectivity
- End user applications: MS Office; Star Office; Outlook
- Windows and Unix systems integration
- Auto manufacturer system integration

Services

- Startup services, including needs assessment, planning, purchasing and integration
- Virtual IT management
- System administration
- Network management
- 7x24 monitoring
- End-user support
- IT Asset management
- Operating system, data and applications restoration
- Hardware maintenance

management, allow for eventual expansion of the network and bring as much uniformity as possible to hardware and software. To begin with, EMF installed a file server for managing the entire network, including providing a central location for backups. The server also established e-mail for all PC users and, for the first time, allowed users to share files.

Customer service is important to EMF, so they understood its importance to Fenton Family Dealership, too. EMF set up a wireless network that allows the dealership's customers to check on their own e-mail while they're waiting.

Now, EMF takes care of maintenance and support services, MIS management, system administration, asset management, network management (including security, backup and performance issues), end-user support, troubleshooting and problem resolution, restoration of the operating system and applications when needed, hardware maintenance and professional services, such as needs assessment.

Many of these tasks are handled remotely to reduce the interruption to work flow. Fenton Family Dealership has an IT department (EMF) who looks at everything and understands how one change affects the entire system—"even a laptop plugged into the system," says George Osborn, EMF's Support Services Manager. "We talk to their vendors on a technical level, we give their employees someone they know to call personally, we eliminate downtime."

"EMF tells me how to save money and be more efficient."

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Joyce agrees. "EMF is very responsive and very capable, and they're nice people to work with. Their level of expertise is very high. That's extremely critical to the success of this relationship. The way they handle that situation builds trust and respect. We use EMF because I'm impressed with their work and particularly with their people."

Because of EMF, the management and employees of the dealership are free to concentrate on business, not on technology. Joyce has found a major and much appreciated change in the time he has to spend dealing with technology issues. "My role now is to recognize the needs of the company and come up with a possible solution. Then I work with EMF to implement

it. They're aware of new technology that I'm not aware of. EMF tells me how to save money and be more efficient."

If any other company asked Joyce for words of advice, he would tell them to use the expertise of EMF early on. "No matter how carefully you think you've designed and planned a network and anticipated complications, you'll find that you've woefully under planned. EMF can make you aware of the issues you haven't thought of and they'll design a much better network to minimize them."

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