

Kentucky auto dealership drives sustainability with support from Spectrum Business

Paul Miller Ford reduces EV service times with fiber connectivity and Enterprise Network Edge

As consumers continue to buy electric vehicles in quest of a more sustainable future, Paul Miller Ford is evolving the EV customer service experience by leveraging high speed fiber solutions from Spectrum Business.

“As a dealer, the move over to EVs puts us in a unique position of having to manage multiple large downloads,” explains Will Atwood, Chief Technology Officer at Paul Miller Ford. “Running on Spectrum Business fiber is the best way to get the data loads done so the EVs run properly.”

Ford EVs rely on downloads to better collect and analyze data around engine operations and overall system efficiency. Downloads also keep drivers connected to over 19,500 charging stations with 63,000 plugs which form the Ford BlueOval Charge Network, as well as 12,000 Tesla Superchargers also available to them.

By refining internal vehicle dynamics via the vehicle control unit (VCU) module, and employing AI algorithms and EV intelligence, data downloads offer a layer of operational enhancement unique to EVs.

In addition to strategically installing new fiber circuits at key points throughout the Paul Miller Ford campus, Spectrum Business also set up critical network security and

access features, including Fortinet firewall, switches and SD-WAN devices.

Promoting sustainability with high speed data

Paul Miller Ford is an automotive dealership in Lexington, Kentucky. It includes two car dealerships, a truck dealership, body shop, upfitting service, and car and diesel truck repair services. For three generations the Miller family has set a fast pace designing retail solutions that work in the automotive industry. They know continuing that tradition for generations to come means embracing an environmentally sustainable future.

Today’s challenge is making sustainability a more realizable goal for themselves and their customers. To keep EVs working properly, extensive data-file updates must periodically be downloaded to help manage overall efficiency and optimize performance. “One large data download to service an EV can take as long as 16 hours if you aren’t prepared for it,” Atwood explains.

Internet connectivity has been a component of Paul Miller Ford operations for years, and a cornerstone of their longtime relationship with their technology partner, Spectrum Business. To service EVs better, two Spectrum Business fiber circuits were installed at the dealership



At Paul Miller Ford in Lexington, Kentucky, selling vehicles is more than a business, it’s a family tradition. Partnering with Spectrum Business keeps that tradition moving forward.

Client profile



Company
Paul Miller Ford

Industry
Retail

Services
Dedicated Fiber Internet (DFI)
Enterprise Network Edge

Overview

- Paul Miller Ford is a full-service automotive dealership based in Lexington, Kentucky.
- Paul Miller Ford has taken the lead in marketing Ford's line of electric vehicles (EVs). Accomplishing this demands a greater level of connectivity.
- Working with the dealership's Chief Technology Officer, Spectrum Business is developing a high-speed data-driven network that allows EVs to be more efficiently programmed and updated.

Outcomes

- Paul Miller Ford can now shave hours off download times for EV programming and updates using Spectrum Business high-speed fiber connectivity.
- The dealership can now adjust connectivity bandwidth as needed. All installations and adjustments are done within days.
- Paul Miller Ford needs pinpoint IT network oversight to ensure its many parts all function smoothly. Such oversight is now readily available via portal with Enterprise Network Edge.

Why it matters

- EVs will play a pivotal role in determining the future of the automotive business. Paul Miller Ford is committed to achieving a greener future by investing in high-speed connectivity with Spectrum Business Dedicated Fiber Internet (DFI).



"Today's EVs run on data. To that end, Spectrum Business fiber offers less latency, cleaner traffic and better quality of service," says Will Atwood, CTO at Paul Miller Ford.

campus. Now data-downloading times for EVs are managed more effectively with the boosted bandwidth of high-speed [Dedicated Fiber Internet \(DFI\)](#).

EV business at Paul Miller Ford continues to expand as both local governments and longtime customers seek to reduce fuel costs and their carbon footprints. With Spectrum Business support, Atwood is seeing the time required to perform data downloads drop from most of an entire day to under two hours: "Now, with two of our bays cabled with Spectrum Business fiber, we have the ability to perform multiple EV data downloads simultaneously and efficiently."

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics cites estimates that EVs could account for 40% of all passenger car sales in the country [by 2030](#). Spectrum Business Account Manager Christie Struck believes a smooth transition can only happen with forward-thinking dealerships leading

"Communication has been the biggest key for me with Spectrum Business."

- Will Atwood, Chief Technology Officer, Paul Miller Ford

the way. "Paul Miller Ford understands the power of connectivity as an investment that will pay big dividends when acted upon quickly enough," she says.

Connecting an enterprise of many parts

Located on a sprawling 27-acre campus, Paul Miller Ford is the anchor of a full-service automotive retail establishment that also includes a Mazda dealership, a truck dealership, a body shop, upfitting service and several repair services. An affiliated dealership for off-road vehicles is nearby.

Having central IT oversight of these separate operations is a core part of Atwood's job. He needs a network that offers ample security and scalability, especially as EV data loads require agile management. He counts on [Enterprise Network Edge](#) (ENE) to make his job easier.

"Enterprise Network Edge, with its Fortinet platform, gives me the ability to manage everything from one location," Atwood says. "It's in the cloud, so I can log into it from anywhere, at home, on location, on my phone, wherever."



Paul Miller Ford IT operations across their 27-acre site are effectively brought under the control of Enterprise Network Edge.

Enterprise Network Edge includes a firewall for network protection and threat mitigation that is managed and monitored via a central portal.

Enterprise Network Edge also serves a critical support role in EV data uploads. While the data is delivered to Paul Miller Ford via Dedicated Fiber Internet, once there it is distributed to specific areas of the Ford dealership using the Enterprise Network Edge Fortinet firewall and LAN switches designed to maximize bandwidth yield across the campus.

A partnership built for doing more

The relationship Paul Miller Ford has had with Spectrum Business has grown over the years into a partnership, where both sides anticipate areas of possible need for the dealership and collaborate on ways to address them.

Spectrum Business worked to ensure that the new FortiGate firewall is ready to safely run EV data downloads at levels well beyond the dealership's current operating level.

Similarly, when plans for locating one of the new fiber circuits were

changed to better address the dealership's immediate needs, the Spectrum Business team set out to make it happen and did so in under a week.

"We're able to accommodate the client's needs, not push back and say we can't do this," says Jason Pittinger, Sales Manager, Spectrum Business. "We're going to be flexible. If that's what they need for their business to operate better, we're going to make it happen for them."

"It really stresses your network when you have two or more EV [electric vehicle] updates running simultaneously. Now that we have moved to Spectrum Business fiber connectivity and Enterprise Network Edge, we are much better positioned to manage those updates in a way that works for our customers."

- Will Atwood, Chief Technology Officer,
Paul Miller Ford

The advantages of a technology partnership

With Spectrum Business, Atwood enjoys the flexibility of co-managed services. He has the ability to make changes to his network directly from his Enterprise Network Edge dashboard. Or he can put in a request for Spectrum Business to take care of the issue.

"I have the luxury of doing it myself or just say 'Hey, Spectrum Business, I need this done,'" he notes. "If it's a high priority issue, I know it'll be done within 24 hours. That takes a lot off my plate, knowing it's going to get tested, validated and done."

He and Struck have what she calls "a five-year plan" for updating the technology at Paul Miller Ford, figuring out what needs lie on the dealership's horizon and how Spectrum Business can help prepare for them. Such forward-thinking also allows the dealership to select services that work better in tandem, such as leveraging the higher bandwidth and low latency of Dedicated Fiber Internet to optimize other services.

"Sometimes we will talk about a service and I will decide it's not the right time for it yet," Atwood says. "But I always appreciate hearing from her and knowing what is in the pipeline."

Another nice aspect of the Spectrum Business relationship for Atwood is how it allows him to manage costs as an operating expense rather than a capital expense.

"OpEx is a lot easier for us to work with and depreciate," he notes. "The solutions are a lot more user friendly, too, especially with the people Spectrum Business has on the back end to support it."



Paul Miller Ford also offers a wide range of pickups and SUVs, including these hardy and luxurious Ford Broncos. Variety as well as reliability are staples of their business.

Taking charge of the future

Sustainability is expected to take up a large part of Paul Miller Ford's future plans. Atwood is examining ways caching data in servers can cut down on update times, and how cloud technology can streamline downloading.

Throughout this process, he keeps in regular contact with Struck and her Spectrum Business team.

Atwood explains: "I feel great about the Fortinet firewall and switches our Enterprise Network Edge solution has, but if I had to name one thing that is best, it would be having one source.

"The service with Spectrum Business is phenomenal. The relationship I have with the sales executives and engineers is a huge piece of that. The technology catalog they offer goes a long way as well."

– Will Atwood, Chief Technology Officer,
Paul Miller Ford

One person to go to, one person to deal with everything. The relationship with Spectrum Business has been phenomenal."

IT issues are already complicated in the automotive retail business, without the unique challenges of marketing and servicing a new type of vehicle with its own unique demands. For that, Atwood appreciates a technology partner he can count on.

"I think Spectrum Business gives us what we need now and what I can see going forward," he says. "Plus I know if something comes up, I can reach out to Christie and say we want to move in this direction, and it can get done. So Spectrum Business is a very good solution for us."

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