

CASE STUDY: C3 TECHNOLOGY ADVISORS SD-WAN ENGAGEMENT WITH DP FOX



DP Fox Ventures, based in Grand Rapids, MI, operates an impressive portfolio of companies ranging from auto sales to motorsports to fashion, sports entertainment and luxury resorts. Since their founding in 1992, DP Fox has grown and expanded their presence across the United States. Fox Motors alone represents 41 automotive brands and is West Michigan's largest new car dealership network, with nearly 1,000 employees across 25 locations.

CHALLENGE

According to Kelly Blue Book, about 17.2 million cars and trucks sold in 2017. Purchasing a vehicle is easier than ever! Potential buyers are no longer going to six or seven car dealerships; they search for their vehicle online and then visit approximately 1.6 dealerships (CNBC). Very cut and dry, right? But, what if the potential buyer visits a dealership and the dealer is experiencing an internet outage that takes them entirely offline. How much money do you think that dealer is going to lose? Hundreds? Thousands? How can auto dealers protect themselves from this happening to them?

This is something that Grant Zondervan, VP of IT at DP Fox, took seriously and decided to take action on. During DP Fox's rapid business expansion in the auto dealership chain, Grant realized that there was a critical need to move key applications to the cloud. DP Fox decided to replace their on-prem DMS with a Cloud-based solution called Dealertrack, and to replace their hosted Exchange servers with Microsoft Office 365. This was a great step forward in the right direction; however, Grant faced a new challenge. Now that these mission critical applications were delivered "as a service" an internet outage at any of their locations would take that dealership entirely offline.

It's this new challenge that drove Grant to C3 Technology Advisors.

OBJECTIVES

Grant had several objectives as part of his initiative to improve the company's Cloud-based technologies, including:

- Minimizing network outages and improving uptime
- Increasing bandwidth significantly
- Retaining the company's network architecture and firewall
- Improving Cloud application performance
- Simplifying carrier proficiencies

HOW C3 HELPED

DP Fox called upon Ryan Boyk and the C3 Team to help with the following matters:

- Evaluate if SD-WAN is the correct technology needed
- Evaluate the dozens of potential providers in the marketplace
- Coordinate vendor meetings
- Negotiate several rounds of pricing
- Implement the new network

C3 was engaged to bring sanity and expertise to the process. Sitting side by side with Grant, C3 created a long list of potential SD WAN providers for the project. Using the agreed upon criteria, the parties whittled the list down to three vendors who fought hard for DP Fox's business. C3 extensively collaborated with the vendors to vet the solutions and worked with the carriers' engineering staffs to ensure that the optimal solution was being proposed, all while negotiating the best rates possible. Grant stated, "The three finalist vendors were each put through a deep-dive, technical product demonstration. Through that process C3 helped us realize two key criteria that we hadn't originally considered." In the end, Grant selected BigLeaf Networks, an SD WAN provider with a unique Site-to-Cloud Architecture.

This vendor/technology evaluation process, coordinated and executed by C3, ensured the proper vendor selection for DP Fox. C3 was able to negotiate aggressive price points and reduced the cycles Grant and his team spent on this project. Due to DP Fox's willingness to commit to the process, C3 waived all professional service fees on this engagement.

THE SOLUTION

C3 and BigLeaf Networks recommended:

- Deploy a 30-day proof of concept at two of DP Fox's largest dealerships
- Plug the WAN connections into the Bigleaf router, plug the router into the existing firewall and update the firewall's public IP settings to the new IP block.
- Evaluate the Internet circuits at each of the dealerships

"Bigleaf's Cloud-first SD-WAN has become a foundational technology for DP Fox. We can expand and innovate faster than ever knowing that Bigleaf will keep us connected, no matter where we grow."

- Grant Zondervan

Bigleaf's intelligent software creates a resilient and high-performance connection utilizing readily available internet connections anywhere that DP Fox does business. The Dynamic QoS feature automatically detects and prioritizes their most critical Cloud application traffic. The Intelligent Load Balancing feature ensures that those priority applications are routed over the ISP that will provide the best end-user experience. These autonomous decisions are made and implemented 10 times per second, ensuring uninterrupted application performance.

"With Bigleaf, we simply don't worry about the WAN anymore."

RESULTS

Today, over 90% of all DP Fox business locations run on Bigleaf's Cloud-first SD-WAN. Bigleaf optimizes performance for all of the traffic in and out of those sites, including both Cloud application traffic as well as VPN traffic between branch locations and headquarters.

The result to date has been 100% application uptime across all of DP Fox's locations running on Bigleaf.

DP Fox continues to grow, with three new dealerships in the past year, and more coming all the time. For Grant and team, this kind of growth requires the speed and agility of Cloud technologies to keep up.

"We're very thankful to have Ryan Boyk and C3 Technology Advisors as partners because they introduced us to vendors we had never even hear of. They provided us with expert advice and a process to make confident decisions. It is nice to have a non-biased agent working for us that isn't trying to sell us anything."

-Grant Zondervan