Vertical Puts Lou Fusz Auto Group in the Driver’s Seat

Background
In the world of auto sales, there’s no such thing as a ‘do over.’

“If we miss a call, or fail to respond to a customer query in a timely manner, that opportunity, is in essence, dead,” says Ted Stranz, general manager of Lou Fusz Auto Group, a large dealership that sells multiple brands to consumers and businesses in the St. Louis area. “Prompt, accurate and courteous communication is the basis for how we sell our vehicles and how we serve our customers. Without it, our business would flounder.”

With its previous phone system, the dealership had a difficult time communicating with staff spread throughout its 14 franchises. Outbound calls had to traverse the public telephone network, adding significant cost and time; voice mail messages went into an abyss; and

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

■ Customer: Lou Fusz Auto Group
■ Industry: Auto Dealership
■ Location: St. Louis, MO

CHALLENGES
■ Network multiple dealer sites together
■ Improve customer call handling
■ Reduce toll charges and third-party communications costs
■ Implement UC solutions to improve internal communication
■ Evaluate efficiency of print and electronic advertising campaigns

VERTICAL SOLUTION
■ Wave IP
■ WaveNet
■ Wave ViewPoint
■ Wave ViewPoint Mobile
■ Wave Contact Center
■ Wave Call Classifier
■ Wave Call Reporting
■ Wave Fax Manager
■ Wave Campaign Tracker

RESULTS
■ Networked multiple sites and employees through a single system
■ Improved communication among 200 employees
■ Reduced communications costs by more than 20%
■ Enhanced customer service and increased call response times
■ Improved sales training
■ Provided deeper insight into advertising effectiveness
sales personnel spent significant time tracking down colleagues on various dealership lots to find out what cars were in stock.

“Our old system really only provided basic telephone service,” notes Stranz. “For most of the other features, such as call recording and database solutions, we were forced to use outside vendors. Those technologies had to be integrated, which was expensive and disruptive to the business. Our overall costs just began to spiral out of control, particularly as we added new locations. The time had come for a system that was more aligned with our specific needs.”

Solution
In evaluating various communications systems to meet the dealership’s sophisticated and ever-changing demands, Stranz met with Mickey Levy, a senior account executive at CT Innovations, a certified Vertical Communications® dealer in St. Louis. Stranz quickly learned that Vertical and CT had extensive expertise in the auto dealership market, and a proven solution that formed the foundation of an entirely new communications system at the Lou Fusz Auto Group.

CT designed and implemented a communications solution that is feature-rich, cost-efficient and flexible enough to support future growth. Deploying Vertical Wave IP platforms throughout the auto group’s network of dealerships provided seamless connectivity to more than 200 employees. All intra-dealership calls are dialed directly to extensions, saving time and money. The Wave IP’s robust unified communications suite allows employees to see the status of everyone on the network, and communicate through instant message if co-workers are on phone calls.

The Wave IP’s ViewPoint desktop UC interface enables dealership agents to identify incoming callers and instantly route customers to specific sales representatives or service personnel. The system’s automated IVR features allow callers to schedule or change service appointments on the fly. And with the embedded Viewpoint Mobile application, all the same features and connectivity of the Wave IP platform are available on employees’ smartphones or other mobile devices, ensuring staff can receive calls and check messages on the lot or off.

Results
With the networking capabilities available through the system’s WaveNet application, communication across franchises is now seamless and easy. Agents can give callers the attention and service they deserve using the Wave IP’s powerful contact center applications, and internal communication is more efficient with ViewPoint’s UC features, such as presence management and instant messaging.

“The mobility tools, in particular, have been a revelation,” says Stranz. “Our sales people rely on ViewPoint Mobile to serve customers and close deals while they’re on the lot, on test drives, or at our other franchises. It has a tangible impact on our bottom line.”

Even more impressive are the cost savings realized through the implementation of Vertical’s Call Recording and Campaign Tracker applications. Campaign Tracker enables franchises to measure the efficiency of print, electronic and online advertising by assigning undetectable tracking codes to incoming phone calls. Wave’s Call Recording feature stores all voice calls directly on the platform, giving management instant access to a secure library of recorded conversations between staff and customers. These two applications eliminated the need for expensive third-party services, created better visibility into a number of business operations and increased the dealership’s profitability.

“Through Vertical’s technology, we’ve lowered our communications costs about 20 percent, while enjoying features that were unattainable with our previous system,” reports Stranz. “Vertical and CT fully understand our business, and offered us a solution that other vendors can’t come close to matching. They are a tremendous partner in helping us achieve our business objectives.”

For more information on products and solutions from Vertical Communications®, contact your Authorized Vertical Business Partner, call 1-877-VERTICAL, or visit www.vertical.com.