



A Fiberlink Company

## Case Study

### Major Automotive Parts Company Uses S2S-Fiberlink IP-VPN for New Automotive Application Suite

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#### Customer Profile:

Multi-billion dollar, retail automotive sales and service company has over 60 distribution centers supplying automotive and truck parts to over 5500 participating stores throughout the USA. A portion of the total retail store population is owned corporately, while the remaining, larger percentage are independently owned franchises.

#### Customer Challenge:

The customer was preparing to rollout a newly developed automotive parts-related, software application suite. Given the stiff competition within the automotive parts marketplace, it was imperative they gain competitive advantage and differentiation at the point of sale. To that end, the Company developed a contemporary suite of applications which enabled participating retail stores to: (1) provide web-enabled financial transactional processing with major customers, (2) access new inventory management systems located at the corporate data center in Atlanta, GA.

Customer recognized the need to implement the new automotive solutions as quickly as possible in order to retain existing customer base and to expand their presence and reputation within the marketplace. The existing dial connectivity at the retail stores presented yet another challenge. Bandwidth was sufficient for merely a portion of the application suite. Customer realized that broadband connectivity optimized both cost and speed. To increase time to market, Customer needed a broadband solutions provider capable of managing the life-cycle processes associated with a broadband VPN-based solution. The challenge was to rollout accessibility to their new applications as efficiently as possible by choosing a provider capable of supplying a fully managed service that included broadband circuit provisioning, VPN router/FW configuration/implementation, ongoing operations, maintenance, monitoring and reporting.

#### The Solution:

The Company selected S2S-Fiberlink to provide their managed VPN services using S2S-Fiberlink's Global Connect (FGC) managed service solution to connect thousands of their participating stores across the USA (additionally, they chose Fiberlink's Extend360 secure mobility laptop solution to enhance accessibility to corporate applications as their sales teams traveled across North America). S2S' ability to obtain the largest broadband footprint available enabled the secure connection of 2600 branch stores. Broadband technologies such as xDSL, Cable Internet, and terrestrial wireless were broadly deployed. Where broadband connectivity was not available, a dial-VPN solution using a "persistent" connection method was deployed as an interim solution until broadband coverage became available. A fully managed hardware-based VPN/Firewall device was also supplied at each store to provide a secure and flexible VPN tunneling architecture.



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**S2S' Global Connect solution consists of the following components:**

- Pre-qualify locations for broadband availability
- Utilize numerous providers (ISPs/ILECs/CLECs) to provision xDSL or cable Internet service (“persistent” dial VPN if no broadband available)
- Broadband connections installed by on-site technicians
- Configure VPN router/FW, ship and install either remotely (over phone with end user) or with on-site technician
- Proactively monitor/manage VPN network via 24x7 NOC
- Dashboard and detailed reporting
- Ongoing operations, trouble resolution (break-fix) and device configuration management

**Implementation:**

- Over 2600 stores on-line and networked
- 750 stores turned-up within 4 months (corporate-owned stores were bulk of order at 550+ sites)
- S2S-Fiberlink designed a mainstream architecture using industry-leading Netscreen technology
  - Redundant head-end VPN concentrators utilizing geographic diversity
  - Stores have primary/secondary VPN tunnels for fail-over/fail-back
  - Engineered distributed hub-spoke topology for higher performance at larger store groups
  - Store hardware is appliance-based router/VPN/firewall device
- Ongoing monitoring and day-day operations of broadband and VPN network

**Success Factors and Challenges:**

- Sophisticated customer understood and appreciated issues and complexity associated with broadband provisioning
- End user’s (store managers) were anxious to get “connected” and worked cooperatively with S2S-Fiberlink
- By utilizing a multitude of broadband providers (DSL/Cable), S2S-Fiberlink afforded the Company the largest possible coverage footprint
- Increasingly wide DSL coverage and more aggressive cable Internet business offerings
- S2S-Fiberlink afforded persistent dial-up VPN solution, where available, to further increase coverage footprint and to establish rapid start-up connectivity during provisioning of broadband circuits
- Contemporary VPN platform (Juniper-Netscreen) allowed flexibility to implement policy change and had future imbedded Anti-Virus and Intrusion Detection/Prevention capabilities
- Crucial to have adequate site information prior to placing broadband order
- Phone lines supplied for ADSL must not be part of a PBX/Centrex phone system
- Inside wiring issues encountered during ADSL/SDSL installations required multiple truck rolls due to delay associated with cost approval