



Becoming a service champion with a modern network



With end-to-end digitalization and a highly available network, the automotive service provider ATU brings top services to its 530 locations.

With more than 48 million registered cars and popular car brands worldwide, Germany is a true heaven for car owners. This is accompanied by an enormous demand for automotive services, which the workshop and specialist retail chain ATU has been meeting for more than 35 years. As Germany's market leader, the aim is to offer customers the best services and fair prices. To ensure that everything runs smoothly behind the scenes, ATU is replacing the previously rigid MPLS network with an agile SD-WAN that securely connects the approximately 530 locations with the company headquarters.

“At some point, the MPLS was no longer up to date and so we looked around for an alternative solution,” explains Volker Hermann, team leader in the “Communication & Collaboration” at ATU. It quickly became clear that the new solution should be a state-of-the-art SD-WAN. “We wanted to use normal broadband access and a secure connection via VPN for our branches. The aim was to establish a solution that was much more attractive and agile than MPLS for site networking,” says Hermann.



„The bottom line for us is that the solution is a enormous gain. We are technically up to date and can access all conditions with maximum flexibility from a central location via the cloud react.“

Volker Hermann, Team Leader in the area of „Communication & Collaboration“ at ATU

Stability up, costs down

The requirements for the new solution were ambitious: Maximum security and flexibility as well as a sustainable reduction in operating costs had to go hand in hand with maximum stability and reliability. The project was commissioned by Thomas Zimmermann, Head of IT Infrastructure at ATU. Those responsible found what they were looking for in the German network and security specialist LANCOM Systems. “Here many things fit together: The SD-WAN focus offers us great savings potential and the VPN tunnel technology allows us to build a highly secure network. At the same time LANCOM products stand for quality and security made in Germany,” says Jürgen Brakert, IT Service Management at ATU.

Managing networks from the cloud

The SD-WAN is the “umbilical cord” for ATU’s entire branch network. It thus forms the backbone for the digitalization of all locations and the connection to the company headquarters. However, the workshop and specialist store operator is also relying on a comprehensive digital network at the local sites. All components - from the branch routers to the Wi-Fi access points and switches to the multi Gigabit gateways in the central office - are managed via a central instance, the LANCOM Management Cloud (LMC). Numerous automated processes ensure efficient and secure management from the cloud. “Particularly during rollout and network expansion, we benefit from functions such as automatic provisioning of all devices,” explains Hermann. “When implementing new hardware, all you need is an internet connection. As soon as the devices are registered in the cloud, the LMC rolls out all configurations automatically.” ATU was supported in the rollout of the network by IT service provider OMREX from Moers.



Maximum availability

Redundancy and reliability play an important role at ATU. After all, the failure of a branch router or a central gateway not only costs nerves, but also time and money. „We use four central gateways, each in a separate data center at two different, geo-redundant locations,“ explains Marcel Greim, network administrator at ATU. In addition, the branches have backup scenarios via mobile radio, which ensure maximum availability.

Numerous applications in the stores

A modem provided by the provider is used for Internet access in the branches. The branch router behind it processes all data traffic and makes various applications available via Citrix, such as access to the website, the ERP system, various information systems or the e-mail client. Via LAN desktop PCs and mobile data collection devices, which are used for stocktaking and for incoming and outgoing goods, are integrated into the network. In the workshops, the mobile wheel alignment stand and the engine tester are integrated into the branch network via a specific WLAN. This ensures that the devices can be used effortlessly throughout the workshop. Visitors can access the Internet at any time via a separate guest WLAN. Waiting times can thus be bridged quickly and easily.

Flexible and modern solution

With the new SD-WAN solution, ATU is relying on a modern and flexible network. „We benefit in many ways in this respect. Having two physical paths into the WAN results in greater reliability,“ says Greim. More flexibility can be achieved through individual decisions as to which services or which destinations individual connections should be addressed.

At the same time, the LANCOM Management Cloud offers various advantages such as flexible multi-client capability and the automatic creation of network relationships. All devices are clearly displayed in the cloud, making it easier to monitor and roll out new configurations. „The bottom line is that the solution is a huge benefit for us. We are technically up to date and can react with maximum flexibility to all circumstances from a central location via the cloud,“ summarizes Hermann. The new network fully meets the high demands of Germany’s market leader in automotive service.





The customer

ATU was founded in 1985 and is now the market leader in the German automotive service sector. Headquartered in Weiden in der Oberpfalz, the company operates around 550 branches in Germany and Austria. The approximately 10,000 employees generate annual sales of around one billion euros. ATU has been part of the European market leader Mobivia since 2016. With 19 brands, over 2,000 workshops and more than 22,000 employees, the group of companies has unique expertise in automotive service.

The ATU business model is based on the combination of master workshops with integrated specialist car dealerships. By providing brand-independent advice, ATU can offer product solutions tailored to individual customer needs. ATU offers comprehensive maintenance and repair services in its master workshops, which are equipped with the latest technology. The company ensures high service quality through regular training at the ATU Academy training facility and through external examinations.

At a glance

The customer

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Products and services:

Services around the car and Distribution of tires, rims and accessories for cars and trucks Two-wheelers

The partner

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Requirements

- Stable performance
- Cost reduction by avoiding expensive and outdated MPLS connections
- Redundant connection

Components used:

Various LANCOM routers, access points and switches, LANCOM Management Cloud