

Pon Dealer Group

Optical fiber is crucial element in transformation to 'Dealer 2.0'



For dealers in today's automotive industry, embracing digital transformation is no longer a choice, but an absolute necessity. Customers' behaviour and needs are the leading factors driving this transformation. Prospective car buyers are increasingly turning to the internet to gather information instead of first visiting a showroom to pick up brochures and view the cars on display. And once in the showroom, they expect the same, digitally inspired experience. Pon Dealer Group, official dealer for the brands Audi, Volkswagen, Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, Seat and Skoda, is keying in to that with a range of innovative applications allied with Eurofiber's future-proof, open fiber-optic network.

The challenge

Rapidly shifting market dynamics

Pon Dealer Group is one of the largest dealerships in the Netherlands, with roughly 400 employees and

showrooms in Amersfoort, Hoogland, Barneveld, Hilversum, Naarden and Nijkerk. In addition to selling new and used cars, Pon Dealer Group offers leasing, maintenance and damage repair services. The organisation is part of Pon Holdings, one of the Netherlands' largest family-owned businesses, with 11,000 employees and over 350 operational centres spread across twelve countries.

Pon Dealer Group was quick to pick up on the rapidly shifting dynamics in the market. The company recognised at an early stage that the internet was displacing the showroom as a source of information. And that customers expected the same easy access to information and extensive self-service features to be available in the Pon Dealer showrooms. In addition, car mechanics saw profound changes in their work. Whereas in the past a well-equipped toolkit and a considerable amount of knowledge and experience were enough for them to do their job, cars nowadays are increasingly 'connected'. As a result, in-car technology and computer systems in the garage play an essential role.

"Data volumes are increasingly expanding, and we expect that to continue for the foreseeable future. Indeed, numerous studies and pilot projects are underway to determine what the workshop of the future will look like. At the same time, demand for bandwidth is increasing as consumers are constantly

using their computers, tablets and smartphones throughout the day", says Rob Op den Winkel, ICT Manager at Pon Dealer Group. He and his employees spend much of their time planning for the future. "One of the developments we are keeping close tabs on is holographic projection of cars in showrooms. This technology has the potential to radically alter the showroom landscape by sharply reducing the number of models on actual display. It is imperative therefore that we prepare for that now.

Extensive digitalisation essential to meet customers' expectations

We develop our own software, including a video content system and a planning application. To this we recently added the development of an interactive tracking system for car orders. This enables the customer to track the entire process from order to manufacture and eventual delivery of their new car, including video images. We quickly realised that our existing network connections and data storage capabilities were inadequate for these developments. "The extensive digitalisation needed to meet customers' expectations, as well as our own operational needs, makes flexible data storage and a reliable, fast and secure network with sufficient bandwidth now and in the future essential", says Op den Winkel. Added to that, Pon Dealer Group is exploring partially migrating to the Cloud, underlining the increased importance of a reliable network.

The solution

Start at the top

"We opted for a different approach. Instead of first tackling the fixed network connections, we began by replacing the WiFi network and core routers in our showrooms", says Op den Winkel. "The idea was that once that was stable, this would also ensure a smooth transition to the new fixed network. That proved to be right. Op den Winkel carefully evaluated several options before selecting the ideal partners to deliver network connections and provide data storage capabilities. "First, I phoned around fellow ICT managers at other companies to ask about their experiences with suppliers and solutions. At the top of my list were questions about reliability, flexibility and security - matters of key importance to us. The experiences I gathered helped me select a choice of

market parties, who were invited to tender a quotation based on our wishes. I also asked them for details about their current range of products and services and what their plans were for the future. Eurofiber promptly submitted their quotation, including technical drawings and further specifications to back up their proposal. Amongst the selected parties, Eurofiber was the only one to align with our thinking and understand all our needs."



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Rob Op den Winkel

ICTManager Pon Dealer Groep

Networks configured for full redundancy

Pon Dealer Group eventually selected a redundant 500 Mb/s MPLS network supported by Eurofiber's fiber-optic network. A link was also established to the core network of Pon Holdings, the parent group. Security is provided by two firewalls in a redundant configuration. It was decided to host the redundant data storage and applications across two locations, including a datacenter belonging to Dataplace, a sister company of Eurofiber. Active WiFi access points, which are connected to the fiber-optic network, are located in the Pon Dealer Group's various showrooms.

The benefits

Faster and future-proof

"The present situation is a substantial upgrade from the past. The network connections are faster and latency has significantly decreased",

Op den Winkel explains with satisfaction. "To give a practical example: in the past, when a car workshop which is part of our group requested a digital repair record, downloading the accompanying photos used to take a long time. Now, the entire file, including photos, is displayed on screen quickly and in one go. It all happens so much quicker than before, exactly as we would wish." The new network connections and hosting facilities are also well-prepared and equipped to handle future applications and the migration of certain software to the Cloud, says Op den Winkel. "Our core network's current bandwidth capacity is 500 Mb/s, and if necessary we can easily grow to 100 Gb/s on Eurofiber's fiber-optic network." He can't speak highly enough about his experience working with Eurofiber. "The fiber-optic network is of the highest quality and very reliable, and as an organisation Eurofiber is professional and capable of acting quickly and flexibly."

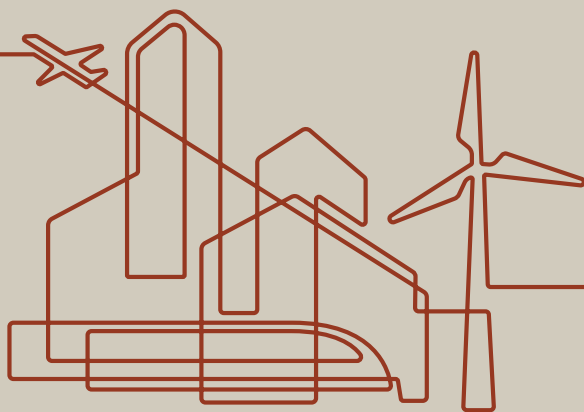
The case

Pon Dealer Group

- Fast and reliable fiber-optic network
- Guaranteed continuity thanks to network architecture configured for redundancy
- Designed for the future with exceptional scalability
- Solid foundation for anticipated explosion in data traffic due to large-scale digitalisation

Curious to hear more about what we could achieve for your organization?

Eurofiber has been a fast-growing international provider of industry-leading digital infrastructure since 2000. Relying on our own fiber optic network and data centers, we provide smart, future-proof solutions for companies, government bodies and non-profit organizations. Customers have complete freedom to choose the services, applications and providers they need, allowing them to tap into the full potential of digital innovation. In addition to our extensive fiber-optic network in the Netherlands and Belgium, along with our data centers in the Netherlands, we also offer solutions for interconnectivity between nearly all high-quality carrier-neutral data centers in the Benelux region. Eurofiber thus lays the foundation for the digital society. Consequently, the Dutch government has granted Eurofiber the status of 'vital infrastructure'.



Eurofiber. Lifeline for the digital society

Safariweg 25-31, 3605 MA Maarssen
Postbus 7072, 3502 KB Utrecht
+31(0)30 242 8700, info@eurofiber.com
eurofiber.com

