



High-Density Data Center Capabilities Drive Car Retailer's Cost Efficiency and Stability

Customer Story

FlexAnywhere™ Solution:
Agility & the Ability to Scale

AutoNation

Flexential and AutoNation migrated the retailer's disaster recovery environment to a data center to ensure its Denver-based production environment was fully replicated to protect the company's data and ensure its availability during an outage.

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Adam Rasner
VP, Technology Operations
AutoNation

The Challenge

Compute challenges detour dependable operations

With its operations and customers' car-buying experiences reliant on the availability of its applications, AutoNation is dedicated to ensuring the stability of its IT systems. When the company migrated its disaster recovery environment to the cloud, it quickly recognized its applications and data were too complex and required too much horsepower for its newly-devised cloud arrangement. The company had two choices: find a cloud provider that could cost-effectively deliver the compute needed to support the business, or move its DR environment to a third-party, on-premise provider that could accommodate its complexity and horsepower requirements.

Flexential Partnership Highlights

- Highly dense footprint reduces cost
- 24/7/365 expert support strengthens partnership
- Leading-edge power and cooling protect core operations

With some legacy systems to consider and a focus on the cost effectiveness of the available options, the company opted to move away from the cloud in favor of a colocation provider to house its DR environment and deliver the capacity it required within a highly-dense footprint.

The Solution

Power and cooling innovations and on-site expertise bolster IT performance and availability

Working with CDW Aggregation, Infrastructure and Managed Services, a consulting firm specializing in technology solutions, AutoNation created a high-density colocation configuration that satisfied its compute needs, managed cabling complexities, and enabled growth and scalability – all while controlling costs. The challenge was now to find a cutting-edge colocation provider that could build this blueprint and provide the power and cooling resources to manage it.

The company researched and toured several providers' data centers but found that many were dated and cluttered. Even some of the newer facilities lacked the high-density framework AutoNation required. However, the company found what it was looking for in a Flexential Texas data center. Through its high-density test bed, the facility offered AutoNation a first-hand look at how it supports the power and cooling requirements of a highly dense, hyperconverged server deployment.

"Flexential was able to achieve for us what few providers could: a high-density DR environment at one of its newest and most innovative data centers," said Adam Rasner, VP, Technology Operations at AutoNation.

Purposefully designed, constructed and operated to deliver high-density capabilities, the facility's high ceilings and maximized floor space enable density levels up to 2000 watts per square foot – three times what most competitors can offer.

With superior network and cooling abilities and a people-powered perspective on service, the Flexential Texas data center provided an ideal mix of technological prowess and unmatched customer service. Its 24/7 expert support and commitment to partnering with its customers made Flexential the clear choice in providing AutoNation with a collocated DR solution.

"I can sense from the Flexential team that we're an important account to them. There is a sense of urgency when we need something. They value our business and it shows."

Adam Rasner
VP, Technology Operations
AutoNation

Flexential Solution Portfolio



Colocation



Disaster Recovery

The Results

High-density configuration drives down costs

Flexential and AutoNation migrated the retailer's DR environment to the new data center to ensure its Denver-based production environment was fully replicated to protect the company's data and ensure its availability during an outage.

"I am really impressed with the smooth process," notes Rasner. "When we gave them the rack elevations and the proposed design they didn't blink at all, and when we actually implemented it they offered to go even more dense."

The move also enabled the company to attain significant cost-savings by reducing its original 20-cabinet, 5 kW per cabinet configuration to seven cabinets with almost 20 kW per cabinet. This consolidated layout reduced cabling complexity and the expense associated with more floor space and wiring.

Additionally, this hybrid solution allowed AutoNation to leverage its existing legacy applications while experiencing the innovations inherent in Flexential's ground-breaking facility and the outstanding service, expertise and flexibility delivered by its team of dedicated professionals. "I can sense from the Flexential team that we're an important account to them," says Rasner. "There is a sense of urgency when we need something. They value our business and it shows."

With a solid DR solution in place – and the power and cooling capacity to ensure the safety and proper maintenance of its equipment – AutoNation protected its core operations and provided the security to maintain operations during an outage. The company also empowered its IT environment to seamlessly scale to keep pace with its corporate growth and maximize its operations to deliver a superior experience for its customers. With a national footprint of data centers in geographically-diverse locations, Flexential is perfectly poised to support AutoNation in other markets as the car retailer continues to expand.

Robust capabilities pave a path for continued growth

As AutoNation continues to position itself for growth, it remains focused on the opportunities that technological advancements can deliver. With an aging production site in Denver, the company is considering transitioning its primary environment to the new data center and establishing an alternate DR site – an undertaking Flexential is ready to facilitate.

"AutoNation made a substantial investment in this project and it's critical to our go-forward plans, not only for DR but for our future growth," says Rasner. "We're very pleased with the decision we made and we're happy to partner going forward."