



Putting more power under their internet hood

- **Business needs** – Support for vehicle diagnostics applications and automotive shop business processes
- **Networking solution** – AT&T Dedicated Internet and AT&T Office@Hand help staff provide the outstanding customer service for which the busy shop has become known
- **Business value** – Highly reliable dedicated internet and phone services support continued growth
- **Industry focus** – Fleet, diesel truck, and automotive repair shop
- **Size** – 18 bays

About Dennis Road Automotive

Dennis Road Automotive is a top fleet and diesel truck shop in the Dallas, Texas, area. Its talented technicians also provide automotive maintenance and repair work for foreign and domestic cars. Dennis Road Automotive has always been family-owned and operated. Current owner, Rosie Dunn, has taken over for her dad, Roy Prestigiacomo, who founded the company in 1969.

The situation

Automotive services have changed dramatically in the five decades since Dennis Road Automotive opened its doors. The shop needed highly secure, reliable connectivity to perform complex vehicle diagnostics and enable vital automobile software updates. It also required phone service to support responsive customer care.

Solution

Dennis Road Automotive relies on AT&T Dedicated Internet Service to support the outstanding service that its loyal customers expect. The premier internet service delivers dedicated, highly secure connectivity that enables important services the automotive shop provides. The shop also uses AT&T Office@Hand for voice, fax, text messaging, and audio and video conferencing.

Honesty and loyalty

Roy Prestigiacomio started Dennis Road Automotive to provide top-quality auto repair and maintenance services to drivers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. He created an honest repair shop with great customer service and reasonable rates, and hired a professional, respectful staff.

James Craig, Dennis Road Automotive general manager, said that formula has created loyalty among staff and customers. Craig has worked at the shop for almost 30 years, beginning as a service writer and working his way up to a top management position. “We have a lot of long-time employees that have stuck with us and quite a few that have retired with us over that time,” he said.

Craig and his team are proud to have served three generations of customers. “We have people driving quite the distance from Garland, Mesquite, Allen, and McKinney because either they saw the reviews or because they used to come with their mom and dad,” he said. “They know the loyalty and honesty, and they’ll drive that far to leave a car with us.”

The company operates 18 bays and two outdoor racks that enable mechanics to work on tall cargo vans and transit vehicles.

Above and beyond other repair shops

While Dennis Road Automotive will perform simple tasks like oil changes, most customers choose the shop to provide all the necessary vehicle repairs and maintenance. “Our oil changes take a little longer than

the five-minute oil change places because we look the car all over,” Craig said. “And we keep records of all the work we do.”

If a repair is needed, staff diligently research car manufacturer websites to see if the vehicle is under warranty or if there has been a recall. “We let the customer know so that they won’t incur a cost,” Craig said.

“AT&T Business has been around long enough that we felt it could handle our needs.”

James Craig

General Manager
Dennis Road Automotive, Inc.

That strategy has won business for Dennis Road Automotive, including a fleet management contract that came about after Craig determined that a rear differential problem was covered under warranty when a competitor insisted it was not. “The customer asked what we did, and I told them we just did what the other shop should have done,” Craig said. “Since then, we have this full fleet’s worth of business.”

The shop also takes a long view of its customers’ vehicles. “We let them know if the brakes are almost gone, or if they’ll need a gasket for the oil pan or some front end work in six months or a year, so they can budget for the work,” Craig said.

Support for sophisticated car technology

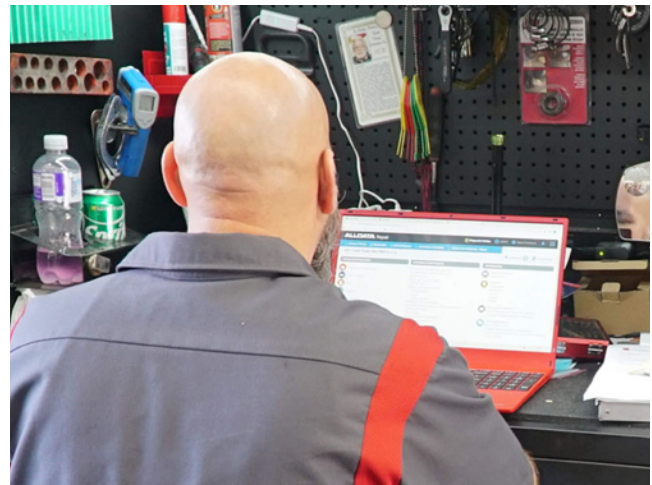
Dennis Road Automotive's business model is clearly different from that of cookie cutter franchises, according to Craig. "We're an independent shop, and we've managed to stay successful through all the changes in the automotive business."

These changes include dealing with vehicles' increasing sophistication. "Cars have to be programmed now," Craig noted. "It's just not a matter of doing oil changes and tire rotations and engine replacements anymore. We have to do computer updates to make sure they have the latest programming that manufacturers require. And to do that, we needed a homerun for our phone and internet connections."

The shop's location, however, made it difficult to get fast, reliable communications services. "Our phone lines would go out when it rained," Craig said. "Or they'd crackle and there'd be all kinds of noise."

Craig continued, "And if you're programming a car and the internet goes down, you can ruin the car's computer. If a computer chip gets fried, you've got to replace the computer, so that's like \$1,500."

Speedy, reliable internet and phone service is a must, he said. "We needed a good quality, crisp internet line and phone line."



Highly secure, dedicated service

The shop had plenty of options when it came to phone and internet services. "We were getting these ads every day and salespersons would come in," Craig said. "AT&T Business has been around long enough that we felt it could handle our needs."

Dennis Road Automotive chose AT&T Dedicated Internet Service to support its growing business. Now the shop has highly reliable internet service and guaranteed speed, no matter how many users are on its network. The constant connection protects against costly outages.

The shop relies on the guaranteed upload and download speeds that AT&T Dedicated Internet offers, with 24/7 proactive network monitoring and ticketing backed by industry-leading service level agreements.

"We have 13 employees and at any given time at least 10 or 11 of them are online. We have had no issues at all. The AT&T service is seamless."

James Craig

General Manager, Dennis Road Automotive, Inc.

No issues, enhanced productivity

Staff saw an immediate difference once the services were installed. “There was less complaining from my crew,” Craig said. “No more issues with programming a car, doing a state inspection, or dropping calls. It used to be that every time I walked in the door, I’d hear that the internet was down. Or they couldn’t attempt to program a car because a bad storm was coming. Now it does not matter.”

The strength and reliability of the service has enabled Dennis Road Automotive to equip each technician with a laptop to enhance productivity. “At the first of the year we gave each technician a computer at his station, and that required a lot of internet strength,” Craig said. “We have 13 employees and at any given time at least 10 or 11 of them are online. We have had no issues at all.” That gives Craig peace of mind, especially when the technicians are downloading software updates to a vehicle. “The AT&T service is seamless—and I’m not blowing smoke.”

Protection against lost connections

Craig believes the strength of AT&T connectivity will support the shop well as it continues to grow. “We originally signed up for 40 megabytes per second, but I wanted to go for 50 just for the surety of it. We decided on AT&T Business because the money we’re going to save in missed phone calls or emails is well worth it. We said, ‘Go big or don’t go at all.’ We went big and we have not had issue one with it.”

The reliable connectivity also enables the shop to save money by ordering parts online. “We order a lot of parts,” Craig said. “If we had storms, we’d have to use our phones to call into the parts warehouse, so we’d lose our discounts. Any time we talk to a live person, we lose a pretty good discount.”

“AT&T takes care of its customers.”

James Craig
General Manager
Dennis Road Automotive, Inc.

Making connections

Building relationships is something the successful automotive shop knows a lot about. Craig said he counts on his relationship with his AT&T Business account team, whose expertise makes Dennis Road Automotive more valuable to its customers. “My account manager from AT&T Business is wonderful,” Craig shared. “He follows through on everything.”

He took the account rep’s advice and replaced old copper phone lines with AT&T Office@Hand, which delivers highly reliable voice services, fax, text messaging, and audio and video conferencing.



“We had a setup that would ring into my cell phone if someone called the shop after hours, and we were able to keep it that way,” Craig said. “So, if a customer breaks down on a Friday night or Sunday morning, he doesn’t have to leave a message and have someone get back to him on Monday.”

The new technology seamlessly enables the same outstanding customer service the shop has always provided.

Getting the best for the company

Change can be difficult for organizations. Dennis Road Automotive minimizes the difficulties by seeking employee input before making changes. “Our success is based on two things,” Craig said. “First, we look at what our needs are, and second we get the opinions of everybody in the shop. It’s not just Rosie or me that makes all the decisions.”

Craig acknowledged that the consensus approach may not work for every business, but said he takes pride in the shop’s expertise and ability to work together. “There’s nobody sitting in a paneled office trying to make decisions for Dennis Road Automotive without knowing what it takes to run the business.”

Craig said he will count on AT&T Business to help Dennis Road Automotive as it makes other technology choices down the road. “We’ve grown tremendously over the last four or five years,” Craig said. “We may need to update our phone or internet systems as we expand. We have to change with the technology. And we plan to stick with AT&T Business. We know how important loyalty is. It’s our business model, and AT&T’s. Their customer service is outstanding. AT&T Business takes care of its customers.”