



Skyjacker Suspensions boosts business with a lift from AT&T Dedicated Internet

- **Business needs** – Family-owned Skyjacker Suspensions needed speedier, more reliable connectivity to handle a pandemic-driven surge in orders.
- **Networking solution** – AT&T Dedicated Internet provides a dedicated connection to the internet that can handle blazing speeds with consistent, guaranteed bandwidth and industry-leading performance, helping Skyjacker easily manage their historic sales rush.
- **Business value** – Efficiency and outstanding customer service.
- **Industry focus** – Automotive aftermarket manufacturing
- **Size** – Privately held

About Skyjacker Suspensions

Skyjacker Suspensions was a passion project established by Lonnie McCurry, Sr. in 1974. He turned his hobby of racing and mud-digging into a prosperous family business that manufactures suspension lift kits, leveling kits, shocks, stabilizers, apparel, gear, and dozens of other suspension products. The business has grown from a one-bay garage in McCurry's back yard in West Monroe, Louisiana, into an international manufacturing warehouse with eight buildings and another in the works.

The situation

While Skyjacker started out selling to individual car enthusiasts, business-to-business (B2B) orders soon outpaced the company's consumer sales. That, however, changed dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic. People working from home had more time to spend on their cars. Consumer sales exploded, and Skyjacker's network struggled to support the orders flowing in. The company needed a better way to handle all new business and continue to satisfy longtime customers.

Solution

Skyjacker chose AT&T Dedicated Internet, which provides the customer their own dedicated internet connection which they can manage and can keep from getting over-subscribed, even during peak usage times. The new service and outstanding support from AT&T enabled Skyjacker to handle rapidly increasing sales. The company is also well positioned for continuing growth.



“The world is changing and becoming more digital. We have to roll with the flow of change.”

Malerie Pike
Marketing Manager, Skyjacker Suspensions

Rolling with the flow of change

Skyjacker has become known the world over for the quality of its vehicle suspension lift kits. Nearly five decades after Lonnie and Nell McCurry started the company, it remains a family business. Lonnie McCurry, Sr., has been named one of the nation's most influential people in the off-road industry. McCurry's son Lonnie, Jr., is now president, and his daughter, Cindy

Acree, is the company's chief financial officer. Several grandchildren work for the company, including Acree's daughter Malerie Pike, who is Skyjacker's marketing manager.

“There are six or seven grandchildren working here,” Pike said. “And we have many other employees that have been with us from the beginning and are part of our family. We're really blessed.” Treating employees and customers like family has always been an important value for Skyjacker.

Over the years the company has been part of some unusual projects. They were part of a plot line on the T.V. series “Law and Order SVU.” They were also named the official suspension for the jeeps used in the Lara Croft: Tomb Raider movies. And the company became a sponsor of the popular “Duck Dynasty” reality show based on another West Monroe family business.

Pike believes the company's success stems from the drive, dedication, and passion of the people of Skyjacker Suspensions. “We have some really great people here,” she said. “They're helping push our 47-year-old company to stay up to date. We've been used to doing things a certain way, but the world is changing and becoming more digital. We have to roll with the flow of change.”

Steady growth and a shift in sales

Skyjacker sells its products in all 50 states and across the globe. It is one of the last family-owned businesses focusing solely on suspensions. “We were one of the first ever and are one of the last that's still standing,” Pike said. “And it's still owned by the original owner. I think that's pretty cool.”

Its customers are an eclectic bunch. “We have our everyday drivers,” Pike said. “Just pavement pounders who just want to level their vehicle or have a small lift. But we also have the major off-road enthusiasts. They live for the outdoors and adventure and want to rock-crawl and go to Moab a few times a year. We have such a wide range of customers.”

The company originally sold its products to car enthusiasts by mail order, advertising in off-road magazines, said Jeff Worley, Skyjacker’s controller. “Over time, probably the last 20 or 25 years, they transitioned to a business-to-business model and started doing a lot more stock orders with wholesale and multiline distributors.”

Adapting to the electronic age

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and people had more time on their hands, Skyjacker’s retail business spiked. “People love to work on their vehicles and modify them, whether they’re old or new,” Worley said. “And we offer a great product that makes things look cool.”

Website and retail sales picked up tremendously during the pandemic—and continue to grow. “We’re continuing our B2B sales, but with COVID-19 our consumer side really took off,” Worley said. Online purchases increased to the point that the company had a tough time keeping up.

IT Manager Mike Ardoin said this could be due to the reluctance of the automotive aftermarket business to change. “It seems like the industry is always among the last to adopt new and emerging technology, and Skyjacker is no different,” Ardoin said. “Sometimes we were comfortable with doing business the way that we’ve always done things. But over the last few years,

with changes in technology, we’ve been forced to progress and adapt.”

Businesses of all sizes are updating their processes. “We’re no longer trading faxes anymore or having people send mail orders to us,” Ardoin said. “We’re trying to do these things electronically and immediately. We needed a system that could make us more efficient, more current, and more accurate to support the surge in orders. And having a nice, steady, open internet connection is vitally important for us to be able to facilitate that for ourselves and for our customers. And so we had to move.”

Worley concurred. He cited a need to move from paper-based processes to Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). “We needed a bigger pipe coming into our facility so we could have EDI capability,” he said.

Bountiful bandwidth, seamless logins

Based on helpful guidance and advice from AT&T Business, Skyjacker officials opted to deploy AT&T Dedicated Internet, a fiber-based service. The fiber technology facilitates the high-speed transfer of information and delivers an outstanding experience, even during times of peak usage.

The services are a fit for Skyjacker, making it easier for them to connect with customers for placing and fulfilling orders and providing outstanding customer service. The services also provide the infrastructure to support many Skyjacker processes, including hosting its own Exchange Server and operating an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system that manages the company’s business processes.

“We also have multiple file servers,” Ardoin said.

“Having a dedicated service through AT&T is going to enable quite a few people to be able to log in like they’re sitting here in the building. And I won’t have to worry about bandwidth for people that want to connect through a VPN.”

An infrastructure for the future

The AT&T Fiber backbone has been installed in about half Skyjacker’s properties. “We still have some more to go, but we’re getting to where we can handle anything electronic, such as starting to use tablets in the warehouse,” Worley said. “Wherever this company wants to go, our infrastructure is not going to limit us. That’s what we want.”

Ardoin looks forward to implementing an Electronic Data Interchange system to completely digitize the company’s current processes. “And once we do that, we are going to be constantly trading thousands of documents back and forth all day long between us and our customers. Having a dedicated line is going to be a necessity for us.”

Worley appreciates the service level agreements that support uptime for the services AT&T provides. He likes knowing that there probably won’t be another day without telephone services, as the company once experienced with its former provider. He also expects AT&T Dedicated Internet to make the company more efficient and relevant. “Once we start moving customers on to the EDI system, we could potentially increase sales and become even more customer-oriented,” he said.

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Jeff Worley

Controller, Skyjacker Suspensions

Ardoin believes services from AT&T Business will support more automation and ultimately free staff from tedious manual processes. “It’s going to allow members of our team to be available when they’re needed, whether that’s reaching out to current customers or making cold calls to help us drum up new sales,” he said. “It’s going to make us more efficient all the way across the board. And it’s going to allow us to more easily and readily facilitate the needs of our customers. We’ve struggled with streamlining our business to be more efficient in the past, because we didn’t have the infrastructure to do so. Now we will.”

Responsiveness and a clean deployment

Ardoin said AT&T has been there for Skyjacker and responsive to their needs. “Anytime I’ve ever had a question, our account team has gotten right back to me,” he said. “They point me in the right direction to the people at AT&T that I need to talk to. I appreciate reaching out to AT&T and getting a resolution or an answer back fairly quickly.”

Ardoyn has been responsible for managing the installation of AT&T Dedicated Internet. He's appreciated the customer-oriented support from the AT&T Business team: "It's been a very simple process because of the help and support they provided," he said. "Getting answers in a timely manner just made everything so much better for us. We smoothly got everything connected and finalized in the process."

Worley was also impressed with the installation process. "It was very clean and simple," he said. "They accommodated our requests about placement because Mr. McCurry is very particular about his property and his buildings. There were no issues."



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Mike Ardoyn
IT Manager, Skyjacker Suspensions

Sky high potential

Based on enhanced infrastructure, Skyjacker managers' believe their consumer sales will continue to grow. "We're going to see a massive influx of orders to process," Ardoyn said. "We're going to have information flowing out of our system to keep the customers updated on the status of their orders."

He added: "Having that AT&T fiber-based, dedicated connection means we're not going to have to worry about whether we have enough bandwidth to get all of this information out of our system and to our customers."

Pike believes the services from AT&T Business will continue to open doors for Skyjacker. "We have so much more potential now that our consumer side has taken off," she said. "Our focus is on making everything more efficient."

Although the company has been around for 47 years, Pike believes they're on the threshold of a new chapter of growth. "There's so much more we can do," she said. "Moving forward, as we get closer to our 50th anniversary and past that point, we just want to be everywhere, and be good at it, and efficient with the information we're able to process."