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Alvin Ng, Managing Director of Star Motors

Company name:

Star Motors

Industry:

Automotive

Company size:

6 employees

Company website:

starmotorservice.com

Geographic region:

California, USA

Star Motors repairs bad WiFi with Orbi Pro WiFi 6

SUMMARY

California-based Star Motors can now provide both staff and customers with ultra-fast WiFi that is always reliable, right to every corner of the site. Whether supporting the team when they carry out automotive software or firmware updates, or to keep customers occupied while waiting for their vehicles, the Orbi Pro WiFi 6 system from NETGEAR has helped Star Motors take WiFi to a whole new level, with flexibility, capacity and coverage for years to come.

BACKGROUND

Located in Sacramento, Star Motors is an automotive service and repair company specializing in Mercedes Benz, BMW, Lexus, and other high-end imports. Team members have over 20 years' experience between them, and pride themselves on excellent customer service. Independently owned, Star Motors is the recipient of an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau.

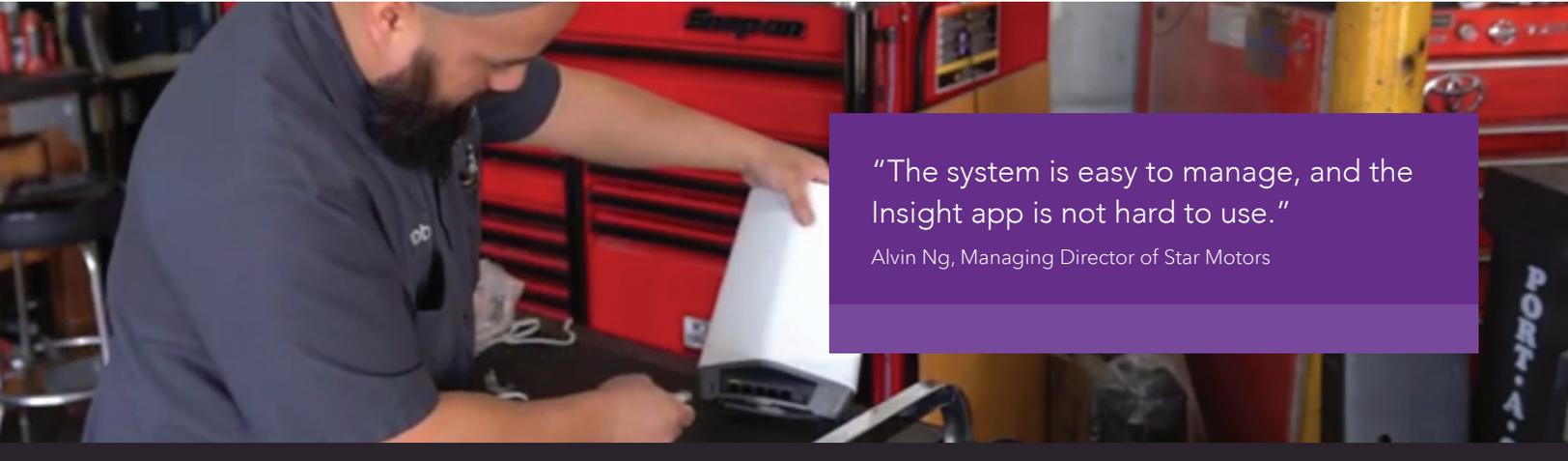
WiFi has long played an important role in Star Motors daily operations, across its IT system, WiFi access for customers, and also for staff working on the shop floor. That dependency on WiFi has increased. For instance, these days, with modern vehicles containing so many electronics, carrying out software and hardware firmware updates has become an integral part of a mechanic's skillset, requiring reliable network connectivity.

THE CHALLENGE

While the previous WiFi system had worked fine for years, growing demand on bandwidth meant it began to reach its limits. Says Alvin Ng, managing director of Star Motors, "If the WiFi signal drops while we're carrying out an update, a module could lock up or we have to start over. That takes up valuable time, which is not good for us or our customers." The team tried to overcome the problem by running Ethernet cables to where vehicles were being serviced or fixed, but that was not ideal on a busy shopfloor.

The spread-out configuration of the site was also a challenge, with WiFi proving weak or unavailable in some areas. That matters, because as Alvin explains, "Before Covid-19, customers could wait in the reception area. Now, they have to wait outside, where the WiFi may not work well. Customers expect good WiFi, so that they can access videos or whatever they need to do to kill time while their vehicles are being worked on."





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THE SOLUTION

Between visitors and employees, all with multiple devices that need or want robust connectivity, it was clearly time to look for a WiFi upgrade. Alvin sought advice from NETGEAR, which had provided the existing WiFi system six years previously. NETGEAR’s recommendation was the Orbi Pro WiFi 6 Tri-Band AX6000 WiFi system, which as well as supporting coverage of up to 6000 square feet, also provides between 40-70 percent speed gains compared to WiFi 5. Just as important is the way it works: unlike previous WiFi standards, WiFi 6 can treat all devices on the system equally, so every application and user receive constant, reliable high-speed connectivity.

While the Orbi Pro system is sufficient on its own, Star Motors also chose a NETGEAR Smart Managed Plus Ethernet switch, to which the Orbi Pro system is connected via a 2.5Gb port. NETGEAR Smart Managed Plus network switches provide entry-level management for essential services, with support for QoS and VLANs, plus the ability to set priority for voice, video and other data traffic.

All the network equipment can be controlled by simple-to-use and intuitively-designed Insight solution, NETGEAR’s cloud-based network management portal, via its mobile app or a web interface. Alvin explains: “Our guys are not network experts, so the equipment needs to be easy to set up and maintain.”

THE RESULTS

Setting up Orbi Pro took just a few minutes, as shown in an unboxing video, featuring Star Motors’ Rob Yang. Using the Insight app on his smartphone, Rob hit the add button, Insight then scanned the QR code, asked him to name the location of the main unit and the satellite, and the network was ready to go. Now that the system is installed, the team can use Insight

to instantly troubleshoot and make any configurations changes as required. Says Alvin, “The system is easy to manage, and the Insight app is not hard to use.”

Star Motors has located the main Orbi Pro unit in the company’s break room, and a satellite unit in a storeroom in the shop. Says Alvin Ng, “This provides good coverage everywhere. We are paying for 25Mb and with the Orbi Pro system, we are now getting that, even out in the parking lot or by the perimeter fence.”

MORE BENEFITS

Plus, multiple devices and users can be connected at the same time, without any compromise to speed and reliability. “With this new system, we’ve become future-proof,” says Alvin. “I’m happy with the product, it was well worth the decision to upgrade, and is already demonstrating its value to our business.”

As multiple, distinct WiFi networks can be created within the Orbi Pro system, Star Motors is able to offer guest access entirely separate to the company’s own WiFi. Alvin points out another feature he likes: “When customers log into the guest network, they are presented with a disclaimer about safe internet use. It’s a small thing but it adds to our professional image.”

Alvin has some final advice for any other auto firm or small shop thinking about upgrading their wireless connectivity: “Strong WiFi is a good investment for your business, your staff and your customers. Reliable, fast WiFi is everything now.”

