

Gulf Coast & Uplevel Bring Luxury Security Service to Mercedes-Benz

Mike DiNapolis, owner of Gulf Coast Computer Solutions, recently improved security by adding Uplevel services to the mix at Mercedes-Benz of Covington without adding cost or complexity.



With more small businesses relying on experts to keep their company safe, top-tier managed service providers (MSPs) are finding new ways to improve security—without adding cost or complexity. Mike DiNapolis, owner of Gulf Coast Computer Solutions, recently accomplished this goal by adding Uplevel services to the mix at Mercedes-Benz of Covington.

Upon taking over management of the dealership’s information technology (IT) systems, Gulf Coast, provider of managed IT solutions across Louisiana, sought to enhance cybersecurity by adding domain management services like those provided by Microsoft’s Active Directory to handle logins, user groups, passwords, and the like.

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Mike DiNapolis
Owner, Gulf Coast Computer Solutions

The provider evaluated several solutions prior to discovering Uplevel’s newly announced domain management services, a more elegant and cost-effective solution. “The Uplevel solution is ideal for small to medium-sized businesses that don’t have Active Directory services but can really benefit from them,” says DiNapolis. “Mercedes-Benz of Covington had 40 to 50 users on their network and no budget for adding another network or file server. We were able to do everything they needed with the Uplevel gateway without most people being aware of any change or disruption in service.”

Right-sizing Domain Management – Security, Simplicity, and Savings

Prior to encountering Uplevel, Gulf Coast explored several alternatives for adding domain services. “We had been looking for an alternative to Microsoft for a while,” DiNapolis says. “Their prices and licenses are not feasible for a lot of smaller companies, many of which have the same needs as larger clients for compliance reasons.”

To fill the gap, Gulf Coast deployed JumpCloud but found the cost to be “steep” for what the solution provided. The MSP also looked at Clear OS, another software-based solution but found it “clunky” as well.

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Uplevel's solution became available late in 2019 and quickly proved to be the best alternative. "We popped Uplevel in, ran some tests and everything looked good right away," says DiNapolis. "We used the documentation and didn't even need to call Support to complete the install."

The MSP quickly migrated nearly all the dealership's user profiles from JumpCloud to the new solution and began realizing a savings of nearly fifty percent. Like the initial installation, DiNapolis says Gulf Coast is finding remote management and configuration to be equally efficient. "For our largest clients, we might go onsite once a week but lots of things pop up in between visits and it's imperative to be able to do everything remotely. That's been easy with Uplevel."

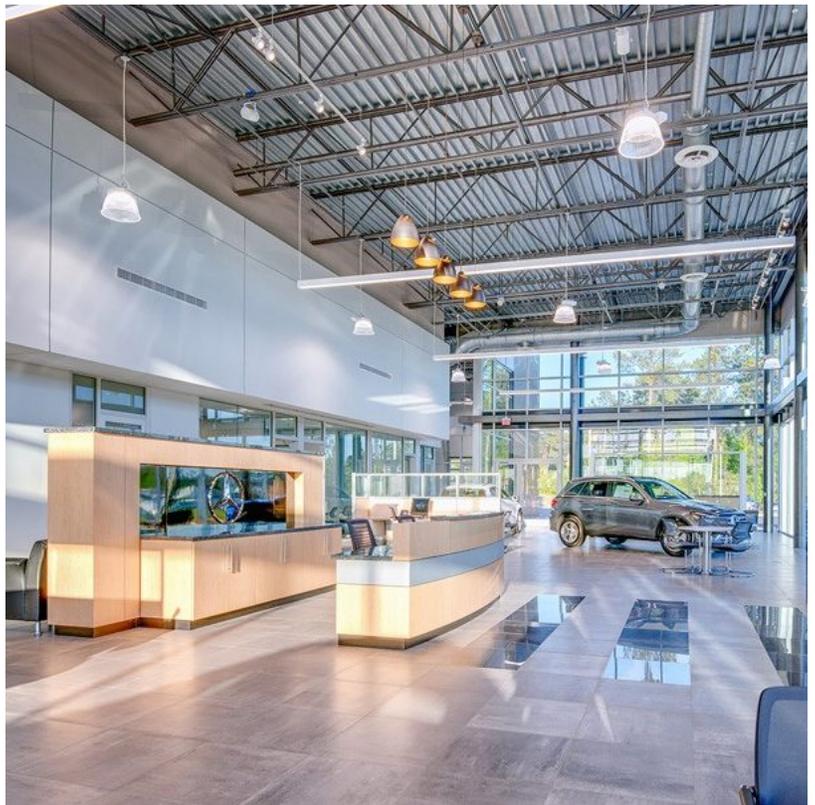
Uplevel's Active Directory capabilities let Gulf Coast address HIPAA and other customer requirements for compliance and security while adding routing, file storage, and other capabilities where needed. According to DiNapolis, "We like the way it works better than JumpCloud and love the fact that we can have a Level 1 technician go in and hook up the device."

Last but not least, the cost of the Uplevel solution does not go up on a per-user or per-device basis as the system scales – a major savings versus competing solutions.

Upleveling Cybersecurity for other SMBs

Along with the domain management services added in 2019, a single Uplevel gateway delivers enterprise-class routing, firewall, file server, virtual private network (VPN), SD-WAN, and other capabilities without MSPs or customers ever having to buy equipment. The subscription model lets MSPs introduce enterprise-grade networking gear, reduce customers' outlay of capital, and easily manage services in real time via the cloud.

Along with saving customers thousands of dollars to build out new sites, Uplevel makes it simple to upgrade individual capabilities such as firewall and Active Directory services as needed. "This product really fills a niche for customers that have been stuck between a rock and a hard place because they can't afford the cost and complexity of enterprise-class solutions like Active Directory," says DiNapolis.



Going forward, Gulf Coast envisions deploying Uplevel technology at other clients to upgrade security and add redundancy. "We have some smaller clients still using consumer-grade routers from Linksys and Netgear that we will be looking to upgrade to a business-class solution," DiNapolis says. "Uplevel was exactly what we needed at Mercedes-Benz of Covington and it would work great for other small to medium-sized businesses we work with as well."

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