



Howards Motor Group

Working with Node4 has helped Howards Motor Group to make their IT much more reliable.



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Whilst old-school dealerships are perhaps still shying away from technology, the biggest and best are fully dedicated to modernising the way that people buy cars, so that they get the best experience when looking and ultimately the best car for them.

Howards is also using technology to aid the sales process. The company securely records and retains the necessary data to make sure that it has all the market information it needs to evolve as buyer preferences adapt and to always be one step ahead of the competition.

The Customer

Howards Motor Group has over 40 years of automotive heritage. Established as a single, family-owned garage in 1972, the business' committed approach to great customer experience means that it now has 14 dealerships, including Weston-Super-Mare, Taunton, Yeovil and Dorchester.

Howards' mission is to make sure that buyers have the best possible experience they could ever have buying a car. For many, this means a relaxed environment where staff can easily, and promptly, help them with information and find the right car for them, in the right place at the right time. Behind the scenes, customers would probably be surprised how much the use of stable and reliable technology underpins and supports this great service.



The Challenge

"At the point we engaged with Node4, we really needed to upgrade our systems. They were starting to fail us drastically. We wanted reliability, stability and a much more enterprise-grade, professional approach which could support our expansion plans," said Group IT Manager, Mike Devonald.

The systems in place at the time were making it far harder for the team to do their job. The final blow was being hit by a virus and losing one server. They wanted something easy to integrate and use, and they wanted it within a short time-frame.

Mike and the team knew that the new system needed to be scalable and easy to deploy so that they could react quickly to opportunities. They wanted to have the agility to respond within weeks, rather than months, and a consistent user interface so staff could effectively use any machine in any dealership.

The Solution

Node4 delivered a consistent, multi-functional desktop environment, enterprise-grade connectivity, secure data back up and virtual servers, securely housed in Tier-3 data centres. Working together also allowed centralised management of the systems.

The Benefits

Technology is now the backbone of the business, supporting desktop, telecoms and ultimately all interaction with customers. It joins up the different sites and allows a vastly accelerated expansion of current sites and set up on new ones and new staff.

"We have recently purchased a campervan business and are building a great, new dealership to accommodate it. In the past, it would have been very different, but nowadays, we aren't worried as we know what needs to be done and that Node4 are there to support us," Mike continued.

The systems Node4 has put in place means that Howards can now easily deploy new locations and can make changes itself far easier than ever before. *"This gives us great control over our own systems and means we can make necessary changes at the drop of a hat,"* Mike said.

The Feedback

Howards chose to work with Node4 because it was looking for a professional provider with lots of knowledge and specialists in each area.

"The integration is a great story," Mike said. *"The older systems decided to crumble, just as we started to integrate the new ones, so we needed Node4's response times to be very short. They were great. They managed to get everything working for us at an extraordinary rate and we knew we had made the right choice."*

Whenever Howards has experienced any issues - for example, a switch going down - Node4 has been able to deploy hardware and resolve any challenges very quickly.

"The benefits of having great connectivity between sites is immense. We don't have to worry about systems working and Node4 has made some great suggestions to make our tech better. We have had a great experience with every area of Node4 and what they deliver is a brilliant addition to the business."

Key Outcomes:

- **Enterprise-grade connectivity.**
- **Desktop-as-a-service for streamlined activities.**
- **All of the Howards sites are joined up.**
- **Easy to deploy new systems at different locations.**