

Channels

A publication of
HUGHES
 An EchoStar Company

BUSINESS INSIGHT

Spotlight on Springleaf Financial



For 20 years, Springleaf Financial Services has been a loyal Hughes customer, even as its network needs have rapidly evolved in response to dramatic changes in the banking industry and in how people conduct business. That loyalty stems from the strong collaborative partnership that has developed through the years and from Springleaf's confidence that Hughes will rise up to meet any challenge and solve any problem.

"Hughes is our one-stop-shop, whatever it is we need in our world, we know they can provide it," Tom Peake, Springleaf's vice president of technical services said. "We haven't yet come up with anything for which they haven't been able to say, 'We can do that for you.'" This one-stop-shop level of support comes in part from HughesON™, a comprehensive suite of

managed network and digital media solutions designed for multi-branch, distributed enterprises like Springleaf.

The long-term relationship began in 1995 with a Hughes VSAT satellite networking solution to connect a large number of Springleaf's branches across the country. The ability and flexibility to quickly add sites or change locations made VSAT the logical choice; Springleaf typically leases office space to better target branch locations to a dynamic customer market.

"We will move a branch location over the course of a weekend," said Peake. "We'll close a branch on a Friday, move locations, and install a satellite dish over the weekend so we can be up and running at the new location on Monday. A Hughes VSAT solution made this possible for 15 years."



Hybrid Solutions for Peak Performance

Yet over the past five years, there has been a rapid shift in needs and requirements within the banking industry. Loan applications have moved from paper to online submissions. Internet demand has increased as branches have been directed to interface online with local courts and government offices. Customer expectations have also evolved.

Springleaf approached Hughes to discuss new solution options for these emerging needs. In the end a High-Availability Network (HAN) environment was implemented combining both terrestrial broadband and satellite platforms, where VSAT serves as a backup in the event a digital line or connection within the terrestrial network goes down. Springleaf also depends on VSAT to multicast software code and patch updates overnight. As the terrestrial network expanded, Springleaf's utilization

of VSAT may have been less, but it was no less critical. Today, with HughesOn, SpringLeaf is assured the coverage, scalability, and performance the company demands.

Long-Time Partners, Long-Term Success

The give and take of open dialogue between Springleaf and Hughes has been imperative to the long-term success of the relationship. This is particularly true during pilot testing and the deployment of new technologies, when issues can arise.

"Hughes is both an engineering company and a service provider themselves, so we know if we have a problem, someone at Hughes is going to be able to resolve that problem," Peake said. In addition to candid conversations, Springleaf executives participate in the annual Hughes User Group (HUG), an opportunity organized by Hughes and led by the HUG Board that brings together customers and subject matter experts to discuss technical innovations and business trends and challenges.

As the company has demonstrated, Springleaf is attuned to the swift pace of change. While the company deployed Wi-Fi in its headquarters only a couple of years ago, Peake recognizes that customers today expect Wi-Fi wherever they go—even when running a quick errand to the bank. Springleaf is committed to leveraging its partnership with Hughes so that the company can remain responsive and create a secure branch environment that meets the needs of employees and customers alike, even as those needs grow and change.

The Hughes User Group



The Hughes User Group, or HUG, is an annual conference designed to keep Hughes and its enterprise and government customers in close collaboration. During HUG's technical workshops, roundtable discussions, and networking opportunities, customers learn how to get the most out of Hughes products and services while Hughes learns how to better meet customer needs.

"We go to HUG every year and reconnect with the same key people from Hughes; executives know our names, they know the business we're in. That's a real strength for us," said Tom Peake, vice president of technical services for Springleaf Financial.

During closed-door sessions, Peake explained, users have the chance to talk candidly about issues and problems, and then provide a list to the Hughes team. Over subsequent weeks and months, Hughes addresses items on the list through product and service enhancements, upgrades or innovations. Participating in HUG has become an ideal way for Springleaf to build on its excellent relationship with Hughes by exchanging information and to spark the process for solving complex communication and networking challenges. ◆