

Automotive Technology Company Selects BackBox Automation Solution to Support North American Expansion

Automates network device management to save time and increase reliability of router updates and backups, optimize asset management, and support regional requirements.

Challenge

Founded nearly 30 years ago, this global automotive technology provider has been a leader in its field. As the company grew, its IT staff swelled from six to 60, yet they continued to rely on manual methods to try to keep up with the needs of the growing business.

The tipping point came when the company expanded into Canada. In the U.S., they have thousands of franchised shops that they connect to over the internet. However, in Canada data privacy laws require all connectivity be done over a VPN. So, the company uses Juniper SRX devices to connect to each of the 300 franchises across the country. The network administrator would have to access each router individually to make a change to a server or endpoint. The process would take at least 10 minutes per router if things went smoothly, which amounted to 50 hours or more across all 300 shops each time a change is required. Spending countless hours on manual updates, changes, and backups was not an effective use of resources and left room for errors, so the company started looking for an automation solution.

Solution

The automotive tech company had standardized on Juniper routers and considered using Junos Space, Juniper's network management platform for automation, but the platform was cost prohibitive. Fortunately, the network admin discovered BackBox at an industry conference. After a thorough evaluation, he and the team determined BackBox met all their key requirements, including automated backups, updates, and asset management – and was well within budget.

Deployment was straightforward and the BackBox interface is intuitive, so the team was able to start taking advantage of BackBox automations quickly.



“BackBox automations save so much time – with just a few clicks backups and updates are done. BackBox is also incredibly reliable. Anything that has ever failed has come down to an issue with a network device, user error or a shop being offline – nothing to do with BackBox.”

– Network Administrator

OVERVIEW

Industry: **Technology**

Customer Since: **2019**

Employees: **600+**

Revenue: **Aquired in 2021**

Location: **Grapevine, TX (HQ), 22 countries**

Vendors Automated: **Juniper**

CHALLENGE

A global automotive technology company needed to replace manual processes with automation to simplify expansion into Canada and connectivity with 300 franchised locations.

SOLUTION

BackBox automation solution satisfied the company's primary requirements, including automated router backups, updates, and asset management – and was well within budget. Out-of-the-box and custom automations make it possible to address unique requirements by region and franchise in minutes.

OUTCOMES

- Save time by a factor of 30x and increase reliability by automating backups and OS updates
- Optimize asset management
- Support growth and regional requirements

Automated Backups and OS Updates

With out-of-the-box automations scheduled backups of Juniper routers now happen reliably and easily. The team also uses BackBox to automate OS updates for the three different models of Juniper SRX devices in the field. With a custom automation, BackBox correlates the Junos OS version with the model number since versions vary by model, and in some cases also vary by province. These conditional OS updates that previously were done by hand now happen smoothly as part of a single automation.

BackBox automations are so quick and easy that even changes that aren't urgent and may have been backburned in the past, like updating the network time server so that they are all uniform, are now processed as soon as they are needed. The network admin can schedule updates to run in the evening from home and receive notifications when they are done, giving him back his evenings.

A unique challenge with Canada is that some of the shops are in remote locations and may not have customers for weeks. In the absence of traffic, the VPN shuts down and can only be initiated on the client side which made it difficult to stay on top of needed updates. The team would have to manually maintain a list of shops that were offline and continuously check each shop individually to see if it was back online. Now, with BackBox they can simply check a report to see when a shop reconnects and with a few clicks sends the latest updates.

Asset Management

BackBox also helps with asset management as it maintains an inventory of every Juniper router, including model number, serial number, version, and more. The team can run a report and in minutes, have all the information needed to keep up with support contracts and manage the retirement of outdated routers in a cost-effective way.

Growth and Expansion

Over time, the company has expanded its use of BackBox as their presence in Canada has grown. Moving or consolidating data centers is a complex process that all told would take weeks, including manually updating every IP address. Now it's done in just a few days with BackBox custom automations handling all the IP address updates. And when the company adds a new shop or region, the additional router details are simply imported into BackBox to bring new franchises online. The import initiates a backup, so new sites are immediately protected from disasters as soon as they are discovered.

“The BackBox tech support team is phenomenal. I have never opened a ticket with BackBox that hasn't been fixed. They always have an answer, usually the same day. And they've been able to figure out every scenario I've thrown their way.”

– Network Administrator

OUTCOMES

Save Time By a Factor of 30x and Increase Reliability

With BackBox, the team has gone from 50 hours or more to make just one change across all 300 shops, to automated and reliable updates and backups in minutes. And OS updates that previously took 30 to 40 minutes per device are also accelerated by a factor of 30x at least.

Optimize Asset Management

Real-time asset inventory information enables the team to track aging devices and plan retirement strategies, keep up with support contracts, and manage complex updates that have dependencies.

Support Growth and Regional Requirements

BackBox custom automations allow the network admin to adapt out-of-the-box automations or create custom automations to address regional data privacy and operational requirements, manage data center infrastructure more efficiently, and continue its expansion in Canada.