

AM

AWARDS: 2025

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WELCOME

This special report is a celebration of all the winners and the finalists in the 2025 AM Awards.

At *Automotive Management* we are proud to recognise and champion the achievements of businesses in the UK motor retail sector. Our annual awards programme always reveals the best in the business, and the gala dinner at London's Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel this month was an ideal opportunity to reward companies and individuals for their hard work, innovation and success.

As I told our guests on the night, I'm so proud of the UK's motor retail workforce and its ability to get down to business day in, day out, while waiting for the world's politicians to finally decide for good what they're doing this year and next.

Motor retailers have continued to ensure more and more drivers are experiencing electric vehicles. Motor retailers continue to keep the existing car parc ready for our roads. The servicing, warranty and MOT work ensures the vast array of technology on our modern cars works as it should, keeping vehicles efficient and safe for occupants and others.

And motor retailers continue to offer fantastic career opportunities to an increasing diverse workforce. This industry offers college leavers and graduates the opportunity to be running complex, multi-million pound businesses within a decade or two if they'll learn and work hard.

There is so much to be proud of in our sector. Read on the following pages what exactly makes each of the 2025 AM Awards winners proud.



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interviews and insights
in the UK motor retail
industry.

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AM Awards auditor

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ben
Support for life



Tony Sciascia, managing director, Celtic Subaru and Mitsubishi (centre) collected the award from AM editor Tim Rose (left). Looking on is host for the evening comedian Tom Allen

DEALER PRINCIPAL/GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Tony Sciascia, Celtic Automotive

Since acquiring Celtic Automotive through a management buyout in 2021, Tony Sciascia has redefined what it means to be a hands-on, visionary leader in the motor trade.

Based on the outskirts of Swansea, Celtic Automotive is a small, but formidable, Subaru and Mitsubishi dealership with just 17 staff and two subcontracted valeters. Yet, under his leadership, this compact team has defied market challenges and exceeded expectations.

Faced with Mitsubishi's exit from the UK market and a halving of turnover, Tony's immediate focus was to develop stability and staff morale through a five-year strategy rooted in communication, transparency and a "one team" culture.

His restructuring of the business pivoted operations towards used car sales and aftersales growth – introducing self-funded warranties, tailored service plans, and, crucially, installing a Class 4 and 7 MOT bay.

These initiatives have not only offset lost franchise volume but increased workshop efficiency, profitability and customer retention.

He leads from the front – cleaning cars, greeting customers and selling on the showroom floor.

And it is this personal touch and unwavering support for his team that has resulted in minimal staff turnover and high levels of internal promotion, including a new assistant sales manager and a service manager currently in training.

Sciascia also spearheads marketing and social media, injecting personality and humour into

campaigns that have dramatically increased customer engagement.

His work has strengthened the Celtic brand to such an extent that manufacturers are now approaching him to explore future franchise opportunities.

A career that began in parts in 1985 has seen Sciascia rise through every dealership discipline, culminating in his business winning the AM Franchised Dealer of the Year Award in 2023.

His commercial acumen, innovative thinking and relentless drive for excellence make Sciascia an outstanding example of modern leadership.

He doesn't just run a dealership – he inspires a business that puts its people and its customers first, and does so with heart, humour and hard-earned expertise.

SHORTLISTED

■ Yousaf Muhammad,
general manager,
CarVender

■ Tony Sciascia,
managing director, Celtic
Subaru and Mitsubishi



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Jane Whyman, customer experience director, Luscombe's Leeds, picked up the trophy from Liam Finney, commercial director of award sponsors EMaC

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHAMPION

Winner: Jane Whyman, customer experience director, Luscombe's Leeds

In the world of customer service, there are many who go above and beyond but few who transform an entire business from the inside out.

Jane Whyman, customer experience director at Luscombe's of Leeds, has done just that.

Whyman began her journey in marketing and quickly recognised that the greatest value lies not in what a company says, but in what it does.

Her role has evolved from crafting messages to ensuring every promise made in those messages is upheld – without exception.

Whyman is the driving force behind Luscombe's outstanding customer experience.

Though largely behind the scenes, she has an

impact on every five-star review and loyal customer.

Her influence isn't measured by the occasional grand gesture, but by the consistency and integrity she demands from every team member, every day.

Whyman holds everyone – valeters, sales staff, even the managing director – accountable for delivering on their word, whether it's a callback or a complex query resolution.

Through initiatives such as the Luscombe GEM (graduate development) programme, she has fostered a workplace where customer service excellence is recognised, celebrated – and expected – from all.

Her proactive approach, tireless dedication – she's known to review voicemails at 5am – and eye for

continuous improvement have led to tangible results. Luscombe's now holds a Suzuki CX score of 97.9% versus a national average of 85.3%, and a perfect trust score of 100%.

Perhaps her greatest legacy is not just what she's achieved, but what she has passed on. A new generation of customer experience professionals, trained and mentored by Jane, are now holding others to the same impeccable standards – proof that the culture that she has created will endure.

Whyman is more than a champion of customer service – she is its guardian and yet a most humble hero. Luscombe's fully admits that it would not be what it is today without her, and this award is a long-overdue recognition of her unparalleled contribution.

SHORTLISTED

■ Qamar Arshad, sales & admin, CarVender
■ Jane Whyman, customer experience director, Luscombe's Leeds

■ Karl Harffy, senior sales executive, MB Motors
■ Steve Walker, director, Ponko

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EMaC.



Paul Philpott, president & CEO, Kia UK (centre), received the trophy from Stephen Briers, group editor, AM

MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Kia UK

In a market as competitive and brand-conscious as the UK's, few car manufacturers manage to shift perception as dramatically and successfully as Kia has. Kia UK has not only improved its product range – it has rewritten what British drivers expect from a mid-range carmaker.

One reason for Kia's UK success is how well its line-up fits the needs of British drivers.

The Kia Picanto is a great city car in a segment short of fierce competition.

The Ceed and XCeed cover the hatchback and cross-over segment with style and practicality, while the Sportage is one of the country's top-selling SUVs.

Then there's the Niro range, which ticks the hybrid and electric boxes without straying too far from what traditional drivers want.

Plus the new EV3 and EV6 are widely considered among the best electric cars on the market today.

Strong products alone aren't enough to build a reputation – the buying and ownership experience has to match. Kia UK has invested heavily in its dealer network, and it shows. Customers routinely report high satisfaction levels with the sales and aftercare process.

That's because Kia has happy franchised dealers. They are happy with the dealer-carmaker relationship, and there is mutual respect between Kia's experi-

enced leadership team and its franchise investors.

It is consistently highly-rated in the NFDA dealer attitude survey, as it recognises that its dealers are the experts at getting its new cars into buyers' hands. Crucially, it doesn't begrudge them making a decent profit doing so, and it has the right programmes and incentives in place to support the dealer network's activity.

Kia UK didn't get lucky. It didn't rely on gimmicks or short-term trends. It has earned its reputation by doing the hard work: improving quality, listening to customers and dealer partners, investing in design and technology, and offering peace of mind through long warranties and great service.

SHORTLISTED

■ Audi UK
■ BYD

■ Kia UK
■ Mercedes-Benz UK
■ MG Motor UK

■ Renault Group
■ Toyota (GB)
■ Suzuki GB



Wayne Berry, managing director, Berry Group (centre) was handed the trophy by David Kendrick, head of automotive and corporate finance partner deals at Cooper Parry

STRATEGIC SUCCESS AWARD

Winner: Wayne Berry, managing director, Berry Group

Our winner started the business in 2007 by acquiring a single BMW and Mini franchised dealership and in the ensuing years has shown a commitment to superb leadership and business strategy.

Berry Group has been spectacular when it comes to strategic success since its incorporation. It has a proven track record of taking loss-making and underperforming dealerships, influencing process and culture to drive significant improvement, and by doing so it has now become one of the leading groups in the south of England.

At the turn of the decade it began to seek to increase in scale with its German car manufacturer partner and, by 2021, took the opportunity as

Inchcape began to withdraw from Greater London and the surrounding area. Today it operates BMW and Mini dealerships at Chiswick, Cobham, Croydon, West Drayton and Thames Ditton.

Its Berry Select Cars used vehicle outlet, housed at a former Inchcape Mini dealership at Banstead, retails a mixture of premium and mainstream brand pre-owned cars.

Most recently Berry has driven the business to branch out from its solid premium-brand foundations, to begin partnerships with selected other brands. This has resulted in its opening of a Hyundai dealership at Chiswick just a few months ago, plus its representation of the new Chinese brand BYD, opening a showroom at Thames Ditton in late 2024

in a property that had been occupied by a TrustFord dealership.

As a result of the recent expansions, Berry Group, or Marsh Wall as the AM100 company is known, now employs around 500 people, generates annual revenues nearing £500 million and delivers consistently good profit returns.

And despite having come so far in less than two decades, Wayne Berry is not only humble, but really embraces the value of strategic partnerships and is seen as a great partner by BMW, his main franchise.

He makes considered, strategic investments in his people, properties, systems and operations and looks set to lead Berry Group to further success in the years ahead.

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*Number of cars in the parc by age cohort; DVLA, Auto Trader estimates. October 2023 modelling.



Simon Bishop, general manager, Waylands Volvo (second left), picked up the trophy along with colleagues from Toby Hughes (right), chief operating officer of award sponsors BookmyGarage

WORKSHOP OF THE YEAR

Winner: Waylands Volvo Oxford

Waylands Volvo Oxford is 2025's winner of Workshop of the Year at the AM Awards.

Led by general manager Simon Bishop, Waylands Volvo Oxford maintains a small team of 45 with only six technicians. Every day this team welcomes 30 visiting customers and communicates with even more. It is no small achievement, therefore, that the workshop's productivity measures at 145%, its efficiency at 153%, and its customer satisfaction scores at 7.1% above the national average.

Customer satisfaction is at the heart of all the workshop's controls and processes, from a customer's initial booking through to their workshop visit and post-visit experience.

Waylands maintains a staggered booking schedule to minimise waiting times and offers a variety of

appointment types for maximum convenience – including extensive collection and delivery services, a courtesy car fleet, and local drop-offs or collections.

While a vehicle is in the workshop, customer satisfaction is achieved through a policy of communication and transparency – with pre-calls and information communicated early to enable informed decisions. Technicians create detailed videos for every visiting vehicle to highlight obscured areas and identify potential issues or repairs, and on-site service advisors follow up to answer any questions and confirm next steps. A follow-up after every visit helps to confirm customer satisfaction.

To maintain and enhance profitability, Waylands implements a range of structured controls. Highlights include an efficient management system for parts with a dedicated team operating at 15-minute

service level agreements, clear measurable targets, and pre-planned job card allocation to pair a technician with the right type of work – maximising efficiency and quality.

The workshop differentiates itself through a foundation of expertise, customer care, and investment in people, processes and technology.

The six technicians at Waylands collectively hold more than 55 years of Volvo experience, and the workshop collaborates with the Volvo Technical Academy to remain at the fore of the industry in terms of knowledge and technology.

The latest equipment, tools and platforms are used, enhancing customer journeys with real-time insights and transparent and accessible maintenance. Also, there are considerable opportunities for career progression, shaping a department-wide culture of exceptional service.

SHORTLISTED

■ Group 1 Automotive
■ Hills Ford,
Kidderminster

■ IN'n'OUT Autocentres
■ Perrys East Midlands
■ Waylands Volvo Oxford

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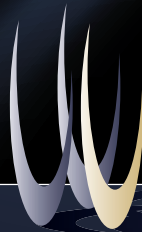


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Tony Sciascia, managing director, Celtic Auto Group (second from left), and sales director Dominic Castle (second from right) collected the trophy from Andrew Landell, managing director of award sponsors LTK Consultants (right)

BEST IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Winner: Celtic Subaru & Mitsubishi

As a small independent franchised dealer, Celtic Auto is faced with the challenge of differentiating itself in the absence of the level of financial resources enjoyed by larger main dealers.

The dealership's solution has been to build on its strong reputation and focus on delivering exceptional customer service, establishing this as its unique selling proposition.

Under the leadership of managing director and owner, Tony Sciascia, Celtic's answer was to implement a customer-centric culture following a management buyout in 2021.

The leadership team was thoroughly briefed on Sciascia's vision to improve customer service through a dedicated programme where staff were encouraged to adopt a proactive, solution-oriented mindset and empowered to address customer issues swiftly and efficiently.

The impact of this "Moving from Good to Great" initiative has been tangible. Customer complaints have decreased significantly, with formal complaints now at zero. By engaging directly with customers, the management team identifies and resolves day-to-day issues, streamlining internal processes and enhancing the customer journey.

Additionally, customers are empowered to leave feedback easily through the introduction of a QR code, which was incorporated into marketing materials to encourage reviews.

Celtic's commitment to customer service has resulted in significant business growth. Over the past three years, turnover has increased by 30%, the number of new and used cars sold has risen by 53%. This is particularly impressive given the decline of Mitsubishi's UK operations.

Despite this, Celtic has successfully retained a large portion of its customer base and has even seen an

increase in retail workshop hours, boosting after-sales gross profit by 4%.

Customer satisfaction scores reflect the business' success. Celtic's Google review score stands at 4.7, Auto Trader and Cargurus both at 5.0 and Facebook at 4.6 with 92% recommending the dealership.

In addition to operational improvements, Celtic has implemented several initiatives to further support customer retention. These include offering a subsidised in-house service plan, which helps customers manage motoring costs in addition to enhanced used car warranties.

Many customers praise the dealership for its friendly, efficient, and non-pressured sales approach. One customer remarked they would "drive an extra four hours" just for the exceptional customer service.

Another commented that Celtic's service was "second to none," a testament to the dealership's commitment to excellence.

SHORTLISTED

- CarVender
- Celtic Subaru & Mitsubishi
- Frosts Cars

- Hills Ford
- Mantles Kia
- Motorfinity

- Ponko
- Roadside (Garages)
- Sandal Group

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BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

PROUD SPONSOR



Nicole Melillo Shaw, managing director, Volvo Car UK, collected the trophy from Ian Simpson, director of award sponsors Premia Solutions. Also pictured is AM editor Tim Rose (left)

BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Nicole Melillo Shaw, managing director, Volvo Car UK

Our winner has made a significant impact at Volvo Car UK since she joined the national sales company in 2020, initially as customer director, then commercial director before becoming managing director in 2023.

It was under her leadership that Volvo's UK operation developed a direct-to-consumer new car sales approach and its dealer network transitioned to an agency model.

Melillo Shaw steered the change management programme with diligence and a collaborative spirit, taking on board feedback from franchise investors and the dealerships involved in the early pilots, navigating the system and process hurdles along the way.

She and her team have delivered an outcome that has brought the retail network along with the changes, rather than alienated its members, but still brought Volvo closer to its customers.

Its dealers, aka agents, remain highly satisfied with their partnership, as evidenced by Volvo's overall 7.5 out of 10 rating in the latest National Franchised Dealers Association (NFDA) Dealer Attitude Survey.

And its sales are climbing. In 2024, the first full year operating a D2C model, the car brand grew its share of the UK market to 3.4%, outselling the likes of Tesla, Renault and Mini.

Beyond her operational acumen, Melillo Shaw is recognised for her commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and diversity initiatives. She

has spearheaded programmes aimed at enhancing Volvo's workplace diversity and inclusion efforts, fostering an environment where innovation thrives through diverse perspectives.

Melillo Shaw's leadership style is marked by a collaborative spirit and a hands-on approach to management. She is known for her accessibility to employees at all levels, fostering a culture of openness and empowerment. This inclusive leadership has contributed to Volvo Car UK's reputation as a preferred employer in the automotive sector.

Her tenure as managing director of Volvo Car UK exemplifies leadership excellence in the automotive industry. She has positioned Volvo Car UK for continued success in a rapidly evolving market.

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Sharon Ashcroft, HR director, TrustFord (centre), collected the trophy from Lottie Roberts, operations director at award sponsors Direct Affinity CX

LEADER IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARD

Winner: TrustFord

The 2025 AM Awards marked TrustFord's fourth consecutive win of the Leader in Diversity and Inclusion category. TrustFord has shown considerable progression across its work to foster a company-wide policy of equitable treatment for all.

This year has seen TrustFord build upon initiatives from previous years with new partnerships to foster meaningful behaviours.

Partnerships have been made with [M]enable for a management-focused development session, with HenPicked to educate colleagues about the realities of menopause, and with Sign Solutions to introduce the InterpretersLive! BSL video interpreter solution – boosting inclusivity across the company by enabling clearer communication with deaf colleagues and customers.

Everyone in the business has taken part in the Driving Inclusion education programme. An early careers strategy has launched with work experience opportunities and a summer job shadowing programme – the organisation also attended 23 recruitment fairs – supported on social media by the TrustFordJobs TikTok account.

TrustFord's DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) strategy is based on values of purpose, principles and ambition.

The organisation is committed to a zero-tolerance approach so that everyone can bring their whole self to work, and to ensuring that managers and colleagues understand, accept and appreciate that not everyone is the same.

The strategy is supported by a dedicated DEI manager and increased in visibility by members of

the board who act as sponsors of colleague network groups.

TrustFord's progress in the areas of diversity and inclusion has been measured, with clear statistics to show success. Company retention came to 79.66% in 2024, a 2.18% rise from 2023, and female retention within the business rose to 82.34% in 2024. The gender pay gap within the organisation was at 3% by 2024.

In addition, the company has been recognised as a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer. It features on the list of Best Workplaces for Women by Great Place to Work.

The future will see TrustFord working to maintain its momentum, focusing on what more can be done to promote company culture to an external audience of prospective newcomers and customers.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

■ eStar Truck & Van

SHORTLISTED

■ eStar Truck & Van
■ Hills Motor Group (Woodford)

■ Kinghams of Croydon
■ Sytner Group
■ TrustFord

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Ben Mills, Fords of Winsford

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Rebekah Hind, office manager and HR support specialist, Motorfinity (centre) was presented with the trophy by Anna Houldsworth, global head of paint protection at award sponsors Autoglym

COMMUNITY HERO

Winner: Motorfinity

Motorfinity offers specialist discounts on vehicles to the UK's armed forces, veterans and emergency services personnel, including police, fire and rescue, NHS and education sectors.

However, its commitment goes far beyond simply offering discounts – it is dedicated to making a genuine impact within its community by supporting those who serve.

In 2024, Motorfinity continued its tradition of meaningful charity work, partnering with nine key organisations to help those in need.

From post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) support and funding bereavement services to hosting community fundraisers and providing free marketing services, it expanded its efforts to give back to those who make our lives safer and more

secure through raising awareness. Motorfinity hosted events such as the 'Paying It Forward' veteran photography exhibition and celebrating the contributions of these everyday heroes.

The business actively fosters a community-minded culture by partnering with organisations such as the Blue Light Card Foundation, Newark Patriotic Fund, PTSD 999 and the Children's Bereavement Centre.

In 2024, it pledged around £15,000 to the Blue Light Card Foundation to fund life-enhancing projects supporting emergency services personnel, and hosted key events to engage with local veterans and ex-service personnel, creating lasting connections.

Its dedication to aiding local charities extends through skill-sharing initiatives and providing marketing support to organisations such as Beaumont House Hospice Care, Newark Mencap

and Positively Empowered Kids. This commitment is further reinforced by its management team, headed by CEO Daniel Briggs, who leads by example in participating in charity events and raising thousands of pounds for local causes.

It is this hands-on involvement which shows the business' dedication to fostering a culture of gratitude and giving back.

By prioritising these initiatives, it not only supports those who serve, but also builds stronger relationships within its own community and deepens its understanding of others' challenges and aspirations.

Motorfinity deserves to win this award for its unwavering commitment to giving back, celebrating the heroes who inspire the business, and making a tangible, positive difference in its community.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Roadside (Garages)
- SHARP Automotive

SHORTLISTED

- CarVender
- Motorfinity
- Partridge of Hampshire

- Roadside (Garages)
- Sandal Group
- SHARP Automotive
- TrustFord

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EV ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Winner: Drive Green

Drive Green has established itself as a premier specialist in pre-owned electric vehicles (EVs), dedicated to facilitating the transition to electric driving since its inception. Over the past eight years, Drive Green has become synonymous with EV expertise in the UK, exclusively selling and specialising in EVs.

This singular focus has endowed it with extensive knowledge and experience, making Drive Green a leader in understanding both the technical aspects of EVs and the customer experience associated with adopting electric driving lifestyles.

Central to Drive Green's approach is its comprehensive training programme, designed to equip every team member with in-depth knowledge of every EV it sells.

This includes practical experience living with each model, enabling staff not only to advise customers effectively but also to provide thorough post-purchase support.

This commitment extends to educating consumers through a robust digital presence, including informative articles, guides, and a substantial library of videos that address common concerns and dispel myths about EV ownership.

Drive Green distinguishes itself through transparent practices, such as openly sharing battery health data and conducting comprehensive studies. These efforts contribute to building consumer confidence and driving positive perceptions of EVs. Additionally, Drive Green actively engages with industry stakeholders and governmental bodies, advocating policies that support the transition to

sustainable driving solutions.

Looking ahead, Drive Green plans to expand its influence by offering consultancy and training services to the broader motor trade.

By sharing its expertise, it aims to enhance the industry's capacity to meet growing EV demand effectively. Furthermore, collaborations with larger dealerships and ongoing public engagements underscore its commitment to driving meaningful change.

Through these initiatives, Drive Green not only supports customers in making informed EV choices but also strives to catalyse broader industry adoption of electric driving solutions.

Its holistic approach, from sales to aftercare and advocacy, positions Drive Green as a pivotal player in advancing sustainable mobility and shaping a greener future for all.

SHORTLISTED

■ Drive Green
■ EZ00

■ Mantles Kia
■ TrustFord

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We are pleased to sponsor the **Independent Dealer of the Year** for AM 2025 Awards.

Visitor Chat supports over 2,000 UK retailers with industry leading Live Chat technology.

UNITY, Visitor Chat's latest solution represents a results-driven approach to online customer engagement which centralises all advertising platforms and messaging channels into one. Streamlining the process for customers and retailers 24/7 has demonstrated an increase in lead to sale conversions by 15-20% for existing dealers.

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Muhammad Yousaf, general manager, CarVender (centre), picked up the trophy from Chris Wateridge, managing director of award sponsors Visitor Chat

INDEPENDENT DEALER OF THE YEAR

Winner: CarVender

CarVender has set itself apart as the best independent dealer in the UK due to its exceptional growth, customer-centric approach and commitment to quality in used car retailing.

Led by Muhammad Yousaf, the Romford-based dealership has demonstrated remarkable financial performance, innovation in stock sourcing and a dedication to customer satisfaction that impressed the AM Award judges.

Over the past three years, the company has achieved substantial financial growth, with turnover increasing by nearly 80% since 2022.

Operating profits have surged by more than 280% in the same period, reflecting the dealership's

strategic approach to sales, pricing and operational efficiency.

The business has successfully scaled its operations over the past two years with sales volumes more than doubling, increasing by 113% from 2022 to 2024.

CarVender has a rigorous approach to sourcing stock by prioritising vehicles less than eight years old, with low mileage and a full service history.

The dealership sources stock primarily from BCA, utilising only pre-inspected and mechanically assured vehicles.

The dealership puts a lot of effort into preparing its stock and has a price position from 102% to 110% to achieve the best return on investment and

to protect gross profit margin per unit, which increased by 22.5% year-on-year in 2024.

Customer satisfaction is at the core of CarVender's operations, as evidenced by its perfect 10/10 CSI scores and nearly 900 five-star reviews.

Motoroo's customer-first approach is further highlighted by thoughtful extras with every sale, including a quarter of a tank of fuel or 100 miles of electric charge and a complimentary box of Ferrero Rocher to make sure customers leave with something over and above what might be expected.

CarVender is also thinking about its future expansion including the acquisition of a 13-acre site near Stansted Airport, positioning the dealership for its next phase of growth.

SHORTLISTED

- CarVender (formerly Motoroo Cars)
- MB Motors
- Ponko

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AM
AWARDS: 2025

**UPLOAD NEW
CAR OFFERS**



**UPGRADE
YOUR SALES**

Autotrader



Harry Grainger, managing director, Grainger Motor Group, picked up the trophy from Rebecca Clark, sales director of award sponsors Auto Trader

FRANCHISED DEALERSHIP OF THE YEAR

Winner: Mantles Kia

Mantles Kia, part of the Grainger Motor Group, has always had its sights set on the top with a founding aim of being recognised as the best of the best franchised dealers in the UK.

The business was judged the clear winner in the Franchised Dealership of the Year category following its impressive financial growth, exceptional customer service and an industry-leading approach to electric vehicle sales and service plans.

Under the leadership of Neal and Harry Grainger, the Royston-based showroom has demonstrated remarkable business growth.

Over the past three years, turnover has increased by nearly 185%, while operating profits have seen a rise of more than 100%. Sales across all depart-

ments, including new and used vehicles, servicing and parts, have consistently grown year-on-year.

The dealership's used car sales volume is more than double the average for Kia dealerships in the UK network, solidifying its position as one of the top-performing retailers for the brand in the UK.

Customer satisfaction has been a key driver of Mantles Kia's success.

The dealership's CSI score improved from just less than 93% in 2022 to a perfect 100% in 2024. Online service bookings have increased by nearly 250% over the same period, reflecting the dealership's commitment to convenience and digital integration.

Mantles Kia also leads the way in service plan adoption, with 100% of new retail customers opting for coverage – well above the industry average.

Mantles Kia's dominance extends beyond sales and service. The dealership ranks first out of 186 Kia franchises nationwide in multiple key performance areas, including retail sales penetration, EV adoption and customer experience.

The dealership's reputation score has climbed by more than 20% in just two years, reinforcing its standing as a trusted name with its customers.

Members of the group's leadership team have prioritised a culture of continuous improvement, with a focus on consistency, staff development, daily operational briefings and hands-on management.

This approach has driven consistent performance across all departments and ensured that customer satisfaction remains a priority.

SHORTLISTED

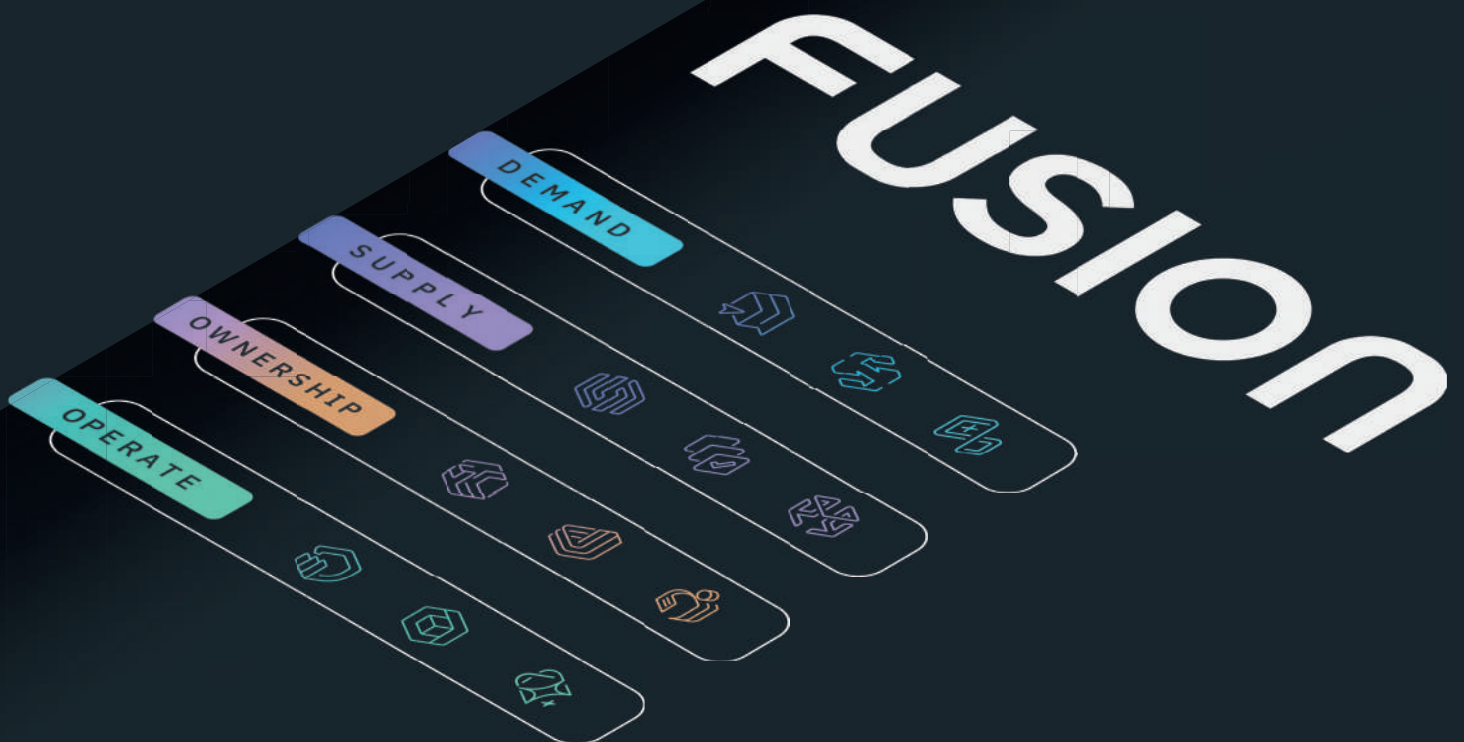
- Mantles Kia
- Perry's Motor Sales – Dover Ford
- Roadside (Garages)
- Steven Eagell – Lexus Ipswich
- Waylands Volvo Reading

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ONLINE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE OF THE YEAR – FRANCHISED

Winner: TrustFord

TrustFord's approach to online consumer experience is a peerless integration of innovative digital solutions and customer-first thinking.

Built upon the company's core marketing strategy, TrustFord aims to be the number one choice for customers in its operational areas by ensuring every digital touchpoint reflects its commitment to excellence in customer care.

The company's 'digital-first' strategy is driven by a passion for data and collaboration.

With a marketing team dedicated to shaping the customer journey, TrustFord has invested in key digital channels, including website, social media, paid search, digital display advertising, CRM and video content, all of which are meticulously optimised for the best possible customer experience.

The inclusion of high-impact ads, strategic SEO, and a commitment to offer a seamless user journey ensures that TrustFord remains accessible and user-friendly across all digital platforms.

TrustFord's investment in website optimisation, digital marketing and CRM has delivered outstanding results. In 2024, website conversion rates rose to 7.89%, an improvement over the previous year, with a marked increase in customer engagement across digital touchpoints.

The introduction of a new payment method, allowing customers to make transactions directly from their bank accounts, added an extra layer of security, enhancing both consumer trust and operational efficiency.

Moreover, the innovative customer opportunity system (COS) has revolutionised the way TrustFord

identifies and targets customer opportunities.

With its advanced data-driven approach, COS ensures that potential customers receive tailored, relevant communications at the right time, resulting in a more efficient sales process.

TrustFord's efforts have also yielded impressive results in social media engagement, generating 17.4 million impressions and 680,000 website clicks, showing its ability to connect with consumers.

TrustFord's commitment to constantly developing its digital strategy to meet consumer expectations, coupled with its attention to detail in website functionality and content, is setting a new standard in the online consumer experience.

Its holistic, data-driven approach, constant investment in innovation and unyielding focus on customer satisfaction makes TrustFord the standout winner.

SHORTLISTED

- Luscombe's Leeds
- Pentagon Motor Group
- TrustFord

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Robert Robinson, director (second from left) and Toby Frost, managing director, Frosts Cars, collected the trophy from Aimée Turner, deputy editor, AM

ONLINE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE OF THE YEAR – INDEPENDENT

Winner: Frosts Cars

Frosts Cars' dedication to providing an exceptional online consumer experience is driven by three core principles: ease of use, transparency and continuous innovation.

Its approach to creating a seamless, intuitive and fully integrated digital journey ensures that customers can easily manage their vehicles online – whether buying, selling or booking aftersales services.

Its website, www.frosts4cars.co.uk, is more than just an online platform; it's an essential tool that gives customers full control over their vehicle buying and servicing journey.

By offering an interactive 360-degree view of vehicles, detailed descriptions, high-quality images and an intuitive finance application system, it has redefined the car buying process, making it transparent and customer-centric.

Its platform also allows customers to instantly

secure part-exchange valuations and manage financing options, ensuring a comprehensive and frictionless experience.

Frosts Cars has also invested heavily in optimising mobile and tablet usage, ensuring a fast, responsive and uninterrupted experience across devices.

With a mobile-first approach, it guarantees easy navigation, quick-loading pages, and straightforward calls to action – giving customers an effortless journey.

Additionally, innovative tools, such as iStoreDocs and iTrackLeads, have revolutionised document access and lead management, ensuring customers receive prompt, efficient service at every stage of their buying journey.

Frosts Cars also places significant value on aftersales convenience. Its integration of real-time diary management for service and MOT bookings allows customers to select preferred timeslots with instant confirmation, reducing customer stress points.

Moreover, its partnership with Marketing Delivery

has allowed the business to implement an automated service and MOT reminder system, further streamlining processes and improving engagement.

In 2024, the business saw impressive growth across key performance indicators, including a 30% increase in online vehicle reservations, a 24% rise in used vehicle sales and significant improvements in customer engagement metrics.

Social media platforms have also played a vital role in driving consumer interaction and brand loyalty, with notable growth in reach, content interaction and customer engagement across Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

By investing in cutting-edge technologies, real-time engagement tools and continually evolving based on consumer feedback, the business has created an online experience that sets new standards.

This award not only acknowledges its efforts but also its passion for providing a truly exceptional digital journey for customers.

SHORTLISTED

- EZOO
- Frosts Cars
- MB Motors
- Vanaways



Harry Grainger, managing director, Grainger Motor Group (centre), collected the trophy from Tim Rose, editor, AM

EV PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

Winner: Mantles Kia

Mantles Kia impressed the AM Award judges with its outstanding commitment to delivering the best electric vehicle (EV) customer experience in the UK. As the number one Kia EV dealer in the country, Mantles has shown exceptional sales performance, customer satisfaction and industry leadership.

In 2024, Mantles Kia achieved a 34.8% EV sales mix, outperforming the national average of 9% by more than 380%.

The dealership, part of Grainger Motor Group, also secured a 100% EV sales net promoter score (NPS) for the year, significantly above the Kia UK national average of 90.67%. Additionally, its EV aftersales NPS of 98.08% was 52% higher than the Kia UK

benchmark. These figures reflect the dealership's dedication to customer service and its ability to convert interest into long-term EV ownership.

Mantles Kia's success is driven by its strategic approach to EV adoption. The dealership invests heavily in staff training, ensuring all employees are EV experts capable of educating customers on charging, range and financial options.

Weekly knowledge assessments, daily team meetings and director-level support maintain high standards. Open days, public awareness events and a dedicated EV service fleet further reinforce its proactive approach to customer engagement.

Beyond sales, Mantles Kia has pioneered initiatives that simplify the transition to EVs. Its structured

upgrade process helps customers move from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to hybrids and fully electric models at a pace that suits their needs. Concerns around cost, range and charging are addressed through personalised consultations, making EV ownership more accessible and attractive.

Mantles Kia's commitment to excellence has not gone unnoticed. Kia UK has recognised the dealership's achievements, endorsing its success as a market leader in EV sales and customer experience.

The business has the vision to continue its EV customer engagement initiatives and to set the industry standard for excellence in this growing segment as it matures into the next phase of the EV revolution.

HIGHLY COMMENDED
■ Luscombe MG Leeds

SHORTLISTED

■ Drive Green
■ Luscombe MG Leeds

■ Mantles Kia
■ Partridge of Hampshire

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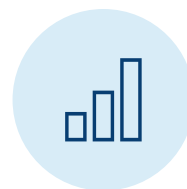
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MARKETING STRATEGY OF THE YEAR

Winner: TrustFord

Trustford's digital-first marketing strategy was centred on its company purpose: to drive the standard in customer care.

2024 saw the launch of the 'World of TrustFord' campaign, designed to define the brand and enhance customer understanding of services and experiences that TrustFord makes available.

The campaign was originally intended to boost the brand's presence in Scotland and Carlisle, but its impact extended significantly beyond those regions.

The project involved the creation of a short film that highlighted key areas of the brand. After the video's March 2024 launch, it reached more than 523,200 people on Facebook, 91,400 users on Instagram, and achieved 16,000 clicks on the 'World of TrustFord'

website. It also screened in cinemas across Aberdeen and Carlisle and was complemented with a series of radio ads.

The marketing team, led by Julia Greenhough, has 22 members based across the UK. Their approach embraces innovation and data to drive multi-platform engagement in line with a marketing calendar agreed up to six months in advance.

TrustFord's team committed to refining the brand's digital presence and making use of cutting-edge technology to streamline customer journeys. The company website was prioritised as the hub of customer experience, but a data-driven customer opportunity system was developed in-house to use analytical tools to provide secure and relevant customer opportunities. An always-on PPC strategy

targeted key customer groups, drove website traffic, and promoted special offers.

Running through Q1 and Q2, a new all-electric pay per click (PPC) campaign generated 111,683 impressions and drove consistent and targeted traffic to the website with 12,273 clicks.

The brand's marketing strategy has achieved significant customer approval. TrustFord established a benchmark for customer satisfaction by partnering with TrustPilot for reviews; in 2024 it passed 15,000 five-star reviews.

TrustFord credits its success to boldness and a focus on innovation. Its team remains passionate about harnessing data and innovation to ensure its marketing resonates with and represents the diverse communities it serves.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

■ Norton Way Group

SHORTLISTED

■ Holdcroft Motor Group
■ Norton Way Group

■ Rossetts Commercials Mercedes-Benz
■ TrustFord

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THE NIGHT IN PICTURES





Harry Grainger, managing director, Grainger Motor Group (centre), was handed the trophy by Marcus Gregory, managing director of award sponsors Payment Assist

DEALER GROUP OF THE YEAR (UP TO 10 SITES)

Winner: Grainger Motor Group

In a very closely contested category our winner took the lead thanks to the success of its 'buy and build' strategy. Grainger Motor Group is less than three years old, but the experience of its leadership team and their careful choice of takeover targets has led to an already high-performing business.

What began in January 2023 with former Norton Way directors Harry and Neal Grainger acquiring the single-site Mantles Kia in Royston, Hertfordshire, has expanded through further acquisitions and brand partnerships into a group that by the end of 2024 was running eight sites across East Anglia representing Kia, MG, Mazda and, lately, BYD.

And in the recent Kia UK awards its Royston, Cambridge and Thetford dealerships won a first, second and third in its dealer of the year category. Plus its Mazda business has climbed almost 80 places in the brand's league table into 15th place after one full year of trading since acquisition.

An "attitude is key" culture differs the turnaround specialist business from others, according to Grainger's bosses, coupled with a drive to be the best, supported by its 12-step sales process.

Its approach is to focus on key areas such as people, partnership, process and performance management. "It is only by measuring and managing every aspect of the business that we can create an

environment capable of achieving 100% customer satisfaction in every department throughout the year," said managing director Harry Grainger in his awards entry.

Among its methods to maintain standards are weekly quizzes for staff to keep them engaged, director-level support on site to understand how resources are deployed and significant training in soft skills and technical abilities.

Grainger Motor Group delivers outstanding new car sales performances for its manufacturer partners, and is winning customer favour too. Importantly for its owners, as it grows it is improving its profits too.

SHORTLISTED

- Grainger Motor Group
- TMS Motor Group

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James Smullen, finance director, Waylands (centre), was handed the trophy by Phill Jones, chief operating officer at award sponsors MOTORS

DEALER GROUP OF THE YEAR (MORE THAN 10 SITES)

Winner: Waylands Automotive

Waylands is no stranger to the AM Awards, having won Dealer Group of the Year (up to 10 sites) on six occasions. Its expansion in 2024 with the acquisition of Volvo Gloucester pushed it up into the 10-plus category, but the quality of the business continues to stand out.

Shortlisted alongside two giants of the AM100, Waylands won by a majority vote after it impressed the judges with its ability to sustain its superb cultural and financial foundations even as it continues to expand with multiple brand partners Volvo, Polestar, MG and Kia.

After increasing earnings in 2023, during 2024 it grew its operating profits by a further 17%.

Improvements were recorded in new car sales, aftersales and used car sales. Its customer satisfaction scores, already very strong, were sustained or improved further, and its overall JudgeService rating for the entire Waylands business was 96%.

Investment has continued in numerous aspects of the group. Within the past three years it has given every business a full refit in line with its brand's latest CI standards, to ensure its sites are the welcoming, effective properties that its workforce and its customers expect.

It has digitalised its reporting processes to provide more clarity and structure for its teams, resulting in a 19% reduction in deal file administration. Investment in better stock management and

vital management information has helped drive a 38% rise in used car volumes.

And its leadership team identified a need to focus more heavily on the way the group attracts, retains and develops employees.

The Waylands Academy doubled the number of training sessions delivered, and launched a 12-month Future Leaders Programme to ensure the group has people ready to step up when career opportunities arise.

In the remainder of this year Waylands will look more closely at colleague retention, to identify where it can improve employee benefits, offer increased flexibility and to continue to position Waylands as an attractive employer.

SHORTLISTED

- Steven Eagell Group
- TrustFord
- Waylands

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MOTORS



Boris Huard, CEO, CitNOW Group (centre), was handed the trophy by Sara Donald, key account director, AM

SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

Winner: CitNOW Group

Suppliers that are true partners with their dealer group clients always fare well in this dealer-voted category, and the winner CitNOW Group knows this well. It won this same award in 2023.

The company has earned its place as a market leader, not by chasing trends, but by solving real dealership problems. Its success has come from listening, adapting and staying close to the sharp end of the business. For automotive retailers navigating the fast-changing landscape of digital retail, CitNOW isn't just a software provider – it's a strategic partner that understands how to turn technology into measurable results.

Established in 2008, CitNOW began with a single innovation: using personalised video to improve

communication between dealerships and customers. Since then, it has grown into a global group offering integrated digital tools that power every stage of the automotive retail journey.

But the real engine behind the company's success is its deep, practical understanding of what dealers need, and its commitment to delivering tools that make their work easier, faster and more customer-focused.

As CitNOW matured, it expanded its digital ecosystem through strategic acquisitions, becoming CitNOW Group in 2021. Each acquisition added a layer of functionality with the same guiding principle: tools that improve dealer efficiency and enhance the customer journey.

Latest deals include the acquisitions of Feasa, a

UK-based salesforce automotive software partner, in December 2023, and of Auto Imaging in 2022.

A defining trait of CitNOW Group is its close working relationship with its dealer partners. Every product in the group's portfolio is developed or refined based on input from retailers themselves – those who know the day-to-day demands of the showroom floor, the service bay and the sales desk.

The company offers a complete toolkit for the modern dealership, spanning sales, aftersales, imagery, lead management workflow, and customer communication. But more than just selling digital solutions, CitNOW works alongside its clients to help them use the tools effectively.

The result is simple, but powerful: dealerships work smarter, communicate better and sell more.

SHORTLISTED

- Bumper
- Cap HPI
- CitNOW Group
- Codeweavers
- eDynamix
- Pinewood.AI

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Richard Norris, founder & managing director, Drive Green, picked up the trophy from Aimée Turner, deputy editor, AM

THE SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

Winner: Drive Green

Drive Green stands as both a beacon of innovation and commitment to sustainability in the automotive industry.

From the ground up, the business has been meticulously designed with a vision to reduce environmental impact and promote greener living.

At the heart of Drive Green is its unwavering commitment to selling only electric vehicles (EVs). But this focus on green products is just the beginning.

Drive Green's ethos, "If there is a greener way to do it, that is the way we will do it – always," permeates every element of the business from its operations to its customer interactions.

The company has adopted a range of green initiatives, including the use of recycled materials in its office construction, solar power, biomass carbon-neutral heating and even upcycled furniture.

Additionally, Drive Green maintains a strict policy of no single-use plastics, promotes waste-free practices and champions eco-friendly cleaning products.

Drive Green also prioritises staff engagement in its sustainability mission. The company has become one of the few Gold-certified Carbon Literate businesses, offering employees carbon literacy training and incentives for adopting eco-friendly practices, including an EV ownership scheme and a waste-free lunch bonus.

Staff are further involved in local green initiatives, fostering a culture of environmental awareness that extends beyond the workplace.

Not only has Drive Green made significant investments in sustainable construction, including a fully carbon-neutral office built from reclaimed materials,

but it is also actively reducing its carbon emissions through green transport initiatives.

The company has pioneered the use of EV delivery transport, achieving a 43% reduction in the carbon footprint of its deliveries in just six months.

Through these groundbreaking efforts, Drive Green exemplifies how a business can seamlessly integrate sustainability into its operations, which can only inspire the automotive retail sector.

In 2023, Drive Green was honoured with the Auto Trader Sustainability Initiative Award, a testament to its pioneering efforts in integrating sustainability into every aspect of its operations.

Its next steps – reducing packaging waste and expanding its carbon-free delivery service – will further ensure that Drive Green remains a leading force in sustainable business practices.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

■ TrustFord

SHORTLISTED

■ Bridge Classic Cars

■ Drive Green

■ Partridge of Hampshire

■ Sandal Group

■ The Sinclair Group

■ TrustFord



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Harry Grainger, managing director, Grainger Motor Group (centre), picked up the trophy from Steve Franklin, commercial director, Santander Consumer Finance

USED CAR PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

Winner: Grainger Motor Group

A key driver and a five-point action plan form the major components at the heart of this award-winning entry.

At the start of last year, Grainger's directors determined a need to "increase lead volumes and total used car sales volumes" and identified areas for development over the course of 2024.

The five areas for improvement were advert quality, sales process/training, pricing policies, sourcing and staffing.

The entire motor group worked across the year to improve standards in these areas.

Specific highlights include establishing a bespoke used car sourcing relationship with a top leasing company, placing emphasis on reframing the sourcing and marketing of used EV stock as an

opportunity rather than a threat, ensuring early and strong adoption of technology to support used cars – such as artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, videography and dedicated copy writing – and establishing an internal 12-step process for achieving sales.

The success of this approach can be measured by the results achieved by the group across the year. The turnover for Grainger's used cars rose by 48.29% between 2023 and 2024, used car sales also grew by 44% during this period, and the company's CSI score reached 100%.

In the wake of these achievements, Grainger has put measures in place to ensure the continuation of its high standards.

Clear touchpoints have been established and are

regularly reinforced during daily internal meetings. Customer satisfaction teams receive direct support and resources at director level, and all staff benefit from ongoing training.

Determined to maintain its momentum into the future, Grainger has committed to furthering the group's ability and performance via ongoing development of its used car policy, continuing its innovative approach to business and maintaining a comprehensive understanding of the issues affecting the used car sector – in terms of sales, sourcing and sustained business profitability.

Grainger also strives to further its engagement with the used EV market and continues to embrace new technologies in the pursuit of greater profit and customer satisfaction.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

■ Saltmarine Cars

SHORTLISTED

■ Celtic Subaru and Mitsubishi
■ Grainger Motor Group

■ Perrys Dover Vauxhall
■ Saltmarine Cars

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Harry Grainger, managing director, Grainger Motor Group (fifth from left) picked up the trophy with colleagues from Mitesh Kotak (right), senior client development manager – automotive corporate division of award sponsors Assurant

RETAILER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Grainger Motor Group

Outstanding performance from a dealer group so soon following its inception convinced the AM Awards judges to award Grainger Motor Group the Retailer of the Year trophy.

Grainger has already won the Dealer Group of the Year (up to 10 sites) plus the Used Car Performance of the Year awards, in recognition of its strength in turning around its acquired dealerships.

Less than three years since its highly experienced owners Harry and Neil Grainger launched the business, Grainger Motor Group is delivering outstanding new car sales performances for its manufacturer partners, and is clearly winning customers' favour too.

Importantly for its owners, as it grows it is improving its profits also. The brothers' careful choice of take-over targets, including underperforming dealerships, has led to an already high-performing business.

Like its rival Waylands in this category, Grainger Motor Group's foundations have been built with a familiar brand with which it could gain scale.

The Grainger brothers had already developed a great relationship with Kia while at their previous group, Norton Way. From acquiring Mantles Kia in Hertfordshire at the start of 2023, the group now has five more Kia sites in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire.

Plus it now also represents MG, Mazda and, since the end of last year, BYD.

And in the recent Kia UK awards its Royston, Cambridge and Thetford dealerships won a first, second and third in the maker's dealer of the year category. Plus its Mazda business has climbed almost 80 places in the brand's league table into 15th place after one full year of trading since acquisition.

Grainger's bosses are driving a focus on four key areas: people, partnership, process and performance management. "It is only by measuring and managing every aspect of the business that we can create an environment capable of achieving 100% customer satisfaction in every department throughout the year," said managing director Harry Grainger in his awards entry.

SHORTLISTED

Selected from the winners of:

- Dealer Group up to 10 sites (Grainger Motor Group)
- Dealer Group more than 10 sites (Waylands)
- Used Car Performance of the Year (Grainger Motor Group)

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Inductees Dale Wyatt, former director of automobile, Suzuki GB (second left) and Steve Nash, former chief executive, IMI (centre), collected their trophies from Billy Coutin, chief executive officer of award sponsors GardX Group (second from right). Also pictured is AM editor Tim Rose (left)

AM HALL OF FAME

Inductees: Steve Nash, former IMI chief executive, and Dale Wyatt, former Suzuki GB director of automobile

In a rare occurrence, *Automotive Management* inducted two people into our Hall of Fame this year. Both are immensely respected leaders in this industry, both share a level of experience that must be hard to match and a leadership style which is frank yet collaborative – celebratory even.

STEVE NASH

Nash spent 12 years as chief executive of the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), during which he kept the spotlight shining on the reality of the modern motor retail industry to illustrate the wonderful work within it. An industry that invests in skills and provides career paths for the ambitious. An industry that is dealing with rapid development of technology such as electric powertrains and advanced driver assis-

tant systems. An industry that requires high levels of competency and safe, professional workplaces that are welcoming to a diverse range of employees.

Prior to his role at the IMI, Nash spent more than 25 years with BMW Group UK, of which 15 were as a director, overseeing its aftersales function for the BMW and Mini brands.

His passion for technical and leadership excellence should not be underestimated, and throughout his career Nash has made it his mission to raise both the public perception of the industry and the professional standards within it.

DALE WYATT

Wyatt continues to be a prominent figure in UK automotive even though he retired from Suzuki GB this year.

Wyatt served as director of automobile at Suzuki GB for 17 years, overseeing operations in the UK and Ireland. He was instrumental in promoting the brand's unique identity, emphasising "Suzukiness", a blend of reliability, affordability and driving enjoyment. His tenure has been marked by significant achievements, personal resilience and a profound impact on the industry.

An inspiring leader, who has always valued open communication and strong relationships with Suzuki's retail partners, he is supportive yet challenging, ensuring they can stretch themselves to achieve more.

As he told AM in 2018 "Our relationship with our dealer network is the most important thing in the business. The dealer franchise model attracts lots of entrepreneurs and it is a privilege to work alongside them."

PREVIOUS INDUCTEES

- 2024 – John Clark OBE, John Clark Motor Group
- 2023 – Daksh Gupta, Marshall Motor Group and BEN
- 2022 – Stuart Foulds, TrustFord
- 2021 – Professor Richard Parry-Jones, Marshall Motor Group
- 2020 – Graham Day, CEM Day

- 2019 – Tony Whitehorn, Hyundai
- 2018 – Jack Tordoff MBE, JCT600
- 2017 – Michael Smyth, Swansway Group
- 2016 – Mark Squires, Benfield Motor Group and NFDA
- 2015 – Gerard Nieuwenhuys, Sytner

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Elliott Perks, co-founder and CEO, Jigcar (second from left), picked up the trophy with commercial director Jon Pollock from Kate Atkinson, account manager, AM

BEST NEW PRODUCT OR SERVICE

Winner: Jigcar

Jigcar has made an extraordinary impact on automotive logistics with its innovative software solution, which is redefining how car dealerships manage their vehicle movements.

Launched in February 2024, Jigcar was established to address a glaring gap in the market for logistics software designed specifically for the industry.

Unlike traditional logistics software aimed at parcels or consumer goods, Jigcar offers a tailored solution that allows car dealers to control and optimise the cost and efficiency of moving vehicles through multiple channels, including drivers, third parties and marketplaces.

The idea for Jigcar was born out of the experiences of its founders, who were part of the logistics

technology team at Cazoo. There, they quickly identified that the existing logistics systems were ill-suited for the needs of automotive retail.

This led to the creation of a prototype with the support of Glyn Hopkin, which subsequently raised £750,000 in early 2024 to further develop the product.

Since then, Jigcar has proven to be a game-changer for large dealer groups, including Glyn Hopkin, Perrys, Steven Eagell and Parks.

Jigcar's software empowers dealer leadership teams to gain visibility over logistics operations like never before.

The platform streamlines the process of moving cars across sites, offering data-driven insights that identify inefficiencies and reduce operational costs.

Customers have reported significant success, with

Glyn Hopkin managing more than 3,180 vehicle movements and Steven Eagell 2,197-plus movements in just six months.

This has led to a projected £1m+ impact on the bottom line in 2025 through reduced days-to-sell and optimised logistics strategies.

A testimonial from one senior director at Glyn Hopkin highlights the profound impact of Jigcar: "The platform has truly revolutionised our logistics and stock management, paving the way for significant cost reductions for our motor group."

Jigcar's combination of cutting-edge technology, deep industry insight, and commitment to driving efficiency sets it apart as a standout player in the automotive sector, and the fast pace of its adoption is a testament to the value it delivers.

SHORTLISTED

- Car Buddy Chat
- Carwow Collects
- Generational

- Impel CarBuying AI
- Jigcar
- Keyloop Service Hub
- OpenClosed Software

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Steve Beattie, sales & marketing director, BYD UK (centre), collected the trophy from Stephen Briers, group editor, AM

HYBRID OF THE YEAR

Winner: BYD Seal U DM-i

BYD might have established itself as an electric car brand, initially, but is now expanding its line-up to meet the continued retail demand for cars with an internal combustion engine.

The Seal U is a D-segment SUV that is based on BYD's existing Seal saloon. It competes with the Ford Kuga, Kia Sportage and MG HS.

As a plug-in hybrid, the Seal U combines BYD's electric car expertise with the capability for long-range convenience.

Its Super Dual Mode hybrid powertrain integrates a 1.5-litre petrol engine with the option of front- and all-wheel drive configurations.

In day-to-day driving the car can function like an EV, but brings the benefit of a combined range of almost 700 miles when the petrol engine is used.

The entry-level Boost version uses front-wheel drive and achieves a zero-emission range of 50 miles from its 18kWh battery. It has a power output of 217PS and official fuel economy of 403mpg.

Comfort models utilise the same powertrain but have a larger 26kWh battery, providing a range of 78 miles and up to 706mpg.

The Design version has two electric motors and all-wheel drive, along with the smaller 18kWh battery. Total output is 323PS and the electric range is 43 miles with fuel economy of 282mpg.

Both batteries support 11kW AC charging and 18kW DC charging. The engine can also charge the battery, so electric driving is always available.

Pricing starts at £33,205, for the Boost, and the standard equipment list includes alloy wheels, LED headlights, vegan leather upholstery, wireless phone charging, an Infinity premium sound system and a 15.6-inch rotating infotainment screen.

The Seal U DM-i has a spacious interior that looks and feels upmarket, thanks to premium material choices. The rear seat space is generous, enabling three adult passengers to travel in comfort.

There's also a large boot, with a capacity of 425 litres.

**VOTED BY
DEALERS**

SHORTLISTED

- BMW M5
- BYD Seal U-DMI
- Hyundai Santa Fe
- MG HS
- Porsche Panamera
- Volkswagen Tiguan

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Sanka De Silva, sales director, Kia UK (centre), received the trophy from Lance Boseley, marketing director of award sponsors Diamondbrite

EV OF THE YEAR

Winner: Kia EV3

Electric cars are often criticised for being too expensive or not having enough range. In the case of the Kia EV3, neither is applicable.

It's exceptionally capable, managing up to 375 miles between charges, while pricing is very competitive. In fact, the EV3 shows how evolving technology can drive down prices. For example, it's cheaper than the ageing Kia Niro, despite being significantly more advanced and capable.

Built on a new, dedicated electric platform, the EV3 is designed from the ground up as an electric vehicle.

It takes inspiration from Kia's successful EV6 and EV9, blending advanced technology and everyday

practicality at a highly accessible price point.

The boxy styling takes inspiration from the EV9, giving the car a crisp and modern look.

Starting at £33,005, the entry-level Air trim includes standard equipment such as alloy wheels, heated seats, adaptive cruise control, parking sensors and a reversing camera.

Upgraded trims, GT Line and GT Line S, add further premium features.

Two battery options cater to differing driving needs: the EV3 Standard Range variant comes with a 58.3kWh battery offering up to 270 miles of range, while the Long Range model features a larger 81.4kWh battery, capable of travelling up to 375

miles per charge. Both use a single 204PS electric motor.

Charging speeds of up to 135kW are supported, giving a 10%-to-80% charge time of around 30 minutes.

With a 25-litre storage compartment in the front and a substantial 460-litre rear cargo area, the Kia EV3 provides impressive luggage capacity. It matches the interior space of the larger Kia Sportage despite sitting in a smaller segment.

The EV3 ensures excellent comfort and refinement, making it equally suited for long journeys and daily urban use. Its thoughtful blend of versatility and comfort appeals to a broad range of drivers, reinforcing its place as a benchmark in its segment.

SHORTLISTED

- Audi Q6 e-tron
- Ford Capri
- Kia EV3

- Omoda E5
- Peugeot e-5008
- Volvo EX90

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Judges' chair Christopher Macgowan OBE (centre) collected the trophy on behalf of MG Motor UK from Wayne Duxbury, dealer sales director of award sponsors Warrantywise

USED EV OF THE YEAR

Winner: MG4

The MG4 is one of the cheapest new electric cars currently on sale and offers equally good value in the used market.

It has retained the AM Awards Used EV of the Year trophy it won in 2024, which came after it had claimed New EV of the Year in 2023.

And we're not the only ones handing out trophies to the MG4. It was named UK Car of the Year by a panel of motoring journalists in 2023 and Car of the Year by Parkers last year.

The MG4 was lauded for providing the same range, performance and technology as much more expensive

rivals. Two years later, not much has changed.

Based on an all-new platform, the MG4 was the first of a new family of more advanced electric cars from MG. The rear-wheel drive hatch provides keen handling, without sacrificing passenger comfort.

It's available with battery capacities of 51kWh, 64kWh or 77kWh. The MG4 EV Standard Range is capable of travelling 218 miles on the WLTP cycle – with Long Range Models capable of 280 and the Extended Range able to cover 323 miles.

The Standard Range car develops 170PS, the Long Range model serves up 203PS and the Extended

Range puts out 245PS. All can sprint from rest to 62mph in less than eight seconds.

For those wanting something a little more exciting, the MG4 XPower uses a twin-motor set-up, giving 425PS and a 0–62mph time of 3.8 seconds.

Spec levels are high, with a 10.25-inch central touchscreen and separate digital instrument cluster display as standard, along with MG Pilot driver assistant systems and a suite of connected services.

The car also comes with a seven-year/80,000-mile warranty, which remains one of the longest fully transferable warranties in its class.

SHORTLISTED

■ Audi Q4 E-tron
■ BYD Seal
■ Ford Mustang Mach-E

■ Kia E-Niro
■ Kia EV6
■ MG4

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Patrick McGillicuddy, managing director, Jaguar Land Rover UK (centre), collected the trophy from Gordon Bush, sales director of award sponsors Car Care Plan

USED CAR OF THE YEAR

Winner: Land Rover Defender

When Land Rover resurrected the iconic Defender in 2019 there were fears that it had lost touch with its origins and the new, more expensive car would struggle to find buyers.

What actually happened was the complete opposite. The Defender Mk2 has been a runaway success, achieving annual sales volumes the original car could only dream of.

It resonates both with existing Land Rover customers, who appreciate its off-road capability and ruggedness, as well as an entirely new customer type who saw the car as a fashionable choice and were prepared to pay big money for a high-spec example.

Last year, Auto Trader recognised the Defender as one of the most in-demand new cars and that popularity extends to the used market.

AM readers voted unequivocally in favour of the Defender as their favourite used car and, with plenty sold new, there's no shortage of supply.

The Defender launched with a selection of four-cylinder petrol and diesel engines, offered in three-door '90' or five-door '110' body styles. A commercial vehicle variant, known as the Defender Hardtop joined the range later.

Engine options were extended to more powerful six-cylinder units, with mild hybrid technology, as well as a plug-in hybrid. A flagship V8 version completed the line-up.

More recently, the Defender 130 was introduced, with a longer wheelbase and the option of seven seats. There's a wide range of accessory packs and options, increasing the potential for individuality.

The interior strikes the balance between quality and toughness and there are all the latest technology-connected features to bring this icon firmly into the 21st century. Included are over-the-air software updates and the Pivi Pro infotainment system, which features an intuitive interface and its own back-up battery for always-on responses.

The Defender's carefully honed handling also delivers a rewarding drive and first-class comfort across all terrains, as well as having Euro NCAP's maximum five-star safety rating.

SHORTLISTED

- Ford Puma
- Kia Sportage
- Land Rover Defender

- Mercedes-Benz GLC-Class
- Nissan Qashqai
- Volvo XC60

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Paul Philpott, president and CEO, Kia UK (centre), collected the trophy from David Paterson, managing director of award sponsors Supagard

NEW CAR OF THE YEAR

Winner: Kia EV3

With an impressive range, attractive pricing and plenty of space inside, the Kia EV3 entered the compact SUV segment as a class leader, and now it has been voted New Car of the Year by AM's dealer readers.

Using an all-new platform, the EV3 was designed to be electric from day one. It follows the precedent set by Kia's excellent EV6 and EV9 models, bringing high levels of technology and practicality at an affordable price. It's an indirect replacement for the Kia Soul and is offered alongside the Niro, as a more technologically advanced proposition.

Unsurprisingly, the newcomer has already become Kia's best-selling electric model.

The EV3 compares well against its rivals, offering more specification, more space and more range along with lower pricing. The entry-level Air model costs from £33,005 on-the-road and comes with alloy wheels, heated front seats, adaptive cruise control, parking sensors and a reversing camera. There's also GT Line and GT Line S variants, which come with more equipment.

Two battery sizes are available: the EV3 Standard Range model uses a 58.3kWh battery, while the EV3 Long Range variant has an 81.4kWh battery.

The Standard Range can cover 270 miles between charges, while the Long Range manages up to 375 miles. Both battery options are paired with a single 204PS electric motor.

With a 25-litre trunk and a 460-litre rear load capacity, Kia claims that the EV3 offers the largest luggage space in its class. It has as much interior space as a Kia Sportage, despite competing in the segment beneath.

The interior design takes inspiration from Kia's existing EV6 and EV9 models, with a minimalist, yet premium, approach. There's a pair of large screens at the top of the dash, providing infotainment and instruments, plus a touch panel for the climate controls.

Comfort levels are high, along with refinement, making the EV3 an ideal choice for buyers that cover long distances regularly, as well as those that want to use it in an urban environment.

SHORTLISTED

- BMW M5 (PHEV)
- BYD Seal U-DMi (PHEV)
- Ford Capri (EV)
- Ford Explorer (EV)
- Kia EV3 (EV)
- Volvo EX90 (EV)

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