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**PERSONAL FINANCE**



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- Over 150 years in the UK
- Bringing together a strong motor offer



CONSUMER FINANCE  
SOLUTIONS



TAILORED LEASING AND  
FINANCE SOLUTIONS



VEHICLE LEASING AND  
FLEET MANAGEMENT



INSURANCE  
SOLUTIONS

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- ✓ 16 manufacturer partnerships

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- ✓ PERSONAL LOANS
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- ✓ PERSONAL CONTRACT HIRE
- ✓ VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS

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- RANGE OF SOLUTIONS
- PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

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# AM

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**AM AWARDS 2019 / P11**

This year's shortlist is out – but are you on it?

**SEAT UK / P24**

MD Richard Harrison wants to consolidate SUV success

**NEXT-LEVEL  
MANAGEMENT / P29**

How to identify and encourage the future generation of executives

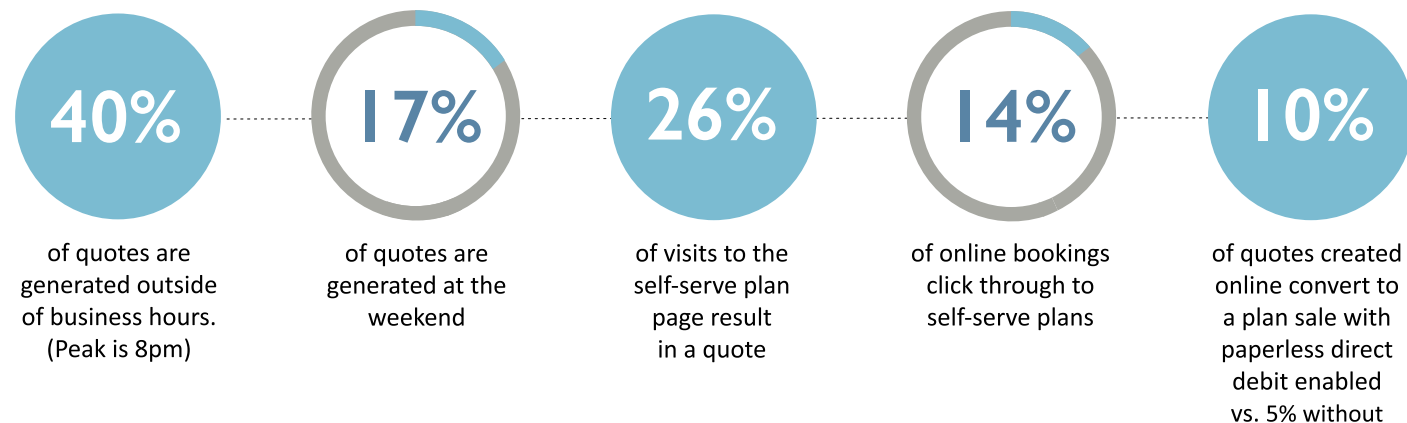
# A MODERN RETAILING MACHINE

ARNOLD CLARK CEO EDDIE HAWTHORNE / P18



# Self-serve plans

with paperless direct debit.



When customers visit your website today, they're both consciously and subconsciously comparing the design, usability and functionality to those from some of the world's biggest brands, like Apple and Nike. If your offering doesn't compare, your reputation could suffer. Dealers need to become customer-centric to succeed, this starts with your website and providing digital customer self-service tools. Those dealers that offer online features that would normally only be available to a customer while in dealership will have more success than those that don't.

One such facility is self-serve plans. Customers should be able to configure a plan to their requirements from a VRM lookup and purchase directly from your website. eDynamix offer such a solution which is available to your customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our self-serve plan feature is fully customisable, responsive and can be embedded in your website, regardless of your website supplier, and is also available through API to allow 3rd party companies to build their own interfaces.

Quotes can even be configured in-dealership, then amended and confirmed by the customer from the comfort of their own home, or vice-versa. If a customer enters their bank details, they can confirm it immediately online using our paperless direct debit option.

Digital self-service technology is going to have an enormous effect not only on customer service provision, but also the way businesses market themselves and compete with one another.

The technologies at the heart of self-service tools have the potential to revolutionise every aspect of a dealer's business. Whatever the future holds, digital self-service technology is leading the way and dealers need to start preparing for it now because, without it dealer's will fail to meet their customers' expectations.

To find out more, call us on 0845 413 0000, visit [www.edynamix.com](http://www.edynamix.com) or email [enquiries@edynamix.com](mailto:enquiries@edynamix.com)



## EDITOR'S LETTER

Our industry is coming under increasing pressure to break down the barriers between physical and digital motor retailing more quickly. Customers want a frictionless experience now, we are told. But new processes and investments in software don't come cheap, so is the industry really equipped to invest in them when the average for a dealership's return on sales remains below 1%?

With Brexit looming, franchised dealers need to have cash in the bank so they can cope should their worst-case trading scenarios become reality. Isn't it about time manufacturers open the tap a little more and allow the profits to flow?

By now, franchisees have invested in carmakers' new corporate identity demands, have scaled up their workforce for the 2016 peak and pared it back again as the market has declined, and are changing their businesses into 21st-century retailers. Their overheads are still increasing – Eddie Hawthorne highlights the issues of business rates and bank charges in his interview on Page 18 – but are their business opportunities increasing alongside them? The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders expects the new car market to decline further in 2019, albeit more gently than the 7% drop it suffered in 2018. Used car sales volumes may begin to follow the new car market downwards.

Competition and trading conditions do not look like they are going to get any easier. So come on, manufacturers – give your "retail partners" a bit more support in 2019.

### MEET THE TEAM



**Tim Rose**  
Editor



**Tom Sharpe**  
News and features editor



**Stephen Briers**  
Editor-in-chief



**Jeremy Bennett**  
Head of digital/associate editor



# Change uncertainty into clarity

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 **Hitachi Capital (UK) PLC Vehicle Solutions**

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Arnold Clark  
Automobiles



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# WILL BRITAIN HOST A NEW DEALER NETWORK AGAIN?

Online showrooms, city stores and the rise in PCH funding and mobility as a service make new motor retail entrants to the UK unlikely to pursue a physical franchised dealer model

**I** don't foresee a time when another car manufacturer will enter the UK with a desire to establish traditional franchisee relationships or any significant physical presence." Frost and Sullivan partner and board member Sarwant Singh's vocalising of a scenario which seems to spell the end game for the franchised car retail model as we know it will send a shiver down the spine of many AM readers.

While a still healthy UK car retail market is capable of sustaining thousands of franchised businesses, the realisation that entrants to the market will head in a new direction could be taken as a clear indicator that a tide is turning.

In a recent contribution to AM, Loughborough University director of the Centre for Automotive Management, Jim Saker, questioned suggestions that the new car market was failing, citing still lofty year-end registration totals and new entrants destined to the region from China.

**I FORESEE BRANDS COMING AND PERHAPS HAVING A PRESENCE IN FIVE OR SIX CITIES ACROSS THE UK AND THAT WILL BE IT**  
**SARWANT SINGH, FROST AND SULLIVAN PARTNER**

But the plans laid out by the likes of Geely's Polestar and Lynk & Co brands, along with fellow new market entrant, Byton, all have one thing in common – none intends to establish a franchised retail network of any scale.

"I foresee brands coming and perhaps having a presence in five or six cities across the UK and that will be it, like the model set to be adopted by Polestar," Singh told AM.

"Chinese automotive manufacturers who have, in the past, put one or two products into Asia or Latin America are now looking to Europe and, with some very high-end electric vehicles (EVs), are keen to claim a share of the market.

"It looks like their first stop will be the UK, as it is seen as a slightly easier, softer entry than the more shark-like territory that is Germany. "But key to any luxury brand entering the market now has to be a very attractive lease or rental model first and foremost."

## THE PREMIUM FRINGE FALTERS

Singh suggested that while the dominance of German brands in Europe was part of the reason new automotive sector brands would side-step franchised networks, a shift in consumer demand towards subscription models also presented an opportunity for emerging manufacturers.

He suggested that the faltering fortunes of Infiniti and the yet-to-be-proven repositioning of DS Automobiles as a standalone premium brand could infer that a radical approach is needed for new players in the sector and Tesla's franchise-free model appears to be the one of choice.

Nissan's premium brand, which suffered a 78.7% volume decline in 2018, from 3,515 to just 750 units, despite building its Q30 and QX30 models in Sunderland, has just six UK dealerships, following the recent closure of the Glyn Hopkin-run site in St Albans.

All but Belfast's Mervyn Stewart Infiniti site are now operated by the Infiniti Retail Group.

This year, the brand will introduce its new Q50 saloon and QX50 SUV, however, and an Infiniti spokesman told *Autocar* that there are no plans for it to exit the UK.

"Once you're in, it's important to stay to continue supporting the brand and our customers," he said. "It's a long road in terms of raising brand awareness and getting the right product."

With the backing of parent company Nissan, Infiniti's fortunes may yet change.

DS, meanwhile, saw its 2018 UK registrations fall by 44.1% to 5,074 (2017: 9,082).

## MOBILITY MATTERS

Geely-owned Volvo is cited among the brands that Singh and fellow Frost and Sullivan principal analyst, Octavian Chelu, believe are leading the way towards a new subscription model that will see them compete with an entirely new breed of mobility-led car brands.

Care by Volvo, launched with the XC40 SUV in September 2017, starts from £799 a month and this includes insurance, servicing, tyres, and breakdown cover.



Volvo's scheme is administered by its franchised retailers and allows customers to use another Volvo in the range on 14 days of their choice.

Jaguar's InMotion Carpe product, meanwhile, starts from £910 and dealers get paid for aftersales work in the same way they currently do, with vehicles sold by JLR on leasing contracts.

Nicola Murphy, Volvo UK direct sales manager, who also heads up Care by Volvo in the UK, said: "The target demographic is people that aren't interested in the traditional ownership model, but they want additional services and use of a vehicle."

This is the customer that newcomers to the sector are likely to target, while side-stepping the costly business of establishing a retail network to deliver direct sales in a model currently only fully exploited by Tesla.

## THE NEW BREED

Polestar is already the best-known incoming brand to the UK's new car market in 2019 by virtue of its ties to Volvo and has offered the chance to operate its high street Polestar Spaces to existing franchisees of the brand.

Just 500 £135,000 Polestar 1 hybrid coupés – a vehicle producing 600PS from a two-litre turbo engine and electric motors on the rear axle – will be sold globally, but a 400PS four-door Polestar 2 EV is expected to be added as a £50,000 rival to the Tesla Model 3 in the second half of 2019.

The Polestar 2 will be offered exclusively on a subscription basis, which will take the form of "a slightly more premium version" of the Care by Volvo scheme, according to the brand.

Geely's Sweden-based Lynk&Co brand follows a similar roll-out model to Polestar, with online sales

backed by boutique-style "Offline Stores", which will initially be established in Amsterdam, quickly followed by new locations in Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels and London.

Lynk&Co is expected to make its UK debut in 2020 with two plug-in hybrid SUV models – the 01 and 02 – which will be produced at Volvo's production facility, in Ghent, Belgium.

Technology-focused Chinese EV brand Byton showcased the 48-inch curved 'Shared Experience Display' of its M-Byte SUV, which will also enter the UK market later this year, at the CES technology show in Las Vegas.

It's another EV brand that will rely on online sales, with urban stores in major cities.

With 71kWh and 95kWh capacities, the Byton M-Byte claims to be capable of a zero-emission range of 248 or 323 miles and is expected to sell for about £33,000.

## ONLINE SUCCESS

Whether the new brands poised to enter the UK market make a success of their new products and new retail concepts will rely on savvy marketing and an acceleration in the shift towards alternative ownership models.

Adrian Dally, head of motor finance at the Finance and Leasing Association (FLA), identified the shift in consumers' openness toward finance solutions, which place less emphasis on ownership, as a key indicator that leasing solutions will gain traction on the road to mobility as a service (MaaS).

"PCP is currently 80% of the market but PCH (personal contract hire) is growing fast. It has gone up from 2.4% of the market in 2010/11 to 10/11% now – a much higher growth rate than PCP," he said.

But with many established car brands still registering relatively



small demand for their online retail channels, it remains unclear whether consumers will spend their money with unfamiliar newcomers.

Summing up the challenges faced by emerging Chinese brands, Jato Dynamics analyst Felipe Munoz said: "Whenever a new brand is born, not only does it have to deal with already established rivals in the market, but with tougher regulation, more complex environmental targets and a more demanding consumer base.

"This is the reality for the Chinese car brands wishing to enter global markets. The situation becomes even more complicated when their reputation for quality is low."

Singh believes the trend towards the adoption of new market entrants will be led by convenience.

"Increasingly, people want to access mobility when they want it and if new car brands can enter the market with a completely new route to market, which delivers that to consumers, of course they can succeed," he said.

"The ability to swap cars regularly, share a vehicle with neighbours or friends and pay for usage is becoming key and there are many more brands with MaaS solutions waiting in the wings that can make a genuine impact in the UK."

**TOM SHARPE**





## ADVERTISING FEATURE

# 17.9m minutes of consumer attention in 2018

By Alistair Horsburgh, CEO, CitNOW



Almost 9 million personalised and web videos were recorded by automotive retailers using CitNOW's platform in 2018. That breaks down to 6m workshop videos, 2.3m sales and 300,000 website videos and, in total, 17.9m minutes of consumer

attention and time spent watching.

The big question is, what is being watched?

Retailers shot far fewer videos for use on websites, 388,657, although these are likely to be viewed multiple times as part of the online forecourt, but watch rates achieved a staggering 82%. The high viewings for web are also backed up by CitNOW's latest consumer research, which found that more than 50% of customers believe an online video tour of a used car for sale is an important or essential part of the used vehicle listing.

Watch rates for personal sales and service messages for 2018 were 59% and 44% respectively. However, retailers can uplift watch rates significantly by combining an email with an SMS message. CitNOW stats show communicating personal video using both methods, whether it's for sales or service, boosts watch rates to an incredible average of 74%.

While the sheer volume of video reflects its growth as a communication tool throughout the sector and across the world, it's the quality that matters. CitNOW uses a five-star rating system, with customers showing their appreciation of personal videos received with average ratings just off the full five across the board.

Bodyshop videos averaged a star rating of 4.67, service videos were rated on average slightly higher at 4.71, but, at 4.81 stars on average, videos made by sales teams received the highest ratings.



## THIS MONTH'S NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

IN DETAIL  
To view the full story go to  
[am-online.co.uk/news](http://am-online.co.uk/news)



DEC

14th

### RETAILERS ISSUED WITH ALTERNATIVE FUEL VEHICLE GUIDE

The National Franchised Dealers Association (NFDA) has published a guide on alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust (EST), Zap-Map and the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV). The guide, issued to 5,500 car retailers, offers best-practice advice on how to keep consumers informed.



17th

### JLR AND FORD TO CUT 'THOUSANDS' OF JOBS

Jaguar Land Rover and Ford are to cut thousands of jobs in the automotive sector. JLR confirmed it would lose 4,500 workers, the majority of them in the UK, while Ford has announced plans to cut "thousands" of jobs across Europe.



19th

### SINCLAIR GROUP ACQUIRES HAY-ON-WYE LAND ROVER SITE

Sinclair Group added its first Land Rover franchise with the acquisition of Likes Land Rover at Hay-on-Wye from Walters Group. All 35 staff employed at the site will be transferred to Sinclair Group.

21st

### 19.6% FALL IN CAR MANUFACTURING VERY CONCERNING, SAYS SMMT

The SMMT attributed UK car manufacturing's serious decline in productivity of 19.6% during November to falling business and consumer confidence caused by Brexit. SMMT chief executive, Mike Hawes (pictured), said the decline was "very concerning".



24th

### VW REPORTED NEW EMISSIONS ANOMALIES 'PROMPTLY'

Volkswagen Group said it "promptly moved" to alert German authorities after it discovered "anomalies" while running checks on updated software designed to measure emissions in its EA189 1.2-litre diesel engines. "As a short-term precaution, there was a joint decision to halt the current implementation," said VW.

JAN

2nd

### AUTO TRADER AND COX AUTO UK LAUNCH JOINT VENTURE

Auto Trader and Cox Automotive UK have brought together their used car stocking platforms under a re-launched Dealer Auction business. Dealer Auction's managing director, Le Etta Pearce, left, said: "We believe we can fundamentally improve and make changes to the industry that will benefit wholesale sellers and retailers alike."



### HENDY GROUP ACQUIRES SEWARD GROUP



Hendy Group has acquired Hampshire-based Seward Group. Chief executive Paul Hendy said the purchase of the group, which operates Renault and Dacia franchises in Bilton

Way, Portsmouth, and a Suzuki franchise on West Street, Havant, would consolidate Hendy's position in the area.

### PENTAGON ACQUIRES THREE TRUSTFORD DEALERSHIPS



Pentagon Motor Group completed the acquisition of TrustFord dealerships in Warrington, St Helens and Runcorn to join the Ford franchise for the first time. David Lewis (left), the managing director of Pentagon Motor Group, said, "We have worked hard to get to this point with Ford."

### NEW CAR SALES DOWN 24.9% AT CAMBRIA

Cambria Automobiles reported that increased profit per unit generated by its luxury franchise portfolio helped to mitigate the effects of a 24.9% slump in new car sales during the three months to the end of November. In a trading update issued via the London Stock Exchange, the AM100 retail group said it remained "well positioned for the year ahead".



### VERTU ACQUIRES ONLINE RETAILER VANS DIRECT



Vertu Motors has bought Newport-based online commercial vehicles retailer Vans Direct in a £7.5 million deal. Chief executive Robert Forrester said: "We expect Vans Direct to generate an

earnings stream with higher gross and net margins than those typically earned by the group."

3rd

4th

7th

## ADVERTISING FEATURE

## Give your customers self-service tools

By Iain Nickalls, director, eDynamix



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## WHAT CAR?

**AM**  
AWARDS: 2019

AM AWARDS 2019  
THE SHORTLIST

# THE SHORTLIST

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, THE ICC, BIRMINGHAM

## BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Carbase  
Marshall Motor Group  
TrustFord  
Sponsored by Marketing Delivery

## BEST WEBSITE

Arnold Clark Automobiles  
Bridgend Ford  
BuyaCar.co.uk  
Carbase  
Gates  
Imperial Cars  
Sandcliffe Motor Group  
Sponsored by CarGurus

## BEST IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Arnold Clark Automobiles  
BuyaCar.co.uk  
Cartime  
M&A Coachworks  
MB Motors Ballymena  
Motonet.com  
Westcars of Tiverton  
Sponsored by EMaC

## BEST AFTERSALES TEAM

J Edgar & Sons  
Milcars Mazda  
Thame Cars  
Sponsored by GTechniq

## BEST SALES TEAM – NEW OR USED

Alexanders Prestige  
BuyaCar.co.uk  
Perrys Vauxhall of Dover  
Rygor Commercial  
Sponsored by Barclays  
Partner Finance

## BEST USED CAR DEALER – FRANCHISED

Arnold Clark Automobiles  
Lookers Škoda Newcastle  
Perrys Vauxhall of Canterbury  
Roadside Garages  
Sponsored by Autoclenz

## BEST FLEET OR LOCAL BUSINESS DEALER

Clive Brook Volvo  
Johnsons Fleet Services  
Norton Way Corporate Sales  
TrustFord  
Sponsored by MFG Group

## MOST IMPROVED DEALERSHIP

Carbase  
Marshall Volkswagen Newbury  
MB Motors Ballymena  
Mercedes-Benz of Preston  
Westcars of Tiverton  
Sponsored by BNP Paribas  
Personal Finance

## BEST DEALERSHIP

Milcars Mazda  
Newmans Suzuki  
Perrys Ford Chesterfield  
Swansway Wrexham Volkswagen  
Sponsored by Rhino Events

## BEST DEALER GROUP – UP TO 10 SITES

Gravells of Kidwelly  
John Banks Motor Group  
Porsche Retail Group  
Sponsored by Diamondbrite

## BEST DEALER GROUP – MORE THAN 10 SITES

Imperial Cars  
TrustFord  
Sponsored by DSG Finance

## BEST MARKETING STRATEGY

Barretts  
Kia Motors UK  
TrustFord  
Sponsored by Motors.co.uk

## BEST NEW DEALERSHIP

RRG Škoda of Bolton  
Perrys FordStore Chesterfield  
Sponsored by RAPID RTC

## BEST NEW PRODUCT OR SERVICE

Alphera Financial Services  
Calldrip  
Cap HPI  
David Utting Engineering  
EMaC

## BEST USED CAR DEALER – INDEPENDENT

Alexanders Prestige  
Carbase  
Cartime  
Imperial Cars  
MB Motors Ballymena  
Motonet.com  
Thame Cars  
Sponsored by Santander  
Consumer Finance

## THE COMMUNITY HERO AWARD

Arnold Clark Automobiles  
Aston Martin Cambridge  
TrustFord  
Sponsored by Texaco Havoline

## USED CAR OF THE YEAR

Audi A3  
Ford Fiesta  
Kia Sportage  
Nissan Qashqai  
Volkswagen Golf  
Volvo XC60  
Sponsored by Car Care Plan

## NEW CAR OF THE YEAR

Ford Focus  
Jaguar I-Pace  
Kia Ceed  
Peugeot 508  
Volkswagen T-Roc  
Volvo XC40  
Sponsored by Supagard

## FRANCHISE PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Ford  
Kia  
Volvo  
Sponsored by Autoweb Design

## DEALER PRINCIPAL/GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Lee Gibbs, Imperial Cars Southampton  
Richard Gough, Mercedes-Benz of Preston  
Steve Puttock, Westcars of Tiverton  
Chris Ward, Milcars Mazda  
Karl White, Thame Cars  
Gary Wood, Swansway Wrexham  
Volkswagen  
Sponsored by LTK Consultants

## MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

Hyundai  
Kia  
Seat  
Volvo  
Sponsored by carwow

## SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

Alphera Financial Services  
Aston Barclay  
Cap HPI  
iVendi  
Rapid RTC  
Sponsored by Copeland Automotive  
Recruitment

## AM PEOPLE INVESTOR AWARD

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Holden & Holden  
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## AM AWARDS SPONSORS





2018 MARKET REVIEW

# NOT EVERYONE SHARED THE PAIN EQUALLY IN 2018

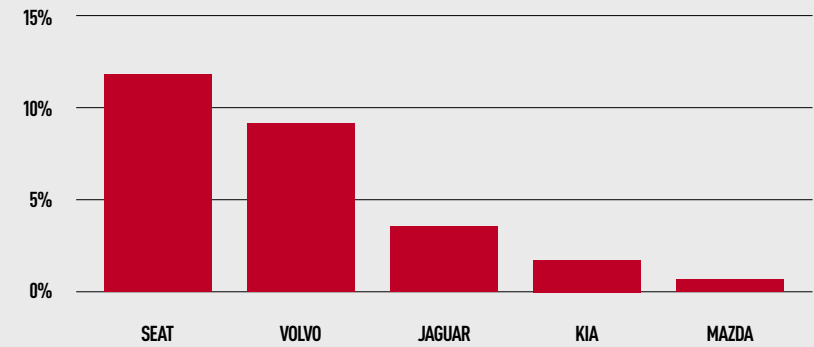
The D segment – down 26% – nears MPV levels of unviability, as Nissan leads the biggest fallers

**T**he overall new car market declined by 6.8% in 2018, to 2.37 million registrations, but movements within particular segments have been far more extreme, with no fewer than four segments falling by more than 20% (see chart below). The D segment (e.g. Ford Mondeo) fell by 26% to just 2.4% market share. Only two models (Vauxhall Insignia and VW Passat) sold more than 10,000 units, which calls into question the viability of the segment. Traditionally, the UK has been the second-largest market in Europe for such cars, however there is no sign that the rest of Europe will come to the rescue. Total 2018 figures are not yet available for all European markets, but the indications are that only the VW Passat, Škoda Superb and Opel/Vauxhall Insignia sold more than 50,000 units across the continent. It is hard to see how any European-made D-segment models

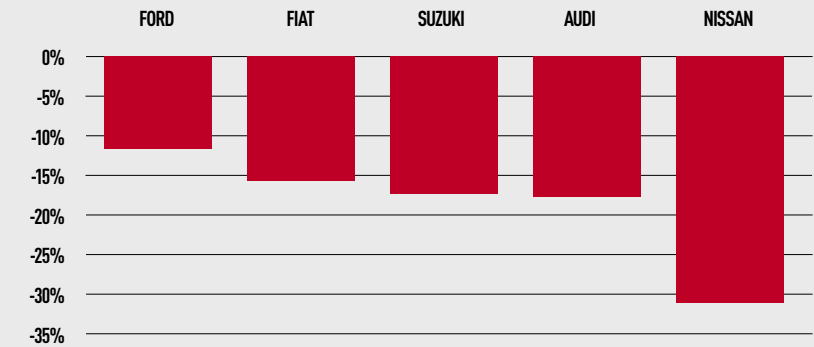
can be viable at volumes of 50,000 or fewer. The D segment's half-brother, the Compact Executive segment, fell by a near-identical 26.2%. The segment is still easily large enough to be viable, at 5.2% market share, but the issue here is the degree of concentration. German brands accounted for 87.4% of total sales, with BMW selling more 3 and 4 Series in the UK than Ford sells Mondeos across the whole of Europe. That means other brands are pretty well locked out of the segment – as Jaguar (XE) and Alfa (Giulia) have discovered to their cost. Another long-established segment in serious decline is specialist sports cars and coupés, spanning the whole spectrum from the Mazda MX-5 to the Lamborghini Aventador. It has fallen by 20.7%, to 1.4% market share, the lowest level since records began. The key losses have come from small coupés, which have effectively ceased to exist, barring a few hundred examples of the Toyota GT86/Subaru BRZ. Luxury coupés and

sports cars (e.g. Porsche 911) have fared much better, with sales down only 6.8%. The segment that has suffered the biggest fall has been large MPVs, with sales down a remarkable 37.5% to just 1.2% market share – barely more than a rounding error. Some 40% of sales come from the two car-based ranges (Ford S-Max/Galaxy and VW Sharan/Seat Alhambra), and almost everything else is van-based, apart from a few run-out Zafira Tourers. Given current sales volumes, all MPVs will probably be van-based in the near future. The only segment to actually increase sales in a falling market was, inevitably, SUVs, which rose a fractional 0.3%. As an aside, it is worth saying that we do not define B- or C-segment crossovers such as the Mokka X or Qashqai, as SUVs, as they are basically tall hatchbacks. We categorise SUVs as either full-size models such as the Hyundai Santa Fe, or luxury models from the Range Rover Evoque upwards. The biggest growth (17.7%) in SUVs came from large luxury models, such as the Range Rover Sport. Interestingly, JLR registrations in this segment grew by 22%, mostly thanks to the Velar, so JLR's problems are coming from smaller SUVs and Jaguar saloons, not from big heavy diesel off-rovers. At a manufacturer level, Ford had another poor year (-11.6%), mostly due to the Focus model change this year (the Focus lost 19,400 sales in 2018, which is 0.8 percentage points of market share). For the first time in quite a few years, Vauxhall actually lost fewer sales than Ford, although the decline of 9.1% was still worse than the overall market. Paralleling Ford, Vauxhall's biggest loser was the Astra, which lost 17,800 sales – but without a model changeover to provide some consolation. On the positive side, Vauxhall did manage to maintain third place in the manufacturers' table, staying 0.2 percentage points (or 5,000 units) above Mercedes and BMW. However, if present trends continue, both German brands will overtake Vauxhall in 2019. In the end, Mercedes pipped BMW to fourth place by just 190 units – it would be interesting to know how many cars each registered in the last three working days of December.

## HIGHEST GROWTH RATE – MAJOR BRANDS\*



## LOWEST GROWTH RATE – MAJOR BRANDS\*



\*Brands with at least 1% market share

Of the other German brands, VW (second place) outperformed the market with a fall of 2.6%, but Audi (sixth place) fell heavily (-17.9%). Given that Audi was almost level pegging with BMW and Mercedes for the first half of 2018, the decline is likely to have been a one-off event related to problems homologating cars to the new WLTP standard. Taking the market as a whole, the question at the end of each year is who deserves the biggest pat on the back, and who deserves to wear the dunce's cap? The sales equivalent to "Driver of the Day" has to be Seat, whose sales rose by 12%. Seat has now overtaken Renault, Honda and Citroën and has finally become a mainstream brand. An honourable mention should also go to MG, not a brand ever previously quoted in this context. Sales are still modest at 9,000, but they are up 103.8%, and even 9,000 sales are 50% higher than Jeep managed.

It seems harsh to give a dunce's cap to Nissan when it is still the biggest Japanese brand in the UK, and it has an exemplary factory in Sunderland. However, it is hard to overlook a sales fall of 32.1%, which is easily the biggest of any major brand. Both the Juke and the Qashqai lost 14,000 sales in 2018, as these models are now wilting somewhat in the face of stiffer competition. There is also a suspicion that Nissan was pulling the sales elastic very hard in 2017, and it has now snapped back rather painfully. The evidence comes from the fact that Nissan was rock-bottom in the Summer 2017 NFDA Dealer Ratings for both self-registrations and new car targets. A dishonourable mention should also go to Alfa Romeo, whose sales fell 16.7% to just 4,200 units. With two major new models in the Giulia and, especially, the Stelvio, sales should be taking off, not drifting towards oblivion. **DAVID FRANCIS**

## SPONSOR'S COMMENT



By **Richard Jones**,  
managing director,  
Black Horse

As I write in early January, the FCA's final report on its review into the motor finance market is imminent. Its interim announcement last year covered a number of positive aspects on how the market is working and focused on areas such as commission structures, customer understanding and assessing affordability. The FCA found that the growth in car finance has been primarily driven in lower-risk customer segments and that rates of arrears and defaults remain low, comparing favourably with other types of lending. This is good news and reflects the professionalism of those who have adapted to recent regulatory changes. I believe it also reinforces Black Horse's ongoing approach to go beyond adhering to regulations, working with dealers to embed the principles and culture and ensure fair customer outcomes – affordable, clear products delivered via a professional and transparent process. We believe the remaining focus of the FCA's work has been on commission structures and the depth of customers' product understanding through the buying process, which, in the interests of providing transparency and fair value, are to be welcomed. The FCA has a good grasp of the particular commission structures that may carry a higher risk of poor customer outcomes.

At Black Horse, we provide strong finance propositions, but it's equally important to us to work with dealers to get the customer proposition right. That includes providing affordability assessments and using clear and unbiased lower-risk commission structures. Our prudent approach to customer affordability and responsible lending will continue. My key reflection is that the market has progressively adopted higher standards over the past three years, operating positively to provide good customer outcomes and fair value. However, the FCA is increasing its focus on these areas across a range of financial services. Progression isn't a choice, it's a necessity. The bar for that is set by our customers' experiences of other purchases and services, which is always rising. I look forward to understanding the outcome of the FCA's work and to working with our dealer partners to provide continued support both for them and for customers.

NEW CAR REGISTRATIONS

2018 new car market worst for five years

New car registrations were down 6.8% in 2018 to 2.36 million cars, as the market suffered its worst performance in five years. Fleet sales were the hardest hit, with a 7.3% decline, while private registrations were down 6.4% year-on-year, with 71,658 fewer cars sold through dealers. The SMMT currently forecasts a 2.325m unit new car market in 2019, a drop of about 2%. Its quarterly reforecast is due later this month.

**1 FORD**  
The market leader had a tough year, down 33,314 units, partly due to some fleets moving away from diesels and the changeover to the new Focus. Growth from its Kuga and EcoSport SUVs couldn't combat the slumps in sales of the Mondeo and Focus.



**2 MG**  
Its sales volumes doubled in 2018 to just more than 9,000 units. Of those, 5,376 were the ZS compact SUV, while the MG3 hatchback was its second best-seller, with 2,692 sales.



**3 BENTLEY**  
Another VW Group brand to underestimate the impact of WLTP, registrations of its luxury cars dropped by 211 units (12%). Contrast that with rival Aston Martin's drop of just 16 units (1%).



December						Year-to-date						
Marque	2018	% market share	2017	% market share	% change	2018	% market share	2017	% market share	% change		
1	Ford	16,493	11.45	15,541	10.19	6.13	254,082	10.73	287,396	11.31	-11.59	
	Volkswagen	16,010	11.11	15,345	10.06	4.33	203,133	8.58	208,462	8.21	-2.56	
	Vauxhall	12,645	8.78	13,303	8.72	-4.95	177,298	7.49	195,137	7.68	-9.14	
	BMW	11,600	8.05	13,471	8.84	-13.89	172,048	7.27	175,101	6.89	-1.74	
	Mercedes-Benz	11,365	7.89	10,427	6.84	9.00	172,238	7.28	180,970	7.12	-4.83	
	Mini	7,211	5.00	7,127	4.67	1.18	67,021	2.83	68,166	2.68	-1.68	
	Audi	6,310	4.38	10,671	7.00	-40.87	143,739	6.07	174,982	6.89	-17.85	
	Škoda	5,328	3.70	6,433	4.22	-17.18	74,724	3.16	79,758	3.14	-6.31	
	Nissan	5,294	3.67	7,759	5.09	-31.77	102,637	4.34	151,156	5.95	-32.10	
	Peugeot	4,763	3.31	4,134	2.71	15.22	81,043	3.42	82,226	3.24	-1.44	
	Land Rover	4,321	3.00	4,186	2.75	3.23	77,906	3.29	82,653	3.25	-5.74	
	Hyundai	4,009	2.78	5,026	3.30	-20.23	89,925	3.80	93,403	3.68	-3.72	
	Volvo	3,840	2.67	3,195	2.10	20.19	50,319	2.13	46,139	1.82	9.06	
	Kia	3,810	2.64	3,773	2.47	0.98	95,764	4.05	93,222	3.67	2.73	
	Renault	3,540	2.46	3,194	2.09	10.83	62,168	2.63	69,110	2.72	-10.04	
	Toyota	2,936	2.04	5,188	3.40	-43.41	101,922	4.31	101,985	4.01	-0.06	
	Seat	2,805	1.95	3,848	2.52	-27.10	62,863	2.66	56,130	2.21	12.00	
	Honda	2,653	1.84	2,632	1.73	0.80	52,570	2.22	53,901	2.12	-2.47	
	Jaguar	2,304	1.60	2,009	1.32	14.68	37,019	1.56	35,544	1.40	4.15	
	Suzuki	2,154	1.49	2,329	1.53	-7.51	38,519	1.63	40,343	1.59	-4.52	
Mazda	2,018	1.40	1,569	1.03	28.62	39,602	1.67	39,092	1.54	1.30		
Citroën	2,010	1.39	2,180	1.43	-7.80	49,618	2.10	51,455	2.03	-3.57		
Fiat	1,977	1.37	1,645	1.08	20.18	35,652	1.51	44,475	1.75	-19.84		
Dacia	1,890	1.31	983	0.64	92.27	24,169	1.02	25,149	0.99	-3.90		
Mitsubishi	1,722	1.20	1,227	0.80	40.34	21,156	0.89	16,092	0.63	31.47		
Porsche	1,211	0.84	1,036	0.68	16.89	12,437	0.53	14,051	0.55	-11.49		
2	MG	650	0.45	454	0.30	43.17	9,049	0.38	4,441	0.17	103.76	
	Abarth	445	0.31	272	0.18	63.60	5,631	0.24	4,441	0.17	26.80	
	Lexus	420	0.29	772	0.51	-45.60	12,405	0.52	12,670	0.50	-2.09	
	Smart	384	0.27	456	0.30	-15.79	7,631	0.32	10,323	0.41	-26.08	
	Jeep	372	0.26	261	0.17	42.53	6,114	0.26	6,380	0.25	-4.17	
	Alfa Romeo	258	0.18	304	0.20	-15.13	4,161	0.18	4,997	0.20	-16.73	
	Subaru	193	0.13	246	0.16	-21.54	3,141	0.13	2,679	0.11	17.25	
	DS	185	0.13	277	0.18	-33.21	5,074	0.21	9,082	0.36	-44.13	
	SsangYong	111	0.08	141	0.09	-21.28	2,754	0.12	3,590	0.14	-23.29	
	Maserati	103	0.07	125	0.08	-17.60	1,297	0.05	1,701	0.07	-23.75	
	3	Bentley	81	0.06	122	0.08	-33.61	1,542	0.07	1,753	0.07	-12.04
		Aston Martin	77	0.05	78	0.05	-1.28	1,455	0.06	1,471	0.06	-1.09
McLaren		26	0.02	23	0.02	13.04	626	0.03	567	0.02	10.41	
Infiniti		25	0.02	59	0.04	-57.63	750	0.03	3,515	0.14	-78.66	
Lotus		6	0.00	11	0.01	-45.45	247	0.01	279	0.01	-11.47	
Alpine		5	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	142	0.01	0	0.00	0.00	
Chevrolet		3	0.00	4	0.00	-25.00	41	0.00	70	0.00	-41.43	
Other British		61	0.04	45	0.03	35.56	723	0.03	700	0.03	3.29	
Other imports		465	0.32	592	0.39	-21.45	4,792	0.20	5,860	0.23	-18.23	
Total		144,089		152,473		-5.50	2,540,617		2,540,617		-6.83	

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FINANCE OFFERS

Carmakers keen to start Q1 with enticing rates

Dealers are facing multiple pressure points in Q1, with Brexit and WLTP concerns filtering over into the busiest quarter of the year.

While manufacturers have set out their plan of attack for the March plate-change, dealers will at least have some sort of clarity on Brexit before the end of the period and Worldwide harmonised Light vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP) stock should have all filtered through to showrooms following delays last year.

Strong retail offers will be an essential tool to help retailers get a positive start to what will likely be another challenging 12 months.

Nissan's network will have the most riding on a successful Q1, as it saw a 32.1% drop in registrations in 2018, the biggest fall of any of the top 10 volume manufacturers in the UK.

Nissan is supporting its vehicle line-up with some strong 0% offers over four years on nearly every model (the Leaf electric vehicle is the only one with a 5.99% APR).

Other than niche models such as the Leaf and GT-R sports car, Nissan customers can secure a new model for under £300 a month. Big-volume models such as the Juke and Qashqai are available for £261 and £298 respectively.

The Juke will be particularly important this year, as there is a new version due in the summer. This means Nissan will need a compelling offer to help clear stock in Q1 and it has one with a low-deposit of £261.18 to get people into a special edition Bose version.

That will leave dealers with the new Juke by the September plate-change to boost sales in Q3 with a new model that is also expected to come with new powertrain options, including a hybrid.

The UK's premium market shifted last year, with Mercedes now the biggest manufacturer in that sector by volume.

Audi had a punishing 12 months, down 18% to 143,739 units. Those figures put a gulf of almost 30,000 units between Audi and BMW.

Audi is hoping to get things moving for its network with big discounts across its range in Q1. The A3 Sportback features a £3,500 discount when customers take on a PCP, the A4 drops by £2,000, the A5 Coupé and A6 Avant down £6,000 and the A8 gets the biggest price drop at £8,875.

Those deposit contributions aren't met with particularly low APRs, except the A4 at 2.9%, but monthly payments are still affordable at £229 and £249 for entry models such as the A1 and A3.

The UK's biggest volume brand, Ford, also has some ground to make up in Q1. While the total retail market fell by 6.4% in 2018, Ford saw registrations drop by 12%.

TOP FINANCE DEALS FOR RETAIL BUYERS							
Model	Finance type	Deposit	Term	Monthly payment	Final payment	APR	Offer ends
Nissan							
Micra N-SPORT IG-T 100	PCP	£3,993.79	48	£169	£5,829.21	0%	31/03/2019
Juke Bose Personal Edition 1.6 Manual	PCP	£261.18	48	£261.18	£6,542.20	0.00%	31/03/2019
Qashqai 1.5 DCI 115 Acenta Premium 5DR	PCP	£1,000.08	48	£298.68	£8,808.28	0%	31/03/2019
Leaf N-Connecta	PCP	£6,047.62	36	£379	£11,188.95	5.99%	31/03/2019
Navara Double Cab N-GUARD 2.3DCI 190 4WD Manual	PCP	£11,173.01	36	£299	£12,657.99	0.00%	31/03/2019
370Z 3.7L V6 328 PS GT Manual	PCP	£10,555.72	36	£229	£16,005.28	0.00%	31/03/2019
GT-R 3.8L V6 570PS Pure	PCP	£16,970.26	36	£699	£46,047.14	5.99%	31/03/2019
Audi							
A1 Sportback Sport 30 TFSI 116PS 6-speed	PCP	£2,995	48	£229.00	£9,381	5.90%	31/03/2019
A3 Sportback S line 30 TFSI 116 PS 6-speed	PCP	£3,783	48	£249.00	£10,437	5.90%	31/03/2019
A4 Black Edition 35 TFSI 150 PS S tronic	PCP	£8,722	48	£299.00	£12,995	2.90%	31/03/2019
A5 Coupé Black Edition 35 TFSI 150 PS S tronic	PCP	£7,148	48	£329	£14,890	4.90%	31/03/2019
A6 Saloon 40 TDI 204PS S line S tronic	PCP	£6,342	48	£399	£16,215	3.90%	31/03/2019
A6 Avant 40 TDI 204PS S line S tronic	PCP	£6,801	48	£419	£17,110	3.90%	31/03/2019
A7 Sportback S line 40 TDI 204 PS S tronic	PCP	£6,707	48	£479	£19,921	3.90%	31/03/2019
A8 50 TDI quattro 286PS tiptronic	PCP	£11,792	48	£589	£21,605	0.00%	31/03/2019
Q2 Black Edition 35 TFSI 150 PS 6-speed	PCP	£6,017.00	48	£299	£13,653.40	5.90%	31/03/2019
Q3 S Line 35 TFSI CoD 150 PS 6-speed	PCP	£5,183.49	48	£359	£14,388.70	5.90%	31/03/2019
Q5 Black Edition 40 TDI quattro 190 PS S tronic	PCP	£7,043.35	48	£449	£21,209.70	5.90%	31/03/2019
Q7 S line 50 TDI quattro 286 PS tiptronic	PCP	£11,882.58	48	£549	£26,183.90	4.90%	31/03/2019
Q8 S line 50 TDI quattro 286 PS tiptronic	PCP	£11,637.48	48	£699	£32,471.00	6.60%	31/03/2019
Ford							
KA+ Zetec 1.2 Ti-VCT 85PS	PCP	£3,322	24	£99	£6,147	0.00%	31/03/2019
Fiesta Zetec 1.0 100PS 5 door	PCP	£4,607	36	£175	£6,558	0%	31/03/2019
Fiesta ST-2 1.5 200PS 3 door	PCP	£4,628.97	36	£225	£9,655	2.90%	31/03/2019
EcoSport Zetec 1.0 EcoBoost 100PS	PCP	£4,790	36	£190	£6,715	0.00%	31/03/2019
Focus Zetec 1.0 125PS 5 door	PCP	£4,653	36	£230	£7,917	0.00%	31/03/2019
C-MAX Zetec 1.0 EcoBoost 125PS	PCP	£6,338	36	£239	£7,103	0.00%	31/03/2019
Grand C-MAX Zetec 1.0 EcoBoost 125PS	PCP	£7,090	36	£259	£7,231	0.00%	31/03/2019
Kuga ST-Line Edition 1.5 EcoBoost 150PS FWD	PCP	£5,797	36	£295	£11,293	0.00%	31/03/2019
Mondeo ST-Line 2.0 TDCi 150PS	PCP	£5,543	36	£249	£9,233	0.00%	31/03/2019
Mondeo Titanium Edition HYBRID Electric 2.0 TiVCT 187PS Auto	PCP	£6,934	36	£269	£10,522	0.00%	31/03/2019
S-MAX ST-Line 2.0 EcoBlue 190PS	PCP	£9,609	36	£289	£12,882	0.00%	31/03/2019
Galaxy Titanium 2.0 EcoBlue 150PS	PCP	£10,567	36	£289	£11,474	0.00%	31/03/2019
Edge ST-Line 2.0 Eco-Blue 238PS AWD	PCP	£10,409	36	£425	£17,886	0%	31/03/2019
Tourneo Courier Zetec 1.0 EcoBoost 100PS	PCP	£2,963	36	£159	£6,728	0.00%	31/03/2019
Tourneo Custom Titanium L1 H1 2.0 EcoBlue 130PS	PCP	£10,573	36	£279	£14,261	0.00%	31/03/2019
Grand Tourneo Connect Titanium 1.5 EcoBlue 120PS	PCP	£6,005.20	36	£259	£9,611	0.00%	31/03/2019
Ranger Wildtrak 3.2 TDCi 200PS	PCP	£12,426.63	36	£305	£12,468	0.00%	31/03/2019

The Blue Oval is continuing with its 0% offers over three years across nearly all of its range in Q1.

The Ka is just £99 a month after a £3,322 deposit over two years and the UK's most popular vehicle by volume, the Fiesta, is likely to maintain its position with 0% over three years at £175 a month.

The Ecosport, Focus, Mondeo and C-Max are all available for under £250 a month and this illustrates how accessible Ford Credit has made the most popular models in the brand's range in Q1. **TOM SEYMOUR**



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## FACE TO FACE: ARNOLD CLARK AUTOMOBILES

# A MODERN RETAILING MACHINE

Long renowned for its traditional car sales prowess, Arnold Clark leads the industry in its digital customer experience too, chief executive Eddie Hawthorne tells **Tim Rose**

**S**pend time with Eddie Hawthorne, the chief executive of Arnold Clark Automobiles, and it soon becomes evident that the ethos of the group has not really changed from that laid down by its eponymous founder – trying to give value for money to customers and giving excellent customer service. What has changed, however, is how it manifests itself in today's environment.

The late Sir Arnold Clark built a group that has variously been described as "a used car machine" and "a money-making machine" over the years. It is fast becoming "a modern retailing machine".

The UK's largest privately owned motor retailer, Arnold Clark has a large digital department – almost 100 software and website developers – as car buyers do more on the internet, but the cars still sit at showrooms. In a changing industry, Hawthorne knows there is resilience for the business in how Arnold Clark's teams transition a strong digital experience into a comfortable physical experience.

The group, fourth in the AM100, has put lots of resources into digital platforms and front-end systems to allow staff to deal with customers in a personal way, he said. Doing this in-house, rather than contracting out, means the company is the master of its own destiny and can react quickly, he said. But this policy required Arnold Clark's headquarters, based alongside its Hillington Renault dealership, to move ahead of typical motor retail working conditions, of 'suited and booted' staff and ordinary office space.

To attract talented young software developers, who are also in demand from companies in other industries, Arnold Clark promises flexible working, a casually dressed and creative workplace, and benefits such as a vibrant, discounted canteen and a monthly coffee budget. The 'Google effect' is evident.

"It has been under way for about five years, but probably in the last two we have

gained serious traction. We had to become an employer of choice for developers; a motor dealer wasn't seen as that, and we were competing with Morgan Stanley, Skyscanner and the like.

"We restructured our business to become an employer of choice for these people. In addition, we put serious back-end investment into our infrastructure and computer hardware."

Hawthorne said the internet means dealers now compete with all other retailers for consumers' time and disposable income.

"Therefore, what other retailers offer, we as a motor industry, and particularly Arnold Clark, also should offer. That's why we put the investment into digital. But, similarly to most motor retailers, we have a huge

Arnold Clark has 'softened' the experience in its showrooms. Sales staff have ditched their suits and ties and been rebranded 'product consultants', and there are more than 400 product 'geniuses' across its group, who explain cars' features and technology to prospective buyers and accompany them on test drives.

Whether online or in-store, consumers can use Arnold Clark's 'Deal Builder', one of several products from its software development team. Hawthorne describes it as "putting the control in the buyer's hands".

After finding their desired car, the consumer can value their part-exchange, get a finance quote, and decide whether to make an appointment to see it and test-drive it or whether to reserve it online. The

**“ IN THE DIGITAL JOURNEY, THE CUSTOMER DOES MOST OF THE PROCESSING THEMSELVES, WHICH LEAVES US MORE TIME TO SIT AND TALK TO THEM ”**  
EDDIE HAWTHORNE, CEO, ARNOLD CLARK AUTOMOBILES

physical presence, because the actual handing over of cars is space-hungry. We're trying to make our stores more inviting for customers, and that tends to be about the people – an improved, more personalised customer service, getting away from processing people to helping people.

"In the digital journey, the customer now does most of the processing themselves, which leaves us more time to actually sit down and talk to them." Hawthorne said the group believes the physical experience is still a necessary part of retailing vehicles. The internet has limitations in that it cannot physically show consumers how cars and the technologies inside them actually work.

elements the consumer has completed in the process online are registered in the group's sales system. When the prospective buyer attends the test drive, staff at the showroom know they have already valued their trade-in or calculated their monthly payments, and these elements needn't be discussed, said Hawthorne.

"Because our web team sit next to our sales team, they're working in harmony."

Two years ago, Arnold Clark launched an initiative called 'Easy To Do Business With'. At the time, buying a car required 17 customer signatures. With the exception of the finance, the group has reduced that to two signatures. If a customer goes away to



Think about it, Arnold Clark can send them a secure link, which allows them to complete the purchase at home, then arrange to come in for collection.

Hawthorne recognises that customers are time-poor, and making it easy for them is key. "Any customer has a bit of apprehension when they walk through a showroom door. But if they've been on the digital environment, and through most of the sales process, they know they don't have to do all that again, then they're more comfortable and they have more time to spend with us."

Arnold Clark has sold nearly 300,000 cars a year since 2016, and Hawthorne expected it to exceed that level in 2018.

His aim is to get to 450,000 cars. Achieving that means expansion in all areas of the group, but with some consolidation of its franchised network likely, to operate more 'hub and spoke' operations.

The group will happily expand with its manufacturer partners, but Arnold Clark, like many dealer groups and manufacturers, is considering whether a full dealership will be required at all points in a network.

That does not mean small franchised dealerships are undesirable, Hawthorne said, because in some communities a small, well-run 'local garage' dealership remains vital. But they must cover their costs. He said the costs of running a large site are substantial, but for small sites they are proportionally just as significant. And costs seem to only go up. Hawthorne said some of the biggest current challenges are business rates and bank charges. Since 2017, banks' debit card charges rose from 60p per transaction to 3% of the price, and

Hawthorne said this has cost the group "a couple of million pounds" year-on-year.

Growth is certain for the network of Arnold Clark Motorstores, its used car supermarket brand. There are currently 23, with another three being added this year, including one in a former Toys R Us store in Bolton. Each stocks a few hundred cars, but has access to the group's 20,000+ used car stock. Relative to franchised dealerships, the costs of these Motorstores are low, but the opportunity is huge, and they are steadily bringing the Arnold Clark brand further south to more parts of England.

Separate to these are three Arnold Clark Delivery Centres, at Southampton, Lingfield, near Gatwick, and Milton Keynes. All opened within the past two years, occupying industrial properties, and Hawthorne said there will be more. These currently sell about 1,000 cars a month.

Each allows a consumer anywhere in the country to find a car on the group's website, pay £95 to have it reserved and transported to their nearest delivery centre within days. They can then attend the site, spend a little time with a product genius and decide whether to buy it while on the property.

Underpinning this service is the group's transport division, which has a fleet of 46 vehicle transporters that operates 24/7. If an online customer requests a delivery centre vehicle – IP addresses help the Arnold Clark website to identify where a user is and to launch a pop-up asking if they'd like to use its delivery centre service – the sales system pushes that order out to the transport system, which guarantees its arrival at a delivery centre within five days. Hawthorne said he



couldn't promise that speed of service if it were using an external transport contractor.

The group has found that buyers in London are happy to go to Milton Keynes or Lingfield for collection.

Hawthorne said the company will only provide home delivery for customers who have issues getting to an Arnold Clark site, such as those living in remote areas. "We want 95% of our customers to experience the physical environment," said Hawthorne.

Arnold Clark has long featured high among the top 20 most profitable AM100 dealer groups, so what drives its profitability? Hawthorne said the group has a very prudent strategy and simple business rules. It sits on a lot of cash, so it can be entrepreneurial when it needs to be. It won't spend more than it makes. Most of the profits after tax and dividends are re-invested into the business. It doesn't borrow money to buy anything substantial and 96% of its 330 properties are freehold.

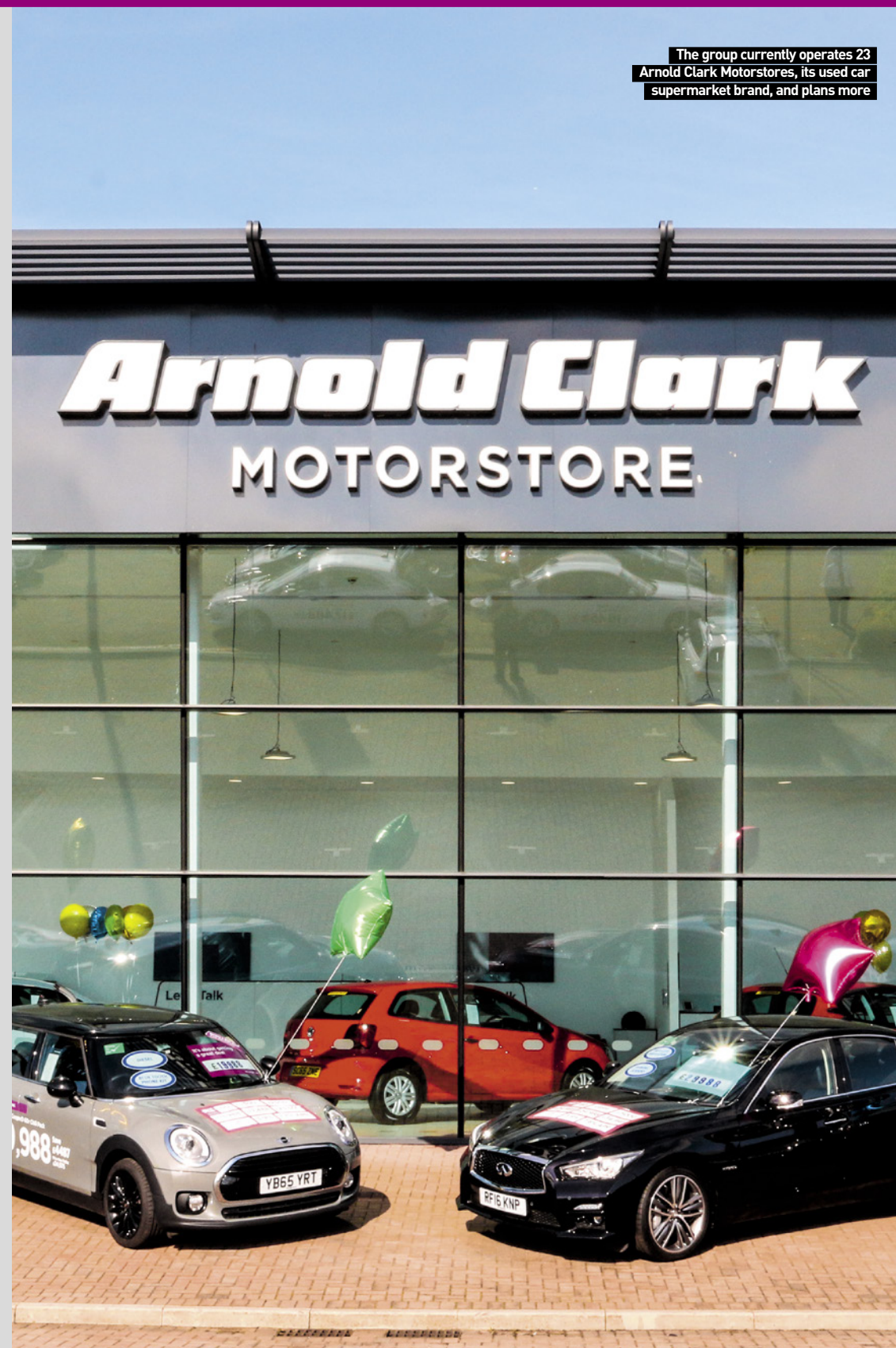
It has also invested in properties around the UK that are leased to other dealers. Hawthorne said that came about when the group had spare cash and investment houses were looking to divest showrooms from their portfolios.

"We don't get that much with the money in the bank, so we're getting 5% or 6% return from these properties. As my old chairman used to say: 'They don't make land'. Therefore it will have a value."

The core of Arnold Clark's strength is its presence in all parts of the motor retail supply chain, from fleet management and daily rental to its own finance and insurance companies, a van conversion business, trade parts motor factors and a network of about 40 bodyshops. If a motorist needs something, Arnold Clark can supply it.

However, each branch of Arnold Clark has a working group entitled 'Think Customer'. Hawthorne believes that when looking for improvements in customer service and business efficiency, there is no better source than the people who work in the group. He has a folder thick with ideas from staff that the group has implemented – and

The group currently operates 23 Arnold Clark Motorstores, its used car supermarket brand, and plans more



funding for good ideas is readily offered.

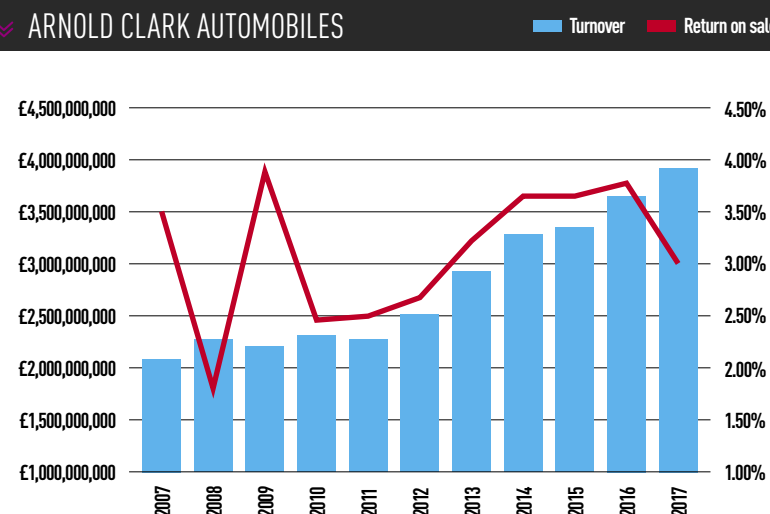
He described it as a continual process and the business benefits from the resultant efficiencies. For example, a technician in one working group came up with the idea for a yellow bag for customers to put their locking wheel nuts into and leave on the front seat. It saves an average 10 minutes per technician because they no longer need to hunt for the wheel nuts, and it eradicated customer complaints about missing ones.

The company wants staff to feel it is a family business – albeit a very large one – that is involved in the community and wants people to progress and to have security. Communication has to be slick in a group with more than 10,000 employees, so the group developed an app, ACE (Arnold Clark Employee), through which it shares company information with all staff. It even has an 'Ask The Boss' function, which messages Hawthorne directly.

As a family business, the death of Sir Arnold Clark in April 2017 was a particularly sad event. Hawthorne and fellow directors were out in the branches on a round of director presentations, and the staff knew support was there. "Staff that had been in the business for a long time felt it more than those who maybe didn't know Sir Arnold on a personal basis, but it was something we were able to deal with," said Hawthorne.

"Our view was that we're going to go sell more cars and service more cars because that's what the boss would've wanted. People asked should we shut for the day, and I thought 'no, he'll come back and haunt me. Absolutely not'. All he ever wanted to do was to serve more customers and sell cars and hours. We keep doing that."

#### ARNOLD CLARK AUTOMOBILES



#### FACTFILE

**TURNOVER** £3.93 billion (2017 accounts)

**PROFIT BEFORE TAX** £106.6 million

**EMPLOYEES** 11,500

**FRANCHISES** Abarth (18), Alfa Romeo (3), BMW/Mini (4), Citroën (9), Fiat (19), Ford (19), Hyundai (5), Jeep (6), Kia (10), Mazda (5), Mercedes-Benz (5), MG (1), Mitsubishi (1), Peugeot (8), Renault/Dacia (18), Seat (6), Skoda (3), Smart (4), Toyota (8), Vauxhall (22), Volkswagen (9), Volvo (3)

**OTHER BUSINESSES** Motorstores (26), Delivery Centres (3), Arnold Clark Insurance, Arnold Clark Finance, Arnold Clark Car & Van Rental, Arnold Clark Vehicle Management, GTG Training, AutoPartsUK



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PERSONAL FINANCE



INTERVIEW  
SUPPLIER



## MINUTES WITH...

James Hind,  
CEO and founder, Carwow



#### How many cars will have been purchased through Carwow in 2018?

We account for just more than 5% of UK new car sales. In 2017, we did about 55,000, in [2018] we should be on about 75,000. We are up to 65% of Carwow customers finding their local dealer [on the platform]. In 2017, it was about 40%.

#### Does Carwow deliver incremental business?

Yes. There are also lots of people who are considering buying nearly new cars who end up buying new and a lot of people who say it was just a lot easier, so they went ahead with it.

#### Will the day come when manufacturers sell direct to consumers on the Carwow platform?

All manufacturers, I think, have some desire to sell direct. I don't think Carwow changes that. Interaction with the dealer is vital. We don't think the direct sales model will take off any time soon.

#### What's your profile of customer?

Our heartland is the traditional UK car buyer, who is an older, wealthier-than-average male. We are working with about nine manufacturers to show monthly prices and that's driving more younger people to Carwow. What we have seen, from those manufacturers who have embraced it, is an increase in conversion rates across the brand.

#### How has WLTP affected the sector?

We have seen a clear difference between brands heavily impacted by WLTP and brands that are barely touched, particularly in Germany. You also have the diesel issue and it's hard to unpick that from WLTP

### CARWOW IS NOT E-COMMERCE, IT REQUIRES THE DEALER TO BE KNOWLEDGEABLE, HELPFUL, ACCESSIBLE

issues. We have seen a lack of sales growth in the WLTP-impacted brands.

We have seen people interested in buying, say, an Audi, and there's nothing available for six months, come back and say they are interested in a Lexus. We track that movement in consideration. We have also seen a shift in people buying nearly new cars. About 5% of the cars we sold were nearly new. That's 15% now.

#### How is Brexit affecting business?

We would have grown faster if it hadn't been for WLTP, diesel and Brexit. Brexit is a concern.

#### What trends do you predict for 2019?

Electric – we will see that coming through properly. We are seeing more enquiries, more sales and more people considering it. One of the key insights is making sure dealers are trained in how to deal with electric questions.

There will be continued lack of interest in diesel. Some dealers do a good job explaining why diesel is a good choice. It's hand-holding and education that diesel is not an evil type of fuel.

#### How important is the consumer experience of the dealer?

Carwow is not e-commerce, it requires

the dealer to be knowledgeable, helpful, accessible. Consumers will not buy a car from a dealer just because the price is good, they will go elsewhere if they are not helpful. That's what we spend so much time measuring, monitoring and training, because it ultimately benefits Carwow. It's not just ratings, we measure response times, how easy it is to get them on the phone, and conversion rate. We share the data with dealers so they can benchmark themselves.

#### What tech developments will take place?

We are just finishing off a project on machine learning, where we analyse messages sent to dealers and vice versa so we can spot trends in what consumers are talking about and measure the sentiment, so we can feed back to dealers.

#### How important is your involvement with initiatives such as the Automotive 30% Club?

We struggle, like manufacturers and dealers. It's only when you hear other people speak at seminars that you think 'we can try that'. Julia Muir [founder of the 30% Club] introduced us as having a double whammy effect – being a motor industry and a tech company, both of which are renowned for not attracting women. We need to work hard to change that. We speak at a lot of tech conferences, we hosted an event with the *Financial Times* recently about attracting women to male-dominated industries and changing the way we speak in job descriptions. We are involved with the Speakers to Schools programme [which provides state schools access to influential leaders] and we have a lot of interns and work experience people. **DEBBIE KIRLEW**

#### FACT FILE

**TURNOVER:**  
£15.3 MILLION  
(2017)

**STAFF:**  
127

**HEADQUARTERS:**  
LONDON



# SEAT UK

Thanks mostly to a stylish trio of SUVs, Seat dealers are riding high in terms of volumes and profitability. UK boss Richard Harrison wants to stabilise and secure that success for the future, he tells **Tim Rose**

**S**eat dealers helped the brand to smash its personal best in 2018. Their challenge for 2019 is to stop the ground gained by its new SUVs from being lost while they await the brand's next major launch.

"In 2017, we had a great year and were the fastest-growing manufacturer, and this year (2018) we're the fastest growing manufacturer," said Richard Harrison, director of Seat UK.

He credited the brand's success to its stylish, dynamic products, his high-performing team in Milton Keynes, and a set of enthusiastic, profitable dealers.

Harrison said the network was achieving an average return on sales of "close to 2%", double the national average published by ASE Global, when *AM* interviewed him in late September.

"Two percent is a strategic target for me for the brand, that's where I want my investors to be, and we are well on track for that in the way we are scaling the business in a controlled way.

"The growth of our business is predominantly in retail and true fleet. We are down in short-cycle. That means we have a very good, small balance of young used cars, all of which goes through the dealer network, and that is all part of a nice jigsaw which includes our residual values being rock-solid now, because we are balancing the 'push and pull' elements. Look back four years and we were predominantly push, now we are predominantly pull."



**IN 2017, WE HAD A GREAT YEAR AND WERE THE FASTEST-GROWING MANUFACTURER AND THIS YEAR (2018) WE'RE THE FASTEST GROWING MANUFACTURER**  
**RICHARD HARRISON, SEAT UK**



Harrison said the Seat network was achieving average return on sales 'close to 2%'

He said Seat dealers typically start a month with a large proportion of that month's volume already sold, and generally they will take orders further ahead. The challenge for Seat UK now is to keep that habit going.

The two SUVs now in Seat's UK line-up, the Ateca and the Arona, have played a "significant" part in the change in the brand's prospects here, he said. A third, the seven-seat Tarraco, is due to join them in showrooms in February [see our review on page 50], to give an extra boost.

Before the launch of the Ateca, Seat had products competing in just 52% of the UK's new car market. It currently competes in more than 80%.

"We generated so much excitement and demand for the Ateca that we weren't able to supply it all straight away. Supply and demand has an impact on a dealer's ability to retain margin. Even now, some 18 months in to the product life cycle, I still cannot get all of the supply that I could sell into the marketplace, so we're able to keep Ateca at a sensible level and it makes a considerable contribution to our dealers' profitability."

Harrison expects to secure higher

volumes of the Ateca for the UK in future, as he believes "we haven't really stretched our legs in terms of the volume potential" with that car. It currently secures about 2.5% of the segment, he said, and that can increase.

He said the Arona had delivered incremental retail and true fleet sales, allowing the brand to take out the substitute business that may otherwise have happened in short-cycle channels to secure market share.

Harrison expects the Tarraco to be a good earning opportunity for Seat dealers. Historically, Seat was a small car brand, heavily reliant on its B-segment Ibiza, he said. Over the past five years, the brand has progressively re-balanced, through the current generation Leon, then the Ateca, so it can sell a larger number of bigger cars, with higher specification, at bigger prices, which puts money on dealers' bottom line. The Tarraco, positioned at a price point about £5,000 above the Ateca, will lift the brand's average selling price even higher.

This echoed a point Seat's president Luca de Meo made to *AM* recently. He said Seat has become much more relevant to more

consumers, but before pushing for much stronger volume growth, the brand must work on the amount people are happy to spend buying its products.

"A car like this [the Tarraco] is probably three times more profitable than the Ibiza. That's what we need, we need that money to be able to invest in other products, in the technology we'll have to have in the next two to three years to survive competition and regulation and new demands," said de Meo.

In 2009, the Ibiza accounted for one in every three Seat registrations in the UK. In 2018, it was one in five.

Harrison said Seat UK has invested heavily in training for dealers' salespeople over the past five years. This has given them the skills to present the new products in a better, more professional way to a new target customer base, selling the technology and value of the cars rather than focusing on the price. (That is good to hear, given I have my own personal experience of being a prospective buyer of a new Alhambra four years ago – during which a young sales executive trying to negotiate the deal apologetically told me he knew little about



The NFDA's Summer 2018 Dealer Attitude Survey placed Seat sixth of 30 brands

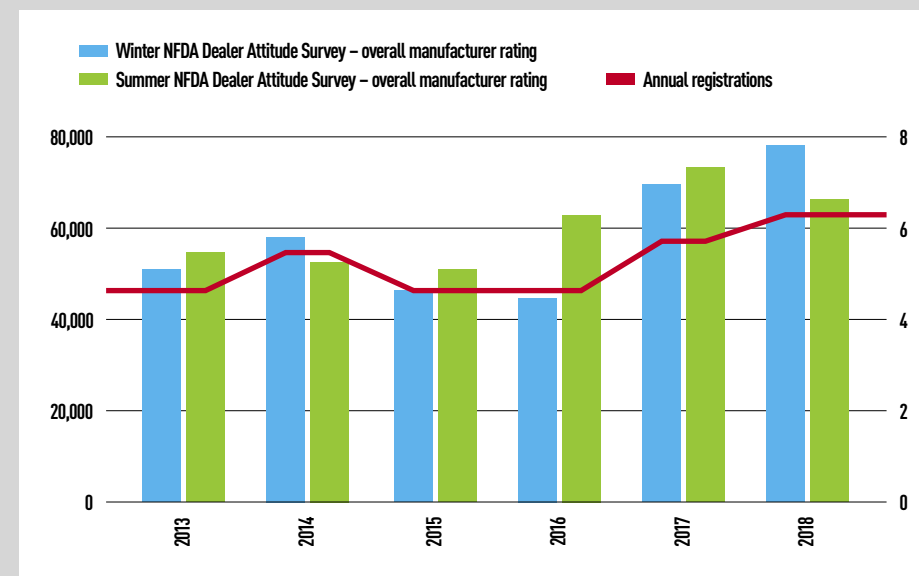
Alhambras as "we mostly sell Ibizas", and referred me to a brochure.

Harrison said about 80% of Ateca sales have been to customers outside the Seat brand, and the Tarraco is also expected to bring conquest business, including some from premium brand saloons and estates. So a sales executive's ability to engage, build

excitement and provide a good experience is vital.

With Seat's new car sales growth comes the opportunity to secure as many of those cars as possible for aftersales within the dealer network. Harrison wants his dealers to explore how they can expand their service capacity. There are very few

## SEAT UK – ANNUAL NEW CAR REGISTRATIONS vs NFDA DEALER ATTITUDE SURVEY MANUFACTURER RATING



## KEY PRODUCTS



### Ibiza

Once its biggest seller by far, Ibiza registrations totalled 13,497 in 2018, or 21% of Seat UK's total.



### Leon

In a segment dominated by the Ford Focus and Volkswagen Golf, the Leon more than holds its own on value and dynamics. 2018 registrations reached 22,466 units.



### Arona

The smallest SUV in the range, and priced from £17,145, the Arona brought 11,859 incremental sales to Seat's 2018 total.



### Ateca

It has won numerous awards and gives Seat an edge in the company car market. Registrations totalled 10,347 in 2018, of which 4,713 were in fleet.





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▼ CUPRA



**F**or two decades, the Cupra badge has adorned the sportiest versions of Seat's cars. Now, the carmaker aims to make more from the sub-brand's collateral. In 2018, it revealed first a new Cupra brand, then the first car bearing it – the 300PS Cupra Ateca SUV. All Seat dealers will continue to sell Cupra models, but a selection will invest in dedicated floor space and branding and specially trained staff. Doing so recognises the passion Cupra enthusiasts have for their cars, but when asked whether Cupra dealers would get extra margin above the standard Seat franchisees to recognise their investment, Harrison would not share details. However, he said Cupra dealers would benefit in a variety of ways, including having priority to sell specialist models such as Cupra R. De Meo added: "The Cupra story is a way to force the organisation and the retailers to raise the standard. You need to create a reference. If the people from Cupra start doing really cool stuff, then everybody else will want to do the same, and that will pull the whole system upwards."

**C**open points in his network plan – he currently has 128 dealerships, up from 124 in 2013, and the network may increase to a maximum of 135 points in time, but he said he's "in no rush".

He has found that Seat's growth in vehicle line-up and in sales volume has brought dealers to his door. Some existing partners are keen to expand – Citygate, which represents Seat in Reading, recently opened its second in Slough. Cecil and Larter, which has represented Seat in Bury St Edmunds for a more than decade in a showroom adjoining its Volvo franchise, took the dealership solus in 2017 to gain more capacity. Arbury Group took its first Seat franchise at Solihull in 2016.

Dealer morale seems fairly good. Franchisees scored the manufacturer overall 6.7 out of 10 in the Summer 2018 Dealer Attitude Survey by the NFDA, leaving it in sixth place of 30 brands. Its average score across all questions was 6.4 out of 10.

The brand is not averse to multi-franchised dealerships, which make up about half its network, providing there is a sales manager specifically for the Seat operation. Harrison said: "What makes the real difference is the people. When you're at 60,000-plus cars, the franchise deserves focus. But we will always be pragmatic. We're not going to say anyone must put a multi-million site up."

The network has completed the introduction of Seat's latest corporate identity upgrade, which was announced in late 2014, and aims to emphasise the brand's Spanish roots through extensive use of warm red and orange colours.

Franchisee Group 1 Automotive UK, which owns Seat dealerships in Hatfield and Watford, also operates Seat's two manufacturer-funded stores at the Lakeside and Westfield shopping centres on the outskirts of London. Harrison said there are no plans to add more stores, but the brand is learning about its e-commerce capabilities and about investments required for high footfall areas. He said the Group 1 team and his own staff have learned the reality of how to develop a brand relationship outside of selling, and what the real demand for e-commerce is as opposed to having a really good relationship with the retailer.

The stores have received numerous visits from Seat colleagues from mainland Europe. Harrison said he wants the experience to benefit the dealer network in the next 12 to 18 months.

"We will evolve our retail experience to fully integrate digital. We will do that in a process way, aligned to what customers want. We're investing in our digital presence, but there's more for us to do to make that experience help us to sell more cars," he said.

**ADVERTISING FEATURE**

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By Michaela Gunney,  
UK sales director, Secure Valeting Group



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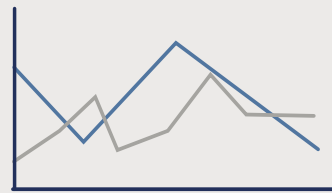




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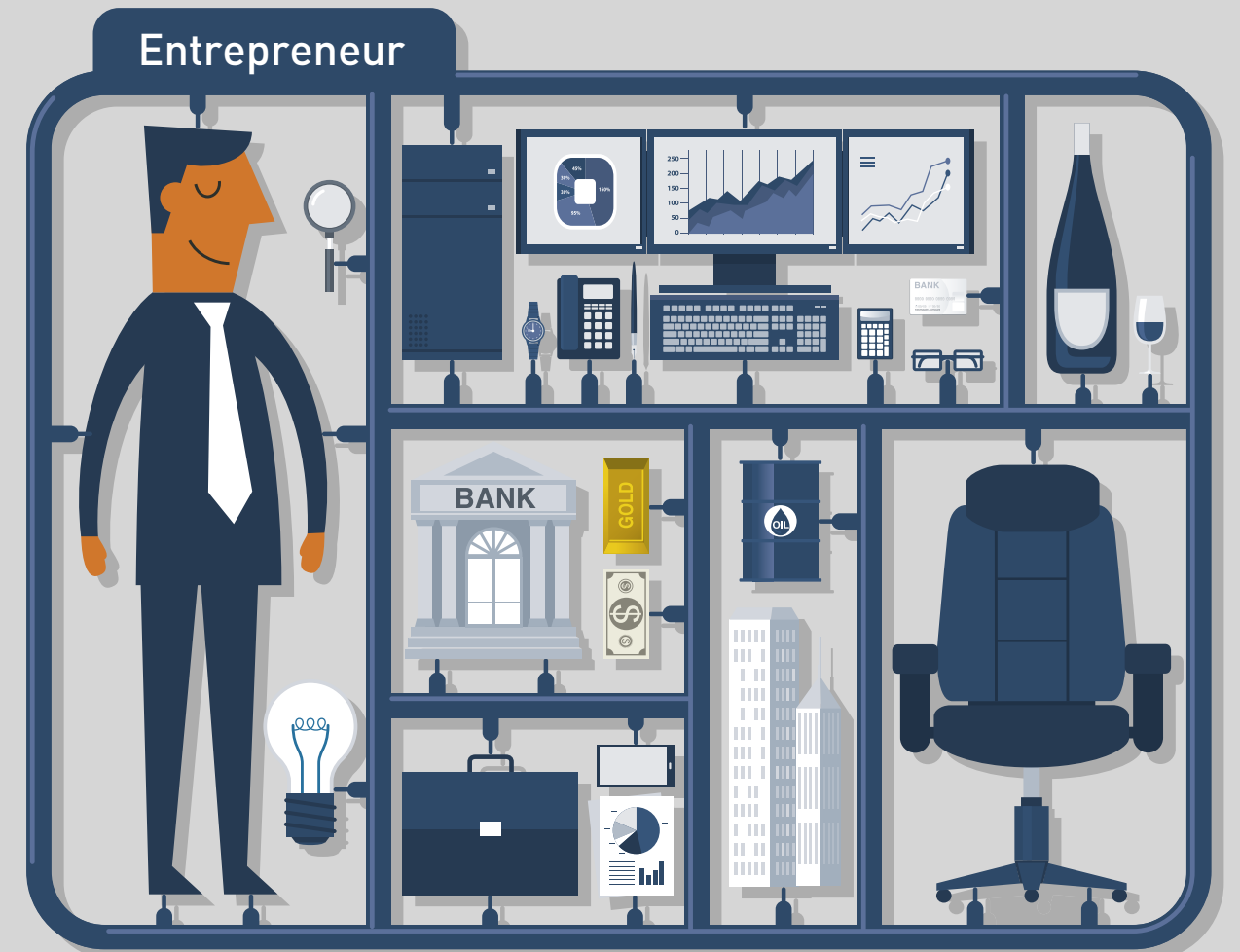
Jon Head, Commercial Director  
Marshall Motor Group

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## SPOTLIGHT: BUILDING ENTREPRENEURS



## Next-level management

How to identify and encourage your next executives, whether home-grown or hired in



**HOOKING A HOME-GROWN LEADER**  
THE INTERNAL PROGRAMMES MOTOR  
RETAILERS USE TO IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP  
POTENTIAL HEADS OF BUSINESS

PAGES 30-31

**OUTSIDE THE BOX**  
HOW HIGH STREET WOES AND NEW  
TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP FIND  
MANAGERS FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES

PAGES 32-33

**THE PATH TO THE TOP**  
WE ASK FOUR MOTOR RETAIL  
EXECUTIVES HOW THEY  
PROGRESSED THEIR CAREERS

PAGES 35-36



# Hook a home-grown head of business

Motor retailers have built sophisticated programmes to identify and develop future heads of business

**R**unning a complex, modern dealership requires extensive leadership skills far removed from the sector's traditional career progression route, which usually saw the best sales performers taking up managerial roles.

Meanwhile, retaining high-calibre staff who want to climb the career ladder is one of the biggest challenges facing automotive retailers.

Consequently, dealer groups have introduced sophisticated development programmes that identify future general managers (GMs) or dealer principals (DPs) and provide ongoing training to fine-tune the leadership skills needed to run a successful business.

Jardine Motors, with 70 locations retailing 20 brands and employing 3,600 people, and privately owned JCT600, with 51 businesses representing 21 manufacturers and a staff of about 2,000, both operate leadership programmes to develop future general managers. Rockar, which pioneered a new way of retailing through its shopping centre stores, where product 'angels' rather than traditional sales executives help customers select their next car, has also launched an internal programme to train future leaders.

JCT600 uses an annual 'talent' process to identify people who have the potential to be heads of business based on their performance, leadership ability and yearly review. Currently, about 60% of its heads of business are 'home grown' with 40% appointed externally, a balance which HR director Katie Saunders thinks is right. No more than 10 at any one time undergo a year-long leadership programme, which

uses an external business psychologist.

Saunders said: "In a business of our size, you only ever need a handful of people that you are developing towards those roles. Six years ago, we had too many external appointments because we didn't succession-plan in the way we do now. You always want fresh ideas and fresh pairs of eyes and it's really healthy to keep that mix. The 60% of home grown heads of business have all been through the leadership development programme."

Jardine Motors Group has operated its leadership development programme for three years and 10 of its current 70 GMs have undergone the programme. In 2018, the group introduced a programme to identify and prepare employees to take the step into sales and aftersales management, with 71 undertaking its 'first line managers' programme in 2019.

To obtain a place on the 'leaders of the future' course, which provides a pipeline of talent for GM roles as well as being open to head office staff, employees are 'sponsored' by their manager, although they can also request to be considered at end-of-year reviews. In 2019, the 12-month course, delivered externally, will be extended to 18

months to allow more time to 'embed' the knowledge gained. All those who pass achieve an NVQ Level 5 from the Institute of Leadership and Management.

Clare Martin, Jardine's group HR director, said: "Sometimes people don't have the confidence and you do have to go to them and say 'we really think you show the potential of being a great general manager of the future', but now it's been running for three years, it's more people putting their hat in the ring and saying they want to be a GM."

Starting at a single site, Bluewater, in 2014, enabled Rockar to port staff across when it opened in Stratford six months later, and to develop its store leader role, its equivalent of a DP/GM.

While it now operates one flagship showroom, the Jaguar Land Rover business at Westfield shopping centre in Stratford,

East London, Rockar is working with a number of manufacturers to introduce its retail concept nationwide, including recruiting the right staff to run the stores.

With the inception of its manufacturer programme, Rockar launched its own leadership development programme in April 2018, which currently has eight people undergoing training.

Managing director Martin Sewell said: "We are growing as more manufacturers come on board and we have some big new projects starting up. It's keeping everyone really excited as they can see the progression from 'angel' upwards. Leadership is leadership, but some of the modules are specific to e-commerce and an omnichannel environment, including the different behaviours and motivators of customers."

These programmes have also expanded both JCT600 and Jardine's pool of general managers beyond the traditional sales environment.

Saunders said: "We have found aftersales managers often make fantastic heads of business because of their depth of problem-solving skills and the fact they have managed much bigger teams and more complex issues."

"We are happier than we have been at any other point with the quality and calibre and personalities of our heads of business."

Martin explained: "It's about having transferable skills. I think people over-complicate things and think you can't run a business unless you have done sales, but in aftersales you are still selling, it's the same

skill set. We have a number of very successful general managers who came through aftersales."

"One of our first guys who went through 'leaders', Jean-Pierre Jamil, who runs Amersham Audi, started his career as a valet and then moved into aftersales, then aftersales manager, completed the programme and took up the GM job."

Prior to launching its programme, Rockar nurtured one of its shining stars from 'angel' at Bluewater to team leader. Business graduate Charlotte Evans worked in the beauty sector before she joined as an 'angel' in 2014 and was promoted to store leader. She now runs its manufacturer implementation team.

Sewell said: "Everyone we recruited came from outside the industry, such as retail or leisure, or straight out of education and joined us at 'angel' level. We have some bright young people who have been with us since launch and we have grown our own. It was easy for us to identify future leaders. We are actively focused on looking in the teams for our leaders and that opportunity is not just confined to the UK."

The programmes all have a common thread – identifying people internally with leadership potential and developing exceptional leaders who inspire their team to deliver the highest levels of customer service.

Saunders said: "The head of business is the most important decision you make for a site."

Martin said: "We are going to lose people because we are not able to fill all of their aspirations because we may not have vacancies but what we see from people going through this programme is that they run our best businesses so we benefit in terms of profitability, customer engagement and colleague engagement. We had a lot of attrition in the GM population and we don't have that anymore."

"What it [the leaders of the future programme] does for us is provide a talent pipeline so when we have a vacancy, the people who go in are more effective more quickly."

She added: "Our next phase, what I would really love, is to recruit people to our businesses who have no motor industry experience. What I say to my general managers is you can come out of this business and go and run any business. That's why the leaders of the future programme is purposefully not anchored in the motor industry, it's about being an amazing leader."

DEBBIE KIRLEW

**“THE HEAD OF BUSINESS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION YOU MAKE FOR A SITE”**  
KATIE SAUNDERS, JCT 600



# Outside the box: How to source managers from external sources

Automotive retailers turn to digital technology and other industry sectors when internal promotion is not possible

**T**here was a time when automotive retailers relied heavily on headhunters to find the best talent. But, due to cost constraints and succession planning, those days are gone.

While dealers are more focused than they used to be on recruiting from within, they are using digital technology, such as social media, to attract external candidates they may not have previously been able to reach.

Melvin Rogers, Sytner Group's director of human resources, said while the company appoints 80% of its managers from within its ranks, it does also use its network of contacts in the motor industry to source candidates.

"We believe that the very best talent is not always actively looking for their next opportunity and therefore we use networking tools such as LinkedIn to promote careers at Sytner and directly approach people regarding specific opportunities," he said.

"The recruitment team embrace a 'never stop looking for great talent' ethos and will constantly communicate on job boards and social media to promote Sytner and our fantastic opportunities and careers."

Rogers said Sytner looks for candidates

with the right attitude and behaviour who can work within a team, and listen and contribute, as well as be honest and respectful. In return, he said they will get the training and support needed to progress their career.

"Sytner is committed to developing talent and building careers," he said. "If a candidate doesn't have the specific experience, but has the right attitude and behaviour, we believe that we can teach the technical knowledge they will need to build a successful career."

Rogers said Sytner's learning and development team provides a range of industry-leading courses run by an experienced team of coaches. They cover everything from core modules and courses to one-to-one training in the dealerships to help get newly appointed managers up and running as soon as possible.

For the more specialist roles, Rogers said the company carries out technical assessments of the applicants. The group has also made some recent HR appointments through effective succession planning.

Scott Smith, recruitment manager at Swansway Garages, said the group advertises on LinkedIn and its own website, as well as all the major online job boards, but also headhunts within the

local markets using its own recruitment team.

He said Swansway recently hired an aftersales manager for its Audi branch in Carlisle who was working at Lookers Volkswagen Carlisle at the time.

"We contacted them and arranged initially to meet for a coffee and talk to them about the role," he said. "Then when they accepted the offer, it was a matter of onboarding them and getting them familiar with our systems and processes and the company culture."

Smith said the company prefers to use its own HR team rather than external recruiters because its research has shown retention levels to be higher among those staff hired directly by the company.

"We are honest and up-front with the candidate from the start about the requirements and expectations of the role, whereas sometimes an agency can try and sell you the dream," he said. "If you can gain their trust and respect from the outset you are much more likely to keep them longer term."

Smith said education is only a consideration when trying to find the ideal candidate for the top jobs. A proven track record in their previous roles is more important, he said.

"We are always looking at ways to

progress our employees' careers and helping them to make the next step up," he said. "Above all, they need to understand the core values of our business and be able to fit within our culture."

For certain roles where the company is looking for a different perspective, Smith said Swansway will use headhunters to recruit from outside of the motor industry. One recent example of this, he said, was for the group HR director role. The dealer group ended up hiring the head of HR from a firm of solicitors.

"We really try and match the type of recruitment to the role and area we are hiring from," he said.

"For example, in Carlisle, because a lot of people read the local paper there, we tend to advertise new roles at our dealerships there."

Clare Martin, group HR director at Jardine Motors Group, said the company has an active pipeline of external candidates that it can call on when they can't fill the role internally. The group also uses automotive executive search company Ennis & Co for more specialist positions, such as when it recently recruited a new IT director, she said.

"In the case of pipelining, if the candidate meets our criteria for the role we would interview them and keep them warm," she said. "That ensures we have a steady flow of candidates should a suitable vacancy arise that we may otherwise struggle to fill."

In terms of qualities the company looks for in a middle to senior management level candidate, Martin said strategic awareness and commerciality were key, as well as the ability to lead and adaptability, particularly given the current tougher trading conditions in the market.

The recent spate of high street collapses and closures at retailers such as Mothercare, Homebase, Toys R Us and House of Fraser has swelled the talent pool of managers that dealer groups may be able to tap into.

Among those to take advantage was TrustFord, which has recruited from

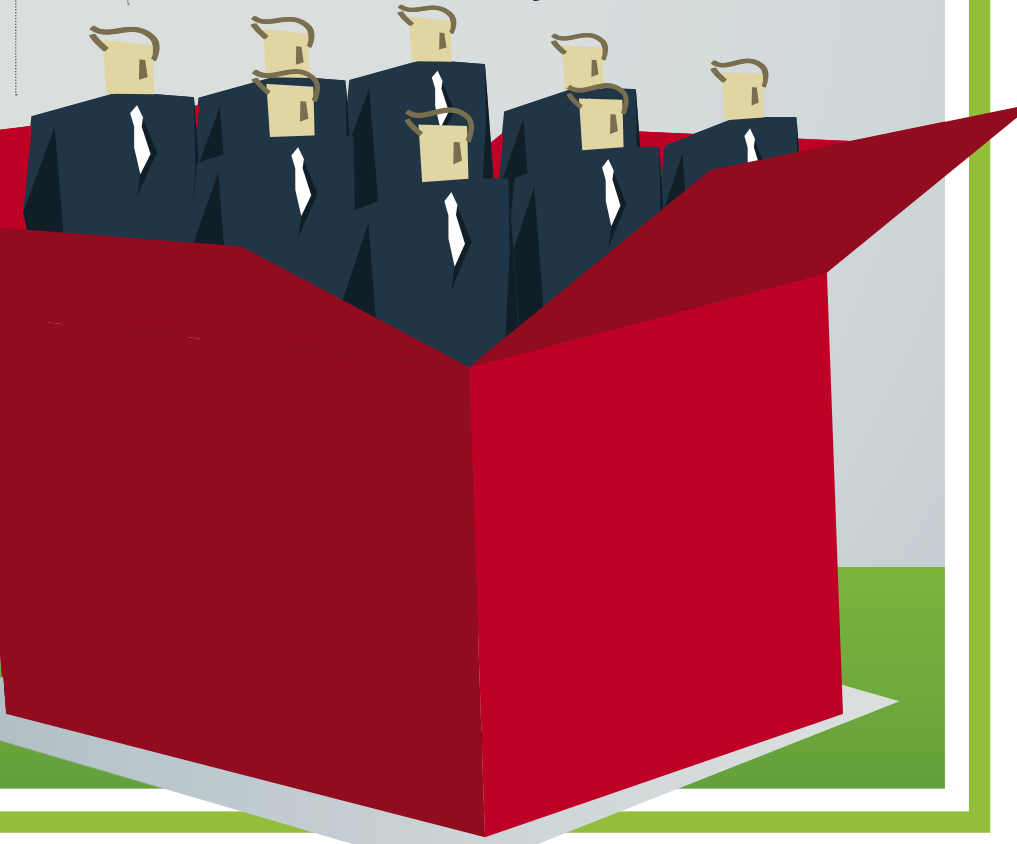
brands including Sainsbury's, Argos, DFS and Barclays.

Martin said high street retail and hospitality were among the areas outside of the motor industry from which Jardine would seek to recruit.

Lynne McBurney, group head of people at Arnold Clark, who herself has moved through the ranks, said education and qualifications are important when it comes to recruiting for specialist roles such as accountants. For a sales role, she said customer service experience is more important.

"While experience and qualifications are key, it's important to have someone with the right work ethic and values," she said. "We have our own dedicated GTG Training centre where staff can receive the right training and quickly get up to speed on the technical side to equip them with the necessary skills such as using our systems."

"What we find now is that we are very much having to sell the organisation to the candidate rather than the other way round. So we're really focusing on hooking them in from the start by telling them the story about our company, its core values and why it's such a great place to work and progress your career." **ALEX WRIGHT**




**WE USE NETWORKING TOOLS SUCH AS LINKEDIN TO PROMOTE CAREERS AT SYTNER AND DIRECTLY APPROACH PEOPLE REGARDING SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES MELVIN ROGERS, SYTNER**



# Q&A: My path to the top

AM asked four motor retail executives how they built their careers. **Tom Seymour** reports




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**IAN GODBOLD**

Cambria Automobiles  
marketing and CRM director

## What is the most important thing you have learnt in your career?

Emotional intelligence is critical. Remain calm, have a positive attitude, be a source of energy that is infectious, and continuously drive out opportunities. Build a strong team around you that know more than you about their specialist job role and provide leadership from the front.

## What skills did you gain through your career?

Learning and providing strategic direction across the ever evolving digital automotive landscape. Ensuring priorities are aligned with key consumer/business objectives, encourage innovation and support good people who take smart risks. With that comes the two key skills – negotiation and adapting communication skills to help collaboration. Resilience is a key factor when bringing people on board with new ideas.

## How did you obtain them and did any associations play a part?

The leadership program through consumer electronics chain Dixons and being one of the first individuals to attend the advanced management e-commerce module at Henley Business School. They both provided key lessons on how to apply retail management principles through digital channels. I'm incredibly lucky to work in an area that changes daily and to work with a company that invests in me with training courses and modules to ensure we stay at the forefront.

## How did you identify opportunities to progress?

Hard work and using a sphere of influence to identify key stakeholders, while being self-driven and wanting to be a leading marketer in the automotive sector.

2002-2004 Dixons Retail head of e-commerce

2004-2006 Hartwells head of e-commerce

Feb 2008-present Cambria Automobiles marketing and CRM director



**PAUL GOODWIN**

Arbury Group  
managing director

## What is the most important thing you have learnt in your career?

Customer service and experience has to be the main focus of any business. Satisfied and happy customers come back for service and to buy their next car. More importantly, they recommend you to friends and relatives – this is the most successful form of marketing you can have.

Over 20 years ago, I dealt with a complaint at Evans Halshaw and our team had let a family down through poor communication. I met the family and apologised. They were really nice people, but unhappy at the time, so together we agreed what the next steps were going to be and I made sure we kept the promises we made and ensured they went away happy. We still look after this family at Arbury and have recently sold their granddaughter a Fiat 500 more than two decades later.

## What skills did you gain through your career?

I am a firm believer in constant learning. Always look to improve in everything you do. Enjoy what you do and always look after people

and you will make money. All three must happen, two out of three is no good. Have morals, make everyone aware of them and never change for anything. Short-term results are no good, long-term results will be remembered. Never stop spending the necessary pound, but question every other cost in detail. Never be rude, but always be clear and honest.

## How did you obtain those skills and lessons?

I have been very fortunate to have worked with and known lots of influencers on my career from all areas of our business, including customers. I have taken a few things from a lot of people to create my own management style. Everyone has good and bad points and I have always tried to be aware of my weaker points, to work on them harder.

## How did you identify opportunities to progress in your career?

A combination of good luck, good timing, hard work and being around a wonderful team.

1979-1999 Evans Halshaw apprentice, vehicle technician, sales executive, business manager, sales manager, dealer principal

1999-2004 Rydale BMW Oldbury and Sutton Coldfield dealer principal

2004-present Cathedral Motor Company (trading as Arbury Group)





## SPOTLIGHT: BUILDING ENTREPRENEURS



**ROBERT FORRESTER**

Vertu Motors chief executive

**What is the most important thing you have learned in your career?**

You can go for a long period in your comfort zone and do OK. However, the real moves forward are when you are taken out of your comfort zone, perhaps through adversity, and forced to rethink and attack.

My move into a PLC role in motor retail came from a near-death illness and the formation of Vertu Motors arose because I did not have a job after the takeover of Reg Vardy by Pendragon.

**What skills did you gain along the way?**

There are two types of skills, technical and leadership. People need to be competent [in] the technical aspects. However, progression is far more determined by leadership skills. The good news is these can be learned. I was very technical in my early career, but realised it was more important to be able to motivate and build trust with people.

**How did you obtain them and did any associations play a part?**

There is no doubt that my technical skills were

gained as part of training as a chartered accountant. Leadership skills can be helped by specific programmes, but I firmly believe it is the individual who has to take complete responsibility for not only acquiring leadership skills, but putting them into practice.

There is a fantastic amount of leadership material available, particularly on the internet. I have been immeasurably helped by having fantastic mentors and being able to access great thinking from the likes of Dave Anderson, John Maxwell, Robin Sharma, Zig Ziglar et al. I still try to read a book a month and am currently reading Jordan B. Peterson's *12 Rules for Life*, one of the best books I have ever read.

**How did you identify career opportunities?**

I firmly believe that if you have the right levels of energy, drive and attitude, combined with taking responsibility for your own actions and those of your team, then you will automatically progress in your career. People are crying out for individuals who take responsibility and can execute excellently.

**1990-1999** Arthur Andersen senior manager

**1999-2001** Brookhouse Group finance director

**2001-2005** Reg Vardy finance director

**2005-2006** Reg Vardy managing director

**2006-present** Vertu Motors chief executive



**JASON CRANSWICK**

Jardine Motors Group commercial director

**What is the most important thing you have learnt in your career?**

The value of a great mentor. You often need someone who isn't your boss, your bank manager or your partner with whom you can think out loud, get great counsel, reflect on your ideas and help you think clearly.

**What skills did you gain along the way?**

I spent time as a development coach for dealer principals. I realised it wasn't important that I could do things instinctively from my time as a DP. What was important was how I enabled others to build those instincts. It wasn't for me to problem-solve and drive performance – I had to find ways of helping others do that for themselves. This was a great lesson on the power of developing the skills of others and the benefits of being able to let go and delegate.

**How did you obtain those skills?**

By learning something from each stage of my career and always having an enquiring mind. I

like to read about leaders in other businesses and think about how I can learn from how they do things. There are some good and bad examples of leaders on the local/global stage, but a defining factor of their success is how they inspire, build confidence, overcome obstacles and criticism, how they deal with ambiguity and change. I have always felt that the retailing principles that I learnt from my time with John Lewis over 30 years ago have stayed with me throughout my career.

**How did you identify career opportunities?**

The opportunities I have used to progress my career have often been where I have been needed to build a new role from the ground up (development coach, Audi head of CQ&ND, Jardine commercial director) or where I have been needed for my turnaround skills in dealer businesses. I really enjoy the challenge of leading change and building the skills of others while also supporting the wider business to achieve its goals and ambitions.

**1986-1990** Management trainee – John Lewis Partnership

**1990-94** Sales executive / sales manager – privately owned VW / Audi dealer group

**1994-2000** Dealer principal – Volvo / Honda PLC dealer groups

**2001-04** Managing director – privately owned Land Rover dealer

**2004-06** Dealer principal development coach – consultant to VW Group

**2006-12** Regional sales manager & national franchise manager – Seat UK

**2012-15** Head of customer quality and network development – Audi UK

**2015-present** Commercial director – Jardine Motors Group

# RAPID RTC Chat

## TURN CONVERSATIONS INTO CONVERSIONS.

More than ever, customers expect immediate answers to their enquiries – and with a personal, human touch. Customers want real, relevant conversations with knowledgeable people who can help make their purchase process swift and easy.

RAPID RTC Chat optimises the chat experience, ensuring customers immediately receive helpful answers to all their questions. Chat connects customers to your sales team in real time to help convert chats into appointments.





# Creating the 100% self-service customer system

Our goal at eDynamix has always been to create customer-centric systems that allow for 100% self-service.

All industries, including the automotive sector, are seeing a shift towards customer-centricity, affording customers the opportunity to serve themselves when they want, and how they want. The airline industry is a prime example of this – a customer can search for flights and book tickets any time of the day or night through an app, adding baggage, meals, and choosing their preferred seats. When the customer arrives at the airport, they scan their e-ticket and present their e-passport before taking their seat on the plane. They have not had to interact with any other person during the entire transaction. This is the definition of customer self-service.

Through our unique offering of integrated, customer-centric products, we bring self-service to the automotive industry. From one supplier, a dealer can provide online service plans, electronic vehicle health check with online authorisation, integrated CRM and online bookings and AutoPoint lockers, which, when combined, provide full customer self-service.

These products, on top of links with most DMS systems, allow us to send out service, MOT and red and amber work reminders, with a link to an online bookings platform that automatically loads the service information. On this booking page, a customer has full control over their service experience, including the addition of courtesy cars or special offers. They can even choose to use an AutoPoint Locker to drop off their keys. This will send them a unique code for their assigned locker as part of the transaction.

On arrival, the customer can use the iVHC Active Digital Reception (ADR) module, which is embedded in the lockers, to check in their vehicle. This immediately alerts staff that the vehicle is on site. On completion of the vehicle health check using iVHC, the



**"This is full customer self-service for the automotive industry and, more importantly, all from one supplier"**

customer can view their report online, with supporting videos and photographs taken through our VIDEO1st platform, authorising work at the same time. For those customers without a service plan, a link can be included to configure and take out the plan online prior to returning to collect the vehicle, where the keys will be waiting in AutoPoint.

During the check-out process using iVHC ADR in AutoPoint, customers can book future amber work through an internal version of online bookings. They will then receive an email and SMS reminder in the weeks leading up to the booking, with a link to amend it through the online bookings platform if circumstances have changed.

This is full customer self-service for the automotive industry and, more importantly, all from one supplier.

Our AutoMate app gives the customer access to vehicle health check records, allows them to authorise online, keeps them informed of work due, allows them to manage their service schedules and service plans and also to book directly with the dealership through the app. This brings self-service together in one platform in the palm of a customer's hand.

The need for dealerships to offer customer-centric systems over the next few years is only going to intensify as members of Generation Z start to visit dealerships. Dealers need to start preparing for Generation Alpha, as they will be growing up in a world where everything is connected and they can control their entire life from their mobile phone. They will expect to serve themselves when and how they want. Those that cannot offer this facility will undoubtedly be left behind.



# eDynamix

## One login for all core dealer functions

Before the advent of the technological age, life in the motor trade was predominantly paper based and users worked with one system at most. Then the emergence of new technologies brought with it a plethora of different systems specifically designed to digitise these processes. Whether it be carrying out a Vehicle Health Check, selling a Service Plan or reminding customers about their service and MOT, users were expected to work with multiple systems, each one having a different log in. To add to the confusion, not all of these systems integrated with each other and even when they did, there remained a lot of double keying. This opened the door to data inconsistency, process inefficiencies and general mistakes.

Currently you could argue not much has changed. In fact, it could be said that things are worse than ever as even more processes and systems have emerged. We have now evolved to recording and sending of videos to customers and tracking sales enquiries as they progress from enquiry to sale.

In 2010 eDynamix was created to provide Service Plans to dealers. Subsequently, it became apparent that there was a necessity, to build a solution that encompasses ALL the daily aftersales processes from one login. Within a few short years eDynamix were able to offer Service Plans, iVHC, a Service & MOT CRM system, a video platform, and much, much more. All of which not only integrate fully with each other but also integrate with the majority of DMS systems. eDynamix now offers a full complement of Aftersales solutions and is now moving into the Sales arena to bring Sales and Aftersales together in a way NEVER done before.

System and process efficiencies, as well as usability and functional richness are paramount to the eDynamix vision. Hence, in addition to integration with DMS applications, integration is also available with other data providers such as DVLA, DVSA & VOSA, Auto Trader, Glass's, CAP HPI, TPS, MPS and many more.

What's more, eDynamix never charge setup fees nor do we insist on tied in contracts for any of our current portfolio of products, which include:



eVHC



Service Plans



Follow Up CRM



Online Bookings



Customer Surveys



AutoMate Customer App



Repair and Finance Plans



Sales and Aftersales Video



Sales Lead Management



Used Stock Management



Connect Management App



Courtesy Car Management



GDPR Consent Management



GDPR Marketing Data Cleansing



MOT History & Data Cleansing



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Car Benefit Solutions (CBS) design, implement and operate intelligent and value adding Employee Car Ownership Schemes, which are easy to enjoy and benefit motor retailers and their employees. The flexible nature of our schemes provides a unique solution for all employees whilst removing the limitations of traditional car arrangements. This allows the employer to determine the level and type of benefit they offer to their employees, delivering a rewarding staff benefit with an unwavering focus on robust compliance and efficient operation.

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GENERATE PRIME  
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INCREASE BOTTOM  
LINE PROFITABILITY

DESIGNED BY CAR BENEFIT SOLUTIONS.  
CONTROLLED BY YOU.

## BOOSTING STAFF RETENTION IN A CHALLENGING MARKET

2018 proved to be a challenging year for the motor retail sector as WLTP and Brexit uncertainty impacted stock availability and consumer confidence when it came to buying a new car. The result was another year of falling new car registrations and in turn downwards pressure on profits. This impact of course extends to dealer employees, with external factors influencing their ability to fulfil earnings potential.

In response, dealers shifted their focus to used cars, as both demand and used values remained strong, providing a profit opportunity on sales. Aftersales also had a key role to play in delivering profitability and dealers that performed well in these areas were resilient in challenging market conditions.

This market shift means there is a consistent demand for skilled employees in key areas, with dealers looking to boost staff rewards to retain and attract the best people. This can be evidenced in the 2018 BDO Motor Salary Survey which shows that overall

***'once management pay is excluded, there has been an average 3% increase in dealer pay, with aftersales employees seeing increases above this average.'***

(bdo.co.uk)

This shows that despite the new car market being down, salaries have increased above the rate of inflation delivering a real term pay increase as dealers strive to retain their best talent.

**ENHANCE REWARDS,  
SAVE MONEY AND KEEP  
YOUR BEST PEOPLE.**

To help manage this challenge, Car Benefit Solutions has worked closely with automotive manufacturers and their respective dealer networks to develop market leading solutions that allow dealers to enhance employee rewards, save money, gain incremental new vehicle registrations and generate valuable used car stock in the process.

Tax robust and compliant, CBS products are tailored to the needs of each business and can be used dynamically to keep dealer employees feeling genuinely valued and motivated whilst moving closer towards business goals.

Employees currently entitled to a car benefit, who choose a CBS product as an alternative do not pay company car tax liabilities, and no employer Class 1A NIC applies. Future increases in company car benefit tax also do not apply. The CBS product delivers business savings through the provision of a rewarding staff benefit.

The CBS all employee product offers affordable access to popular models, creating increased brand affinity alongside flexible repayments that can be tailored to meet business objectives. Collectively this encourages dealership-wide staff loyalty and retention, while simultaneously increasing the business's profit opportunity.

A quick look at dealers with a high rating on Glassdoor and Best Companies underlines that those who have implemented CBS products alongside other workplace engagement strategies are recognised and celebrated as setting a benchmark for the industry.

***"Our focus for 2019 is to work with dealers to continue to align the provision of their employee car benefits to their business objectives, allowing them to enhance rewards, retain key skills and secure prime used car stock whilst increasing bottom line profitability."***

**James Edwards,**  
Head of Network Development





# Improving dealer profitability through aftersales with Car Care Plan

## Who is Car Care Plan?

Car Care Plan is one of Europe's leading providers of vehicle warranty, asset protection products and aftersales motoring programmes, registering more than a million products globally each year.

Established in the automotive industry for more than 40 years, Car Care Plan has built up an impressive clientele, including some of the industry's leading manufacturers and dealers. Car Care Plan partners with these clients to offer protection and peace of mind to motorists worldwide.

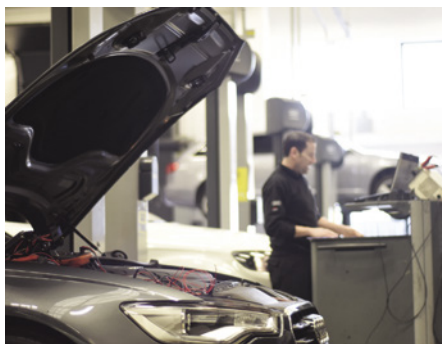
## Five-star products

Car Care Plan prides itself on providing dealerships and retailers with the best products available in the market. Many of the company's products carry a five-star Defaqto rating, one of the most widely recognised ratings agencies for financial products.

Through detailed analysis of product performance, Car Care Plan reacts to the market and consumer needs to continually enhance its product range.

Car Care Plan adopts a clear, honest and transparent approach towards business, constantly striving to improve its suite of products and make processes more efficient for policyholders.

Its focus on product enhancement is evidenced through the company retaining its **AM Dealer Recommended status in warranty for 2019**, which it has held for more than five years consecutively.



Car Care Plan's products drive footfall back into dealerships and workshops post-sale

## An end-to-end solution

Underpinning the products offered by Car Care Plan is a wealth of in-house underwriting, compliance, marketing, claims administration, customer service, auditing and account management expertise. Backed by a team of more than 400 employees based across six offices worldwide, Car Care Plan can provide clients with an experienced, knowledgeable and seamless end-to-end solution, all administered from under one roof.

## What can Car Care Plan do for your business?

The ever increasing level of online competition, combined with the greater level of customer insight and information available to consumers when purchasing a car, is gradually eroding the chassis profit available to dealers. This erosion has placed a greater emphasis on the aftersales and service elements of the dealership to generate revenue and support the business's objectives.

Car Care Plan offers a comprehensive range of products to support the generation of such revenue, including:

- ✓ Vehicle warranty
- ✓ Asset protection

- ✓ Cosmetic repair insurance
- ✓ Alloy wheel insurance
- ✓ Tyre insurance
- ✓ MOT test cover
- ✓ Roadside assistance

This suite of high-quality products helps dealers and retailers to re-establish profit margins in the sale of a vehicle, while also driving footfall back into the dealerships and service workshops post-sale. This allows the dealership to continue to benefit from the additional downstream revenue and sales opportunities provided by warranty and aftersales motoring programmes.

In essence, Car Care Plan offers dealers and retailers an expert, hassle-free and efficient way to manage vehicle warranty, asset protection and aftersales motoring programmes, while enjoying the additional revenue and sales opportunities they provide.



Car Care Plan

An AmTrust Financial Company

## Drive more business

Collaborate with us to shift your sales up a gear. As experts in warranty and asset protection programmes, **Car Care Plan** know how to drive sales in the automotive market.



Want to know more?

Want to learn more about how Car Care Plan can support you in meeting your business objectives and generating more revenue? Simply visit [www.carcareplan.com](http://www.carcareplan.com)

For products that lead to bigger deals, visit  
[www.carcareplan.com](http://www.carcareplan.com)



Car Care Plan  
An AmTrust Financial Company





# Introducing CDK Global Partner Programme

## The story so far...

The CDK International Partner Programme was launched with the aim of developing an open platform using standard integration points that any partners could use to access the CDK DMS products. Technical work started in 2017, with the first pilot partner - showroom system provider enquiryMAX - going live in mid-2018.

After successfully developing APIs with the Rev 8 and Autoline Drive platforms, the enquiryMAX integration is now live in more than 100 dealer sites in the UK. Since this pilot, a further five partners have joined the CDK Partner Programme and are currently developing integrated solutions for dealers.

A key benefit of the CDK Partner Programme is the potential it offers partners for future business opportunities in new markets. Once a partner's application has been certified, it has a single connection point that has the potential to integrate the application with eight different DMS platforms. A number of global markets are already supported by local CDK Partner teams, including South Africa, Denmark, Finland, Spain and Italy.

The CDK Partner Programme team will continue to work closely with existing partners to build connections and develop APIs, and recruit new partners. The next key areas of focus are parts and vehicle health checks.



**Alistair Jeff**  
Head of Partner Platform

**Jonathan Hales**  
Partner Manager, UK

**Michael Landless**  
API Platform Product Lead



### | Force24 | Force24

Force24 is a Marketing Automation Platform, allowing companies to effectively target customers and prospects across channels including email, SMS, social media and microsites to generate sales leads. Marketing automation offers all customers a truly omni-channel experience, streamlining and automating marketing tasks and workflows, ensuring operational efficiency and fast ROI.

### | eDynamix | MOTcleanse

MOTCleanse automatically checks all current vehicle records from a dealers DMS against DVSA information to ensure accuracy of MOT data. With an average of 52.7% of MOT dates being incorrect in the DMS, dealers can increase MOT sales and revenue while reducing the cost of unnecessary reminders.



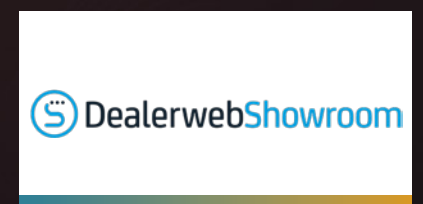
### | Salesmaster | StockBook

Salesmaster takes data from retailers' DMS, factory and third-party systems and enhances it to provide access to the most accurate vehicle information. Among its key products, StockBook is a software tool to aggregate real-time stock data into a user-friendly platform. StockBook automatically combines and processes group-wide vehicle data and can be dynamically suited to the retailer's needs.



### | Dealerweb | Dealerweb Showroom

Dealerweb Showroom is a sales process and enquiry management system built for the automotive sector by industry experts. Accessed by one simple login, its intuitive interface is designed with integration in mind and includes lead management, offer creation, profit calculation and analysis, FCA compliance and real-time activity reporting.



### | Motor Document Solutions Ltd | iDealFILE

Developed specifically for the automotive industry, iDealFILE is an integrated electronic deal file platform that turns unsecured manual paper-based documents into secure visible, traceable and auditable data. In line with ever-increasing legislation, compliance and manufacturer requirements it gives dealers an efficient, transparent and secure way to manage sales documentation and dramatically reduces their environmental impact.







## Ecommerce is here. Let's go.

There's been a lot of hype about online car buying and automotive ecommerce. But now, we are at the tipping point. It's here and it's real. Growing numbers of consumers are ready to purchase a car online, but most dealers are not yet equipped to deliver a blended, omnichannel retail experience.

GForces has been building towards what we think is the inevitable outcome. Through our brand new NetDirector® Auto-e platform, we

are delivering safe, secure and cost-effective digital environments for dealers to sell cars online in the here and now.

There are many claiming to be the next big thing in automotive ecommerce. But GForces already delivers an end-to-end solution, including finance approval, and all within a dealer's native web environment.

**Get in touch to find out more.**

**G F O R C E S**

[www.gforces.co.uk](http://www.gforces.co.uk)  
01622 391 947



# Valeting – compliance is critical

Who is working at your site?



By **Michaela Gunney**,  
UK sales director,  
SECURE Group

## Valeting compliance

With 20 years of experience in supporting the motor industry, SECURE can remove the problems associated with valeting recruitment, ID checks, training, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations and health and safety (H&S) compliance.

## Who is working at your site?

The Modern Slavery Act and illegal worker checks are critical areas of compliance for the automotive industry and in choosing the right valeting supplier. Getting it wrong has serious issues and can damage reputations.

The choice is yours – at SECURE, we can provide clear evidence of compliance. With more than 400 customer sites across the UK, our systems and processes ensure that clients are meeting current legislative requirements.



We have gone far beyond our original focus on contract car cleaning for the motor industry and now offer a range of automotive support services to retail dealers, fleet, remarketing and logistics sectors.

## Auto Imaging – the future is here... valet, image and upload

Our significant investment in software development and the superb Auto Imaging APP is proving to be a great success for our imaging division. Digital backdrops, instant quality control (QC), web upload, HD video and our Progress Chaser portal are now available and being used by major dealer groups and independents across the UK.

Images can be taken at the point of valet with instant quality control of valeting and photography. Digital backdrops of your choice are then added. Unified imaging solutions with vehicle valeting now modernise and maximise workflow.

## Driver hire

SECURE driver hire makes good business sense. Our driver teams are available for delivery and collection, stock vehicle movements and all sales and service requirements.

Whether it is holiday cover, spikes in

business levels or long-term additional staff, we can help.

## Progress Chaser

Our Progress Chaser technology integrates seamlessly with Dealership Management Systems to remove manual processes and data entry. All work is booked directly from your desktop. We can also provide full-time Progress Chaser operatives to manage vehicle movement.

## In summary

SECURE Group provides a nationwide flexible service, electronic online booking system, an experienced stable management team and a robust customer care programme.

Our H&S audit teams ensure that regular site visits are recorded and communicated to clients at every level. With ever changing regulations on H&S, COSHH compliance and general workplace guidelines, it's more important than ever to choose the right service provider. The choice is yours.

**Safe in the knowledge... it's SECURE**



safe in the knowledge...it's SECURE

## Instant QC of imaging and valeting with the popular valet, image and web workflow

- Valeting
- Imaging
- Driving
- Video
- Backdrops
- Inspection
- Valeting Model
- Visitation Model
- Dealership Model



Secure Valeting Group has 20 years of experience in supporting the UK motor industry at almost 400 locations across the UK.

For more information, call 01480 216700 or visit [www.secureplc.com](http://www.secureplc.com)

For more information, call 01480 216700 alternatively visit  
[www.secureplc.com](http://www.secureplc.com) or [www.autoimaging.co.uk](http://www.autoimaging.co.uk)



# SEAT TARRACO: SEVEN-SEATER GIVES DEALERS A THIRD AVENUE TO SUV SALES



The Tarraco is the third SUV that Seat has launched in two years



The 1.5-litre petrol is expected to account for the most registrations



Seat's 'easymove' strategy makes the most popular optional extras standard



£28,320-  
£39,505



1.5TSI PETROL:  
150PS; 2.0TSI  
PETROL: 190PS;  
2.0TDI: 150PS  
OR 190PS



0-62MPH  
8.0-9.8SECS,  
TOP SPEED  
123-131MPH



6SP MANUAL,  
7SP AUTO



37.2-49.6 MPG



148-182G/KM CO2  
(WLTP-  
CORRELATED)

## Q&A



HYWEL EVANS,  
PRODUCT  
MANAGER,  
SEAT UK

### The 1.5-litre petrol is expected to be the main volume model. Why?

The trend in petrol and diesel in the market. Also, that engine has done really well for us in Ateca and Leon.

### Where does that leave diesel variants?

There's definitely a market for diesel in this segment. A significant proportion is made up of diesel. If you look at some of the competition in terms of offering a seven-seat SUV, some are only selling diesel. But we know where our customers have been on other models, that's why we think petrol will be the strongest seller, but there's absolutely a place for diesel.

### Are you confident you can sell the Alhambra and the Tarraco, both seven-seaters, in sufficient volume?

Yes. Alhambra volumes are doing well (2,631 sales in 2018) and, looking at the products, there are clear reasons why you would buy each one. Customers who need seven seats every day have Alhambra, as there's more space. Where Tarraco fits in is that it is for five seats 90% of the time, seven seats

10%. That's a clear differentiation in terms of customer base.

### What about product splits?

Front-wheel drive will be the dominant choice, purely from the cost perspective for a lot of people. But our 4Drive (four-wheel drive transmission) kicks in with our higher powered models, and I would expect the mix of those high power engines to be stronger than in some of our smaller cars – that's naturally going to link to a bigger mix of 4Drive.

### What national activity will lead up to the Tarraco's arrival?

There's a dealer launch weekend planned for February. That's something we don't control centrally, each dealer will have their own marketing launch plan. To coincide with that, our above-the-line media will kick off from early Q1. Plus there will be a multi-channel perspective to our marketing.

### Until recently the large, seven-seat SUV market has seemed like a limited opportunity, with modest volumes. What's behind the apparent resurgence?

It's probably the versatility it gives you. In the past if you wanted seven seats, you had to change bodystyle (to an MPV). This now gives customers the opportunity to have both, that versatility and flexibility, without changing bodystyle.

## REVIEW RATINGS

### AUTO TRADER



### PARKERS



### WHAT CAR?



## KEY RIVALS



### Nissan X-Trail

✓ FINE DRIVING  
POSITION, GOOD  
VISIBILITY

✗ NOISY,  
UNDERPOWERED  
PETROL ENGINE



### Skoda Kodiaq

✓ ATTRACTIVE PRICING,  
SPACIOUS

✗ CONSERVATIVE  
STYLING



### Hyundai Santa Fe

✓ TOWING  
CAPABILITIES,  
WARRANTY

✗ LACKS REFINEMENT

Seat's fortunes in the UK have improved in the past two years as it gained its first two SUVs, the Ateca and the Arona, which took the brand into new market segments. In February, its dealers will gain a third, the Tarraco, which should bring yet more new customers to showrooms.

Based on an extended MQB production platform, and built at VW Group's Wolfsburg plant in Germany alongside the Volkswagen Tiguan Allspace, the Tarraco is Seat's largest SUV and has seven seats as standard in the UK. Like most rivals in this sub-segment, the Tarraco is aimed at drivers who will only occasionally need to use the rearmost seats, so the Seat Alhambra, the even larger MPV, will be protected. Seat pointed out that Alhambra sales are rising globally, and there is no intention for the Tarraco to be its sole seven-seater.

The Tarraco's arrival completes the

planned SUV line-up and means Seat now has vehicles in 80% of the new car market's segments. It's an important flagship and is the first model to adopt a new design language at the company, distinguished from older Seat models by a more prominent grille, sunken headlamps and a full-width rear light. More will become evident in the new Leon, which will be revealed at the Geneva Motor Show in March.

There will be four-wheel drive Tarraco models, offered only with 190PS 2.0-litre engines in petrol or diesel form, but demand is predicted to be low. The strongest demand is expected for models with front-wheel drive and 150PS engines, either a 2.0-litre diesel or 1.5-litre petrol, due to the better fuel efficiency, lower price and lower first registration VED rate. Under the combined WLTP test, the 2.0 TDI 150PS can achieve 50mpg and 148g/km CO<sub>2</sub>, and the 1.5 TSI 39mpg and 165g/km.

Unlike the great-handling Ateca, the

**TARRACO IS ALREADY TURNING HEADS**  
RICHARD HARRISON,  
SEAT UK

Tarraco puts more emphasis on comfort than sportiness. Seat has no plans to offer a high-performance Cupra Tarraco at present, unlike it has just done with the Ateca, but an assertively-styled Tarraco FR may be added if demand is there. The carmaker confirmed it will launch a plug-in hybrid Tarraco in 2020, with an expected range of 30 miles in pure electric mode.

In 2018, Seat UK announced its 'easymove' strategy to simplify the choice for buyers by making the typically most popular optional extras standard fit. For the Tarraco, that means there are four different trim levels available at launch: SE, SE Technology, Xcellence and Xcellence Lux. After choosing their desired trim, all customers need to decide is which colour they want.

Even here, Seat makes the choice easier, as metallic paint is part of the standard spec and there are seven colours to choose from, together with three-zone climate control, rear parking sensors, Full Link smartphone

integration, electric parking brake and 17in alloy wheels. SE Technology adds sat-nav, tinted windows and 18in wheels. Xcellence adds a wireless phone charger, adaptive cruise control, electric tailgate, rear-view camera, 19in wheels and Alcantara upholstery, while Xcellence Lux adds more premium features, such as leather upholstery, 20in wheels, a top-view 360-degree parking camera and a winter pack with heated seats and headlight washers.

To tempt early adopters, Seat dealers also have First Edition special models, which come with even more.

The Tarraco is priced and equipped to compete strongly with segment rivals, and it looks like an attractive addition to Seat dealers' showrooms. They are positive about the new car, according to Richard Harrison, director of Seat UK (See our interview on page 24), who said: "Tarraco is already turning heads. [It] represents exceptional value for money." **TIM ROSE**



SEAT ATECA



SHINING A LIGHT ON SEAT'S DRIVER-FRIENDLY TOUCHES

**N**eat little features on the Ateca should help Seat dealers to sell the virtues of this car to customers who want to be subtly different from the mainstream brand set.

In Xcellence trim, our Ateca has puddle lights beneath the door mirrors so that drivers won't unwittingly get their feet soaked when parking up at night. But these are not everyday puddle lights – they shine an Ateca logo onto the ground. These work whenever the doors are opened, independently of the LED headlamps' 'coming home' function, which keeps them illuminated for a chosen period after the car has been locked.

It's a very superficial thing, but the months spent testing our Ateca have proved these puddle lights leave a memorable impression on passengers. The multi-colour ambient lighting inside the car is less memorable; occupants find it novel initially, but it's soon forgotten.

Another premium feature is that the door mirrors of all Atecas, no matter the trim grade, fold in for safety when parking at the roadside or in tight spaces, to provide easier access and minimise the risk of damage from passers-by. However, buyers may need reminding that they have to press and hold the lock button on the key fob (or on the keyless entry door handles) to activate this function. A minor inconvenience is that the rear door handles don't have the keyless lock function, although this eliminates the chance of an over-eager child pulling their handle too soon and de-synchronising the central locking. **TIM ROSE**



PRICED FROM:  
£20,825  
(THIS MODEL  
£30,000)



SEGMENT SHARE  
2.69% (2018)  
(SOURCE: SMMT)



55.4MPG



2.0-TDI 150PS

✓ IT'S VERY ILLUMINATING

✗ REAR HANDLE CLUNKINESS

CURRENT MILEAGE 0 4 6 2 3

START MILEAGE 0 0 0 9 4

NISSAN LEAF TEKNA



HIGH HOPES FOR HIGH-TECH, HIGH-SPEC EV IN WINTER TEST

**A**t AM, we like a challenge. Just as winter was setting in, we took delivery of a Nissan Leaf. Hopefully, reviewing the best-selling pure electric car through the season's frosty mornings will give us the chance to change some perceptions. We have the advantage of the range-topping Tekna trim, with its heated seats and steering wheel to keep us cosy while optimising the range of its 40kWh battery.

The new WLTP combined cycle test certifies the Leaf as having a range of 168 miles, and Nissan states it will charge from flat to full in 7.5 hours with a 7kW charger or 21 hours on a household three-pin 3kW charge. Our office in Peterborough is equipped with both, and Zap-Map shows more than 20 other public charge points in and around the city, including two 50kW fast-chargers, capable of restoring 80% capacity within an hour.

All Leaf models come with a 'safety shield technology suite' (lane departure warning, intelligent emergency braking, cross traffic alert), but Tekna also has a 360-degree 'around view monitor' and ProPilot advanced driver assistance. In effect, ProPilot makes our Leaf semi-autonomous, as it keeps the car in its lane, at a specified distance from the car in front, up to a driver-specified speed, and will brake the car to a stop.

Another new standard feature with this generation Leaf is 'e-pedal', allowing the driver to speed up, slow down and stop the car using the accelerator pedal alone, which aids the car's regenerative braking. **TIM ROSE**



£31,055 (EXCL  
£3,500 GRANT)



110KW, 40KWH BATTERY,  
150PS



0-62MPH 7.9SECS,  
TOP SPEED 89MPH



0G/KM CO2

✓ FUTURISTIC, DISTINCTIVE

✗ SO MUCH TO GET TO GRIPS WITH

CURRENT MILEAGE 0 2 9 2 5

START MILEAGE 0 2 5 1 2

» GUESS THE CAR COMPETITION



**Gordon Hardie, proprietor at Hardie of Stirling Suzuki, was last month's winner, having correctly identified the Austin Maxi.**

Have a go at identifying this rare 1970s drop-top for a chance to win a £20 John Lewis voucher. Email [am@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:am@bauermedia.co.uk) with 'Guess the Car' in the subject line of your email and include your job title and company name in your entry. Closing date: Friday, February 1.



DEALER MASTERCLASS  
POWERED BY AM

INTRODUCING THE  
DEALER MASTERCLASS  
COMMERCIAL PARTNERS

At Automotive Management Live on November 7, the Dealer Masterclass programme will deliver advice and knowledge to dealer management on a range of key topics that will assist them with the efficient and effective running of their sales and aftersales operations.

Find out more about the Dealer Masterclass commercial partners over the following pages



LIVEPERSON | AUTOMOTIVE



Marketing Delivery  
DATA DRIVEN MARKETING





# Optimise your website and your online marketing for the best possible returns

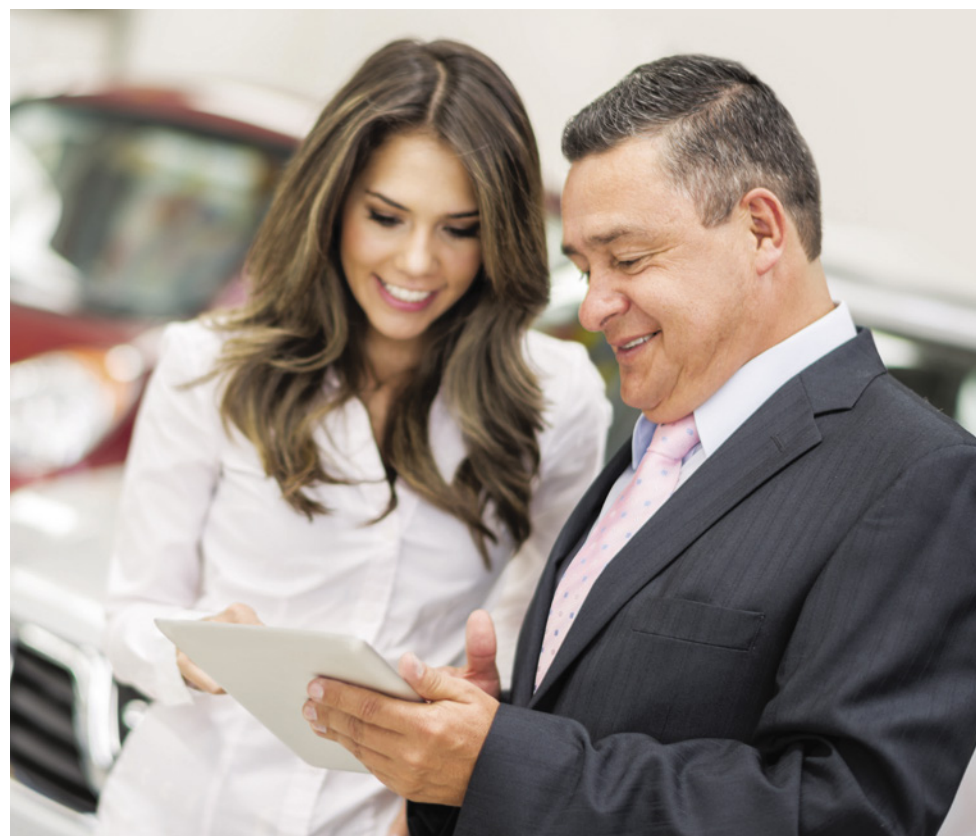
**A**t Autoweb Design, we have served as a website design and digital marketing agency exclusively within the automotive sector for more than 14 years and we know how crucial online activity is to vehicle manufacturers and retailers.

Our approach starts with a simple philosophy that websites and digital marketing activities need to generate the maximum possible return on investment for our clients. Too often, websites are viewed as a templated piece of software, with glossy features that can be added or taken away. We offer these things, of course, but we prefer to strip back our conversations with clients and prospects to performance and return on investment.

With this in mind, we pride ourselves on our approach of providing a consultative service rather than a product. We work as an extension of our clients' teams to provide insights and transparent information, so that we can work in partnership to improve performance. As such, we invest heavily in our people and attract some of the best in the digital marketing space to our team. Our company has five core values – people, performance, trust, growth and innovation. This allows us to provide our clients with industry-leading customer service, combined with industry-leading thinking.

Having recently moved to larger, super-modern premises in North Yorkshire, we have experienced exponential growth within the past year. We have welcomed a number of new clients on board, including manufacturers, AM100 dealer groups, single and multi-franchise dealerships and independent dealerships. As part of this, our team has grown by 39% during this time with further growth forecast in 2019.

During 2018, we were very active in the thought-leadership arena, performing talks at a number of industry events – this will continue in 2019, when



## WEBSITES AND DIGITAL MARKETING ACTIVITIES NEED TO GENERATE THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

we will be speaking at events including Automotive Management Live and many more. You can also see a selection of our talks on our YouTube channel.

Part of our approach is that we believe the best way to maximise return on

investment from websites is to keep them moving forward through continual testing. If you are a smaller dealership and receive a relatively small amount of website traffic, it can make sense to follow industry best practice based on robust testing and statistical work on aggregated data from a pool of dealership websites. However, if you are a larger dealership or manufacturer, then it certainly makes sense to optimise your website using an approach as explained in further detail below, based solely on your website data, which will ensure that your website is optimised to your specific customers.

Optimisation should start with having a proper web analytics setup, such as



Google Analytics. We do not believe in an off-the shelf approach and prefer to use custom metrics and configurations, so our clients receive actionable information specific to them. With this kind of reporting, we can find areas of potential on the website and review the user behaviour within them.

Once an area of focus is identified, we would decide upon a test and run A/B testing to ensure that any ideas are proven successful or not based on robust statistical methods. This methodology also protects against the scenario where a change is made in a weaker month and in the following month we assume the change has had a positive effect, only to find a year down the line that we are down year-on-year.

The above system ensures that your website moves forward through time with proven success. We have successfully increased sales leads by three to five times for some of our clients and we are proud of the case studies

## Advertising feature

that we have created with our partners.

Optimising a website for performance, such as increased sales leads, is one part of the story. Attracting as much good quality website traffic as possible is the other. As a full-service digital agency, we have talented teams of experts specialising in all digital marketing channels including PPC, SEO, email marketing and display advertising.

While SEO is a different field to website design, the way a website is set up and account-managed has a significant impact on your organic search listings (e.g. in Google).

As part of our consultative business approach, our account manager works very openly and transparently with our clients when it comes to search engine visibility performance and identifies areas of the website that may require attention. This aspect of our approach is key to gaining the trust of our clients.

The ongoing proactive approaches of maximising website traffic and website performance go hand-in-hand. After all, generating website traffic that does not lead to enquiries and sales is not the best strategy.

With the industry moving towards e-commerce solutions, we believe that our approach will be even more valuable as dealerships and retailers adopt strategies from e-commerce businesses and moving away from the automotive industry template and working with more data. At Autoweb Design, we employ experts from a broad range of industries, many including e-commerce.



**If you would like to learn more about Autoweb Design and how we can add you to our list of successful clients through transparency and a data-driven performance-based strategy, then please get in touch with Holly Duncan on [holly.duncan@autoweb.co.uk](mailto:holly.duncan@autoweb.co.uk) or 01757 211700**





# Transforming the way consumers connect with you

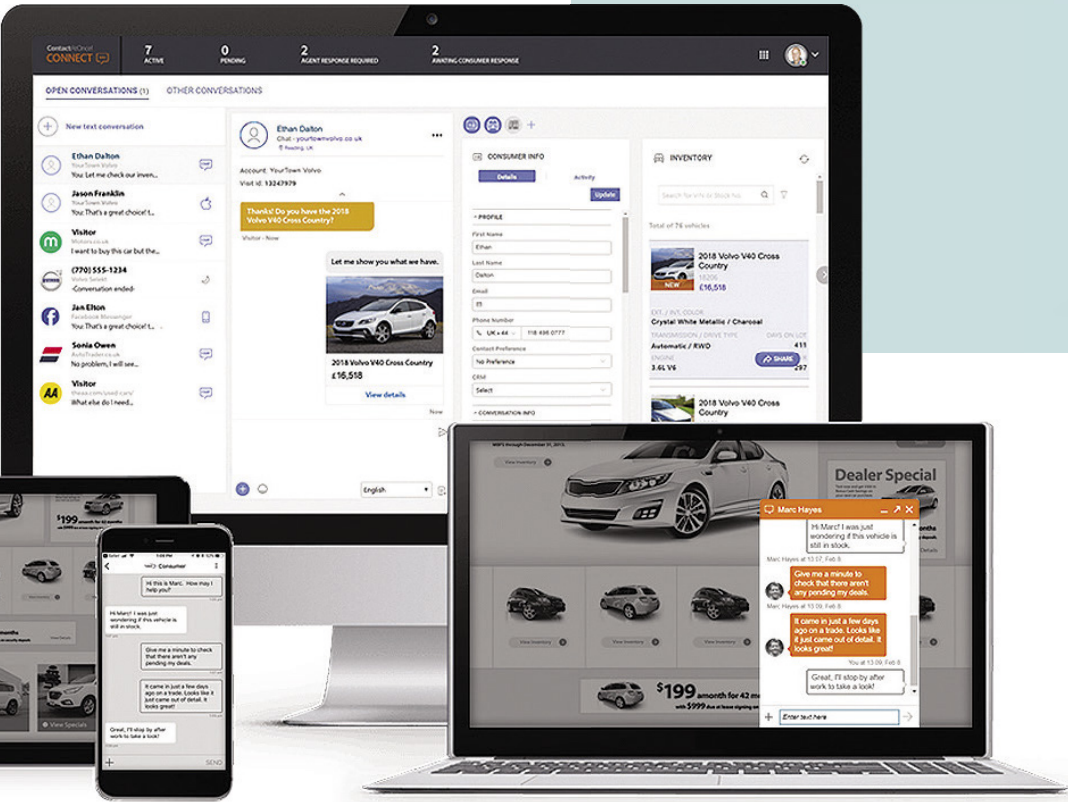
Conversational commerce is more than chat, and we can help you adapt

It doesn't really matter what consumers are doing – searching for a car, updating their bank account, researching travel – their preferred method of communication is conversational. People choose conversational channels (chat, SMS, Facebook Messenger) 70% of the time when they are given the option between calling or messaging a business, based on data from LivePerson.

Conversational commerce addresses these preferences. It enables consumers to talk with businesses on their own schedule, using natural language to get the answers they need and take the actions they want. The result can lead to more sales conversions and a 5-20% increase in customer satisfaction scores, as reported by LivePerson customers across all industries. Automotive studies indicate the same. Root & Associates, a market research company specialising in the automotive industry, found 50% of car shoppers said they would be more likely to choose a brand that offered guided shopping with messaging.

Consumers want greater assistance in discovering, buying, servicing, etc. We have seen car shoppers message dealers with a list of specific details they are looking for... simply because they didn't want to sort through the options on the website themselves. **They want to do it in a simple conversation.** This guided approach is something we have been perfecting for years.

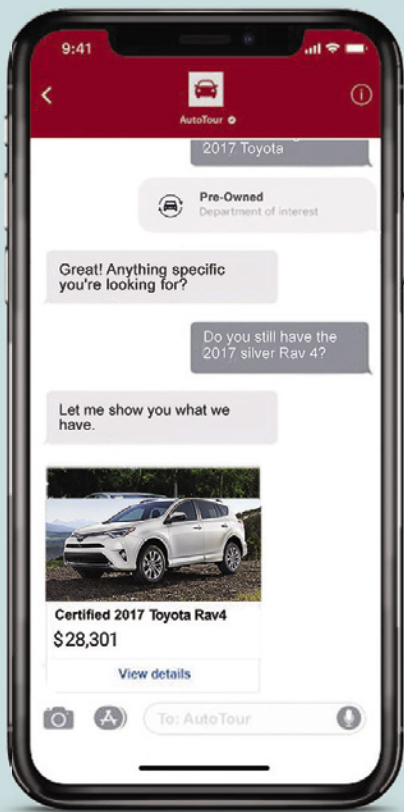
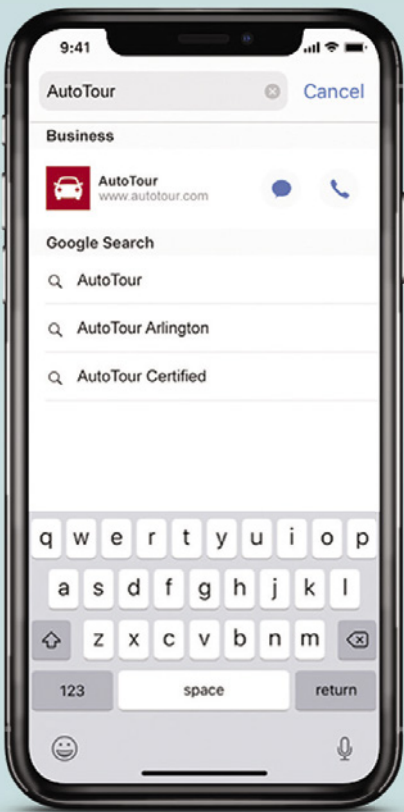
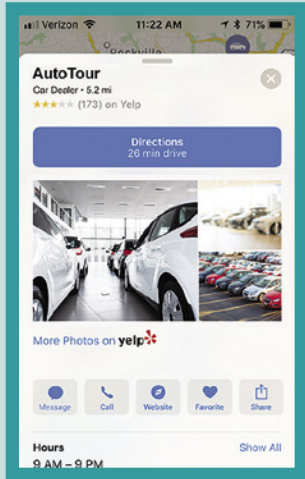
**Introducing LivePerson Automotive**  
LivePerson Automotive, formerly



known as Contact At Once, is the automotive division of the world's leading conversational commerce provider (LivePerson). While Contact At Once introduced chat to this industry 13 years ago, our parent company, LivePerson, basically invented chat on websites in 1995. As messaging technology and trends evolved, we were in the labs with messaging companies such as Apple, Facebook and Google, helping to lead the charge. More than half of all digital messages globally between consumers and brands across all industries are managed by

our platforms and professionals. We are bringing that strength, scale and know-how with a renewed focus on automotive. In fact, thousands of brands worldwide (including Volvo, JCT600, Robins & Day, Stoneacre Motor Group, Renault Retail Group, Hyundai Motors America, Kia Motors America, and 18,000+ retailers) already use our solutions to meet their consumers' conversational desires.

**Conversational commerce in practice**  
There are several ways manufacturers and dealers can join the conversation with LivePerson Automotive's help:



**Web & mobile messaging** Add chat and SMS text messaging options to your websites, so you can answer questions quickly and guide shoppers down the purchase or service path. This is key to the success of any online retailing options you offer. Root & Associates found that 74% of surveyed car buyers would be more likely to fill out online retailing forms if they had live assistance via messaging.

**DMS-integrated texting for servicing** Dealerships can message opted-in customers during and after a service visit, providing vehicle updates, extra work notifications (with imagery), mobile pay options and CSI follow-up. This approach can increase work approvals by 41% and CSI scores by more than three points.

**Networked adverts** Many digital automotive marketplaces allow you to add chat and text messaging to your listings on their sites (AutoTrader.co.uk, Motors.co.uk, AA Cars). This allows you to converse and guide choices as

**CONSUMERS WANT GREATER ASSISTANCE IN ... BUYING, SERVICING**

shoppers actively compare vehicles. We have seen this capability increase shopper engagement by 20% or more. **Apple Business Chat** Last October, several dealerships (including Robins & Day locations) joined Apple Business Chat... using the LivePerson Automotive / Contact At Once messaging platform to support it. Consumers start Business Chat conversations by tapping 'Message' icons beside participating retailers' iOS listings (which show when searched on Safari, Maps, Siri, Spotlight) or special buttons on their websites. In the first three months, more than 130 retailers held almost 7,500 Business Chat conversations with

consumers about their sales and service needs. (To register for Apple Business Chat, simply choose Contact At Once! as your customer service platform.) **Facebook Messenger & Marketplace** Dealerships need to be available to consumers in social channels, too. With the growth of used car listings on Marketplace, dealers can double their interactions. Any questions come through Facebook Messenger, which can be integrated with LivePerson Automotive. Our integration enables you to not only publish inventory regularly to Marketplace (if your inventory is shared with us), but also handle those conversations through the same messaging platform as any other chat or text encounter.

**Aiding the automotive commerce evolution**  
Being present in so many locations raises the question: How can you respond to all those shoppers in the moment? LivePerson Automotive consolidates powerful technologies to make these interactions more automated, yet still personal.

**Integrated platform tools** Along with real-time translation and web and mobile apps to make answering easier, we built our platform to allow any automotive vendor to easily integrate within it. Upcoming inventory, valuation and finance tools to use in the conversation window will also help you to help shoppers take further steps.

**Live advisors** We provide a team of messaging experts who can respond to shoppers on your behalf in all these places when your team isn't available. (Their lead generation rate was 70% in 2018.)

**Automation & bots** To help companies scale conversational commerce, LivePerson Automotive can use AI to assist human agents in answering. Whether the bot handles the initial question (and seamlessly passes it to your team as needed) or works behind the scenes to surface answers to agents, we can deliver the experience that works best for your brand.

Are you ready to talk with your customers, not at them? LivePerson Automotive can help develop your conversational commerce strategy, from choosing the right implementation to creating consistent experiences across a variety of consumer touchpoints.

**To learn more and start building your own conversational commerce plan, just reach out:**  
**Text 020 3095 7289 / caomarketing@liveperson.com**  
**/ liveperson.com/solutions/automotive**





# Getting online motor finance right 'is crucial to profitability' in 2019

Getting their online motor finance offering right will be crucial to the profitability of many used car dealers in 2019, says iVendi

**W**ith trade prices so high that making a worthwhile margin is increasingly difficult, dealers are relying more and more on motor finance to make a profit.

James Tew, iVendi's CEO, said: "We are seeing a convergence of two trends. One is that more customers are completing some or all of their used car purchase online, including motor finance. The other is that motor finance is becoming more and more important to dealers, who are faced with a market where trade and retail prices have moved ever closer.

"What this means is that dealers increasingly need to look to online motor finance and make sure that they are offering something appropriate to their customer base – but this remains an area where the quality of what dealers offer varies widely."

Tew said even the smallest independent dealer should be offering some form of finance calculator, while larger businesses should have comprehensive processes that enable customers to look at different products from a range of lenders, to check their eligibility, to make their application and to complete documentation online.

"It is an obvious statement, but the dealers who put the most effort

into online motor finance are the ones who get the best results.

"What we find time and again is that there is a large group of used car buyers – around four out of five, according to our research – who are confident about the prospect of using online motor finance. However, the majority of those consumers believe that the motor industry lags behind others when it comes to online.

"It's like the old Kevin Costner film, *Field of Dreams*. 'If you build it, they will come.' Dealers who invest time, effort and money into online motor finance sell more cars online and more motor finance. Customers are primed and ready – it is dealers who are lagging behind them.

"However, in 2019, we may be reaching a point where dealers will no longer be able to afford to ignore the opportunities that online motor finance offers if they want to continue to make a decent level of profit."

## THE ONLINE MOTOR FINANCE TOOLS YOU NEED

What are the products you need if you want to maximise your online motor finance offering in 2019? Here is our short guide to the basics:

### • Finance calculator

The finance calculator is the fast front-end of motor finance. It is the most familiar and well established online motor finance tool and the bare minimum that dealers should offer.

Essentially, it provides the means for the online buyer to calculate the cost of financing a car using parameters such as deposit, loan, term and product. Its importance is that it gives the customer the means to work out the affordability of the vehicle in their own time, and can be displayed prominently on the website alongside individual vehicles.

The best calculators are simple and easy to use, and the best web designers make them as available as possible. That means having the calculator alongside the car in which the customer is interested every time it appears on a page, whatever device is being used.

Where a finance calculator is provided, it extends the time spent on the dealer website considerably. It should also be accompanied by detailed product information, ideally in video form, to explain the most important features of products such as HP and PCP.

### • Multi-lender comparison tool

Online motor finance is all about putting the customer in charge, and an important way to achieve this is to provide visibility over your lender panel and product range. Many dealers only offer a single online finance provider, but our research shows that this may not be sufficient.

The fact is that, in 2018, customers are sufficiently web-literate that they expect a choice of finance providers. A multi-lender tool enables the customer, once they have used the finance calculator to make basic decisions about their borrowing requirements, to look at how your panel of lenders would meet that need.

In use, the comparison tool should very much reflect your panel, providing a spread of lending options and forming part of a structured process that follows the finance calculator in a logical path, showing customers how their initial workings translate into a real finance application.

### • Finance pre-qualifier

This is the most advanced of the three tools that are generally available online and is the third step in the online motor finance journey.

The pre-qualifier goes further than a multi-lender comparison tool by replicating the criteria used by the dealer's panel of lenders and showing your likelihood for approval by each without leaving a footprint on the car buyer's credit file that is visible to lenders.

There is quite a lot of sophisticated information to be shown on screen and the key to this product is the ability to show the outcomes in a way that can be easily understood. For example, iVendi's pre-qualifier uses a traffic light system that allows car buyers to comprehend the most important points in a matter of a few moments.

The key to getting the most out of the pre-qualifier is to understand that it is, in some ways, like a more sophisticated finance calculator – users can see how varying parameters such as deposit and term will affect their likelihood of approval. Once a customer has reached this point, their likelihood of making a purchase is high.

Founded in 2009, iVendi makes e-commerce solutions that make vehicle selling easier for dealers, vehicle buying easier for buyers, and vehicle finance easier for all. With offices in Manchester and Colwyn Bay, and products connected to more than 7,000 dealer locations in the UK, iVendi believes in innovating to deliver results.

Visit [www.ivendi.com](http://www.ivendi.com), email [enquiries@ivendi.com](mailto:enquiries@ivendi.com) or call 0345 226 0503.

**iVendi**



# Raving fans buy cars faster

Judge Service's latest research shows that a 20% improvement in recommendation levels reduces the time it takes to sell a used car from 40.3 days to 34.4 days – that's nearly six days quicker

This is based on analysis of more than 100,000 customer surveys matched with stock data. JudgeService offers a range of surveys that give retailers insight into the customer experience, as well as reviews and star rankings. Working with more than 1,000 retailers across the sector, JudgeService uses industry-specific questions to provide actionable insight to improve the customer experience.

**Customer journey**  
"At JudgeService, we believe that insight enables our clients to make the world a better place one customer at a time," said Neil Addley, the founder of JudgeService. "The core to this is understanding the customer journey, which is where

ProAct from our Lost Sales Survey starts, by enabling you to understand why customers haven't bought from you. As with all our surveys, we provide the data back to the dealer in real time, enabling them to act on any hot leads and secure new business. But also, using our reporting, particularly our traffic light report, you can highlight key businesses or individuals that need attention by comparing them with their peers. "You can also highlight any process or systemic issues within a dealer group by highlighting where there is an area of concern. So, improving customer service really does start with lost sales. Key causes of dissatisfaction are poor attentiveness to meet and greet, and badly explained finance options. The single most important driver of



customer satisfaction is the salesperson. "Once a customer has bought a car, our clients use ReAct, our post-transaction survey, to understand their customer satisfaction, but also to drive review content and star rankings. 97% of people look for reviews when they are buying something and 87% of people expect to see well above three stars before they consider a business. Our clients are able to celebrate their reviews by publishing them using our widget or, better still, pulling the content through to their own website using our API. Our reviews index well on Google for great natural search benefits and are also featured on Auto Trader and Motors.co.uk. Unlike some review companies, we don't allow our customers to cherry-pick what reviews are published, or indeed who is asked to complete them. We believe that, in the long run, only authentic businesses will survive. "To complement our sales surveys, we also offer clients Snap 'n' Share,

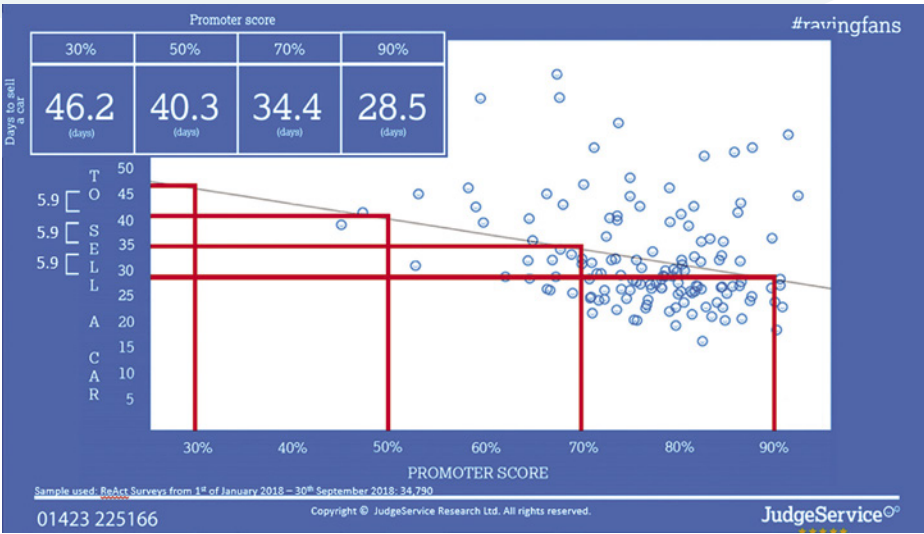
part of the JudgeService App, which allows customers to celebrate the joy of handover. Not only does the customer get a photo of the handover to keep, but they are also able to share it on the dealer's site, Facebook and their own social media. For customers using ReAct and Snap 'n' Share, the handover image and the review are combined when they are presented on the dealer's website. "We also recommend dealers follow-up service customers with our ReAct service survey, which gets really good snapshots of customers after they have had vehicles serviced and repaired."

**How does it work?**  
JudgeService takes feeds of customer data from the retailer on a regular basis, which is critical for it to be able to send out surveys and also conduct analysis. Surveys are sent by email and text, with added reminders to ensure maximum response. Response rates are typically 35-40%, as the customers

## THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Based on our insight, these are our top tips for dealers to improve customer satisfaction, stock turn and profitability

- 1. Meet and greet – attentiveness matters**  
The results are conclusive. Customers want to know you care about them and are available to help. Make sure your magic meerkat is on the lookout for customers on the forecourt or display. Rain or shine, customers want to be acknowledged. Sure, they probably don't want to be pestered, but they sure as hell don't want to be ignored.
- 2. Train your team to explain paperwork, documentation and finance**  
You probably spend time training closes and objection handling, but how much time do you spend teaching your team to explain paperwork and finance documents? Is it even in your training plan? Yet it has a huge impact on customer satisfaction. Get it right and you'll sell more cars more quickly. Get it wrong and customers will walk.
- 3. Keep it clean**  
Whether it's the car being cleaned before being put on display or the forecourt, customers notice your attention to detail and judge your business by the standards you set.
- 4. Maximise your web presence**  
As well as accurate pricing, good specs and great photography, ensure you carry your reviews, recommendations and star ratings on your website. Customers are looking for who to choose and if you don't have the information they're looking for, they will go elsewhere.
- 5. Invest in customer feedback**  
Don't lose sales because someone, somewhere has decided the customer won't deal "today". One man's tyre-kicker is another woman's hot prospect. Use a third-party follow-up to get feedback from "the ones that got away". More than 35% of "lost sales" are still very much in the market to buy.
- 6. Measure customer satisfaction**  
"What's measured is managed and what's managed normally improves." If you're not measuring your used car customer satisfaction or lost sales, then you have no barometer on your performance. It's like driving without a speedometer. Ongoing measurement of the customer experience will highlight where you can make improvement as your processes and team change and evolve. Recognise excellence and coach out the crap!
- 7. Coffee and car mats**  
Coffee, a tank of petrol and car mats. People notice these things. Plastic cups and vended coffee may have been all right 20 years ago, but people expect more now. Decent coffee and a proper cup. Or a can of Coke or bottle of water. Explain whether they have to pay for a full tank or whether they'll get mats. Don't risk spoiling the handover by "bottling it," not explaining what's covered and what has to be paid for. People are used to paying for upgrades – just get the offer right.



For more information, email [contactus@judgeservice.com](mailto:contactus@judgeservice.com), visit [business.judgeservice.com](http://business.judgeservice.com) or call 01423 225 166





# Thoroughly modern marketing

The motor retail industry has accepted low conversion rates as the norm for too long, failing to better understand and act upon some of the root causes. However, forward-thinking dealer groups that are implementing well-planned and well-executed digital marketing campaigns recognise their ability to produce measurable change that helps to increase sales conversion and service retention.

In our 'always on' connected age, the ways in which businesses can interact with consumers are more numerous and more direct than ever, which means that car dealers have a wide range of options when it comes to their digital marketing. That said, while the possibilities for communication have broadened, dealers must be shrewd in selecting the right method for each prospect and circumstance.

In this respect, bespoke programmes that can better connect dealerships with their customers are essential.

Marketing Delivery adapts and automates these programmes to make use of the technology favoured by those customers – which means our contributions typically secure higher engagement rates as a result.

Our digital campaigns deliver a programmatic schedule of communications in the sales and aftersales cycles for our clients, without removing the element of personality from the dealership experience.

## Hold the phone

Successful follow-up on new car sales, or prospecting for aftersales work, should not rely on staff making a high number of speculative phone calls. In fact, too heavy a focus on telemarketing could prove to be a hindrance to effective lead management.

Bespoke research commissioned by Marketing Delivery found significant variances in consumers'

preferences for communication, depending on the purpose of the message and which party was instigating the contact. Email was by far the most favoured method of inbound communication (i.e. from a dealer) for consumers, both for car sales (47.6%) and aftersales (48.3%). Only 24.5% of respondents said they would prefer telephone contact regarding a new car purchase, and just 19.7% favoured receiving a call to discuss service and MOT work.

These numbers should not be that surprising to dealership staff – a customer will often ignore a phone call during their working day, instead preferring to respond to an email in their own time while relaxing at home.

The findings highlight not only the

rationale for using email as the default method in these circumstances, but also the need to ensure an email address is on file for the customer in the first place. When we analysed more than 200,000 records held by dealerships across the country last year, we found that an email address was absent for an average of 16% of customers. This data deficit is undoubtedly a limiting factor in the efficacy of many dealers' outbound communications.

It is worth noting that despite consumers' clear preference for email when it comes to

receiving communications from dealers, the telephone becomes a much more popular choice when it comes to them instigating the contact. In these instances, there is usually a greater sense of urgency – for example, to get a service booked in for a particular date, or to chase information about a new car purchase – and so the immediacy of a phone is favoured.

Therefore, while a focus on email for outbound communications should prove more effective, dealer groups still benefit from well-trained contact centres to handle the inbound communication from customers in response.

## A silent salesperson

One of the most common reasons for a lead not to progress to a purchase is that a dealer's stock doesn't match the

customer's desired specification. Therefore, making customers better aware of an evolving stock situation should be an essential pillar of your digital marketing. Fortunately, automating this process is relatively easy and very cost-effective to address, avoiding the need for proactive input from busy sales staff.

Subscribing prospects to tailored stock alerts – which are relevant to their specific enquiry – performs the function of a 'silent salesperson', helping dealers to recapture dormant leads that may otherwise go elsewhere. The return on investment can be significant, with the potential to add dozens of additional used car sales over even just a few months, at a cost-per-sale that is significantly lower than with other digital services.

## Social work

When it comes to communicating with consumers, there are times when neither email nor telephone are the optimal approach. Instead, engaging with customers through paid-for campaigns on social media platforms can complement ongoing awareness-building activity and deliver tangible results for the business.

Data-driven marketing on social platforms

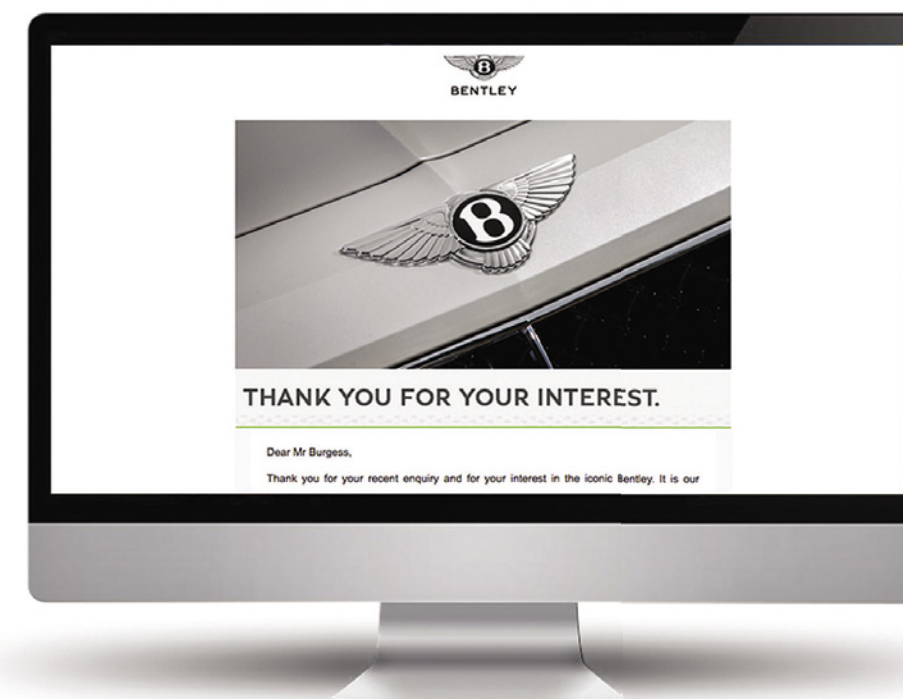
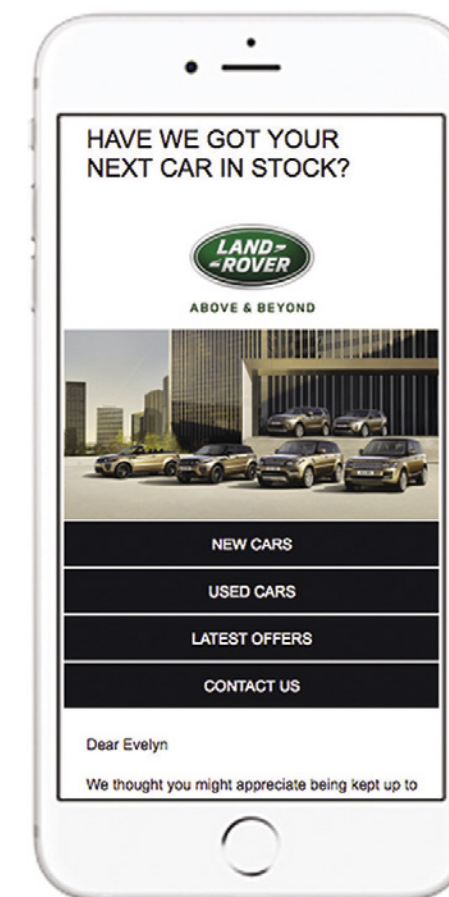
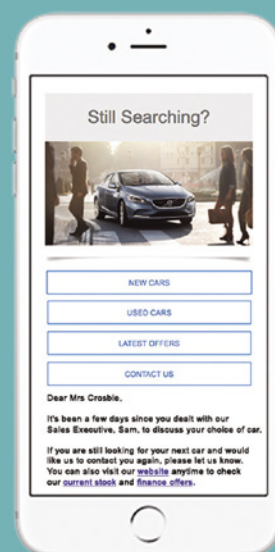
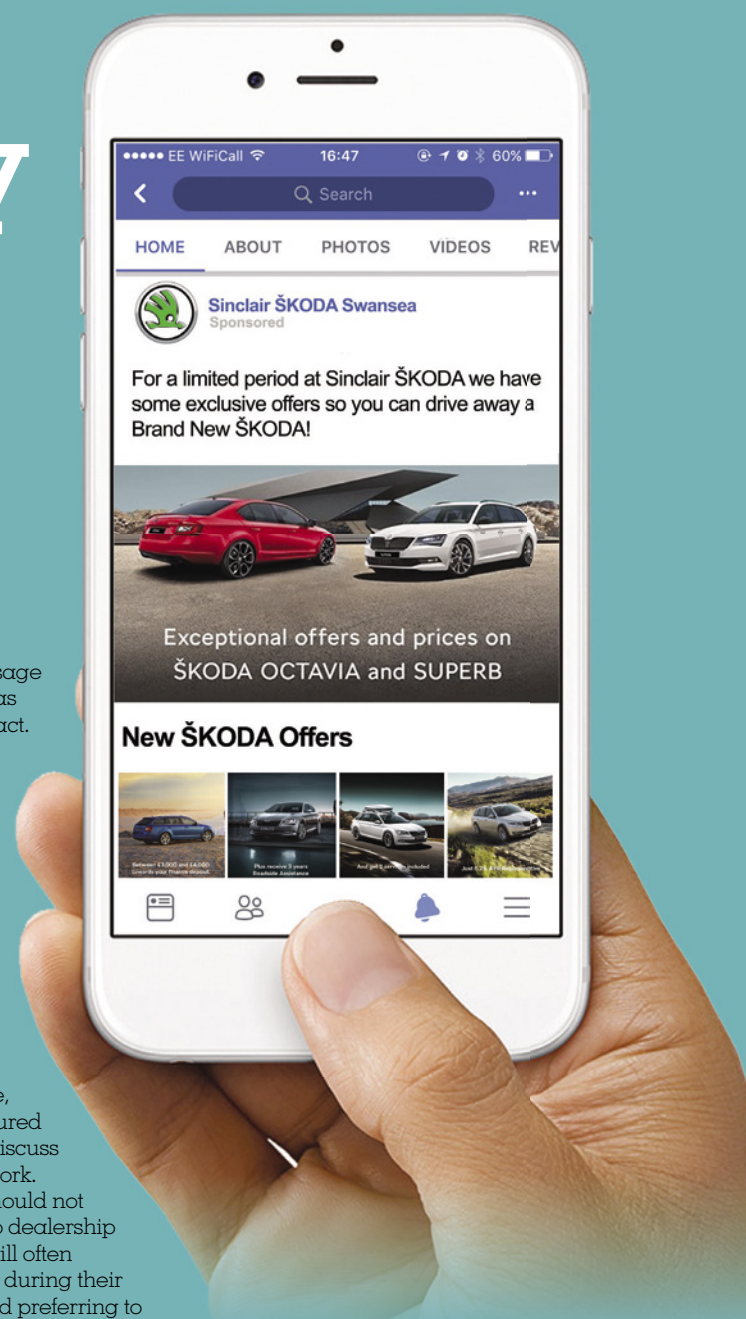
can prove to be remarkably fruitful, and no platform is as geared towards supporting marketing programmes as Facebook. In fact, there is no other initiative that can deliver highly qualified leads so cost-effectively or so rapidly.

In recent years, Marketing Delivery has developed unrivalled expertise in supporting dealers to make the most of the opportunities provided by Facebook, which is now reflected by our status as an official Facebook Agency Partner – unique in the automotive sector.

Facebook's influence on new car purchases in particular can be seen in two key metrics. Firstly, the age group consuming the most automotive content is 45 to 54 – one of the most relevant age groups for franchised dealerships. Secondly, the highest consumption of automotive content happens on Thursday and Friday, with the lowest on Saturday, supporting the view that Facebook plays a key role as a research platform to prepare for weekend visits to see and test drive cars.

For dealer groups who invest in such programmes, cross-checked customer data enables adverts to be placed in front of known prospects on the social media platform, further increasing the likelihood

## Advertising feature



For more information, call 01892 599 913, visit [www.marketingdelivery.co.uk](http://www.marketingdelivery.co.uk) or email [get.in.touch@marketingdelivery.co.uk](mailto:get.in.touch@marketingdelivery.co.uk)

**Marketing Delivery**  
DATA DRIVEN MARKETING

of conversion and a boost in profitability. Going one step further, our LeadBox system places interactive lead generation adverts on social media platforms to reach an even wider audience of likely prospects and enable them to submit a pre-populated enquiry direct to the dealer.

Facebook advertising is proving to be the top source of paid-for traffic for numerous dealers, with up to three times the volume of visitors compared with traffic brought in via Google AdWords. Most of the traffic referred by our programmes is also of a higher quality than from other sources, because the prospects are further down the purchase funnel.

Contacting prospects and customers through their preferred communications channels, whether that is via email, a telephone call, or across a social media platform, is central to exploiting the value of a high-quality database – and ultimately to boosting conversion rates above the typical industry averages.





# CitNOW expertise sees retailers scaling ever greater video heights

In 2019, CitNOW expects to see its retailers using video even more, as the company enters its second decade leading the field in video communications

**C**itNOW clocked up 10 years of delivering video services to the automotive retail sector in 2018 and we will continue to develop new features, deploy the latest technology and enhance our apps and suite of products in 2019.

As the purchase process moves even further into the online arena, retailers need to be using digital technology to form relationships and persuade buyers to visit the showroom, as well as entice customers back to the aftersales department. Video has proven to be crucial to this.

Alistair Horsburgh, CEO of CitNOW, said: "We don't take our position as the market leader lightly. In fact, it makes us

more determined to continually refine and develop our products, as well as provide retailers with the best training, insights and research to ensure they have the knowledge and tools they need for video to help them reach new heights in every aspect of their business."

## CitNOW highlights

New features and products are created in response to retailer requests and continual insights gathered from data and independent research. Our quarterly release process ensures updates are regular, relevant and ready to go. Here are some of our 2018 highlights.

## Year of the Used Car report

2018 was a great year for used cars. This was reflected in our consumer research and publication of our Year of the Used Car report. Still available to download from the CitNOW website, the research was commissioned to understand the role video plays in the buying process and its findings were eye-opening.

Almost half of those questioned said they are looking to buy used for their next car and nearly 20% were yet to decide between a new or used vehicle. More than 50% of consumers in the survey believe an online video tour of a used car for sale is an important or essential part of the used vehicle

## CitNOW smart video products and services

Products and services will only be successful if they are easy to use, processes are straightforward and results are apparent. As such, all CitNOW products and services have been developed for ease of use, despite the incredibly sophisticated technology at work behind the scenes.

### CitNOW Sales

Makes high-quality filming, editing and distributing personal videos of vehicles in response to an individual enquiry easy. Providing a virtual way



to view the car, sales executives are also able to build a relationship with the consumer before they set foot inside the showroom or on the forecourt.

### CitNOW Workshop

Customers can see the work required on their vehicle when on the ramp or, indeed, receive assurance of a clean bill of health when the technician shoots a short one- to two-minute video. With increased transparency, customer service is enhanced and work is more likely to be authorised.



### CitNOW Web

Retailers can capture still images alongside video and 360-degree shots to create all the visual assets required to market used car stock online as soon as it is retail-ready. Integrated with dealers' own websites and used vehicle locators,



brand-approved still images and video can be uploaded and online in minutes.

### CitNOW Bodyshop

Providing customers with a video of the body repair work required on their vehicle builds trust and results in increased retail work conversions enabling the bodyshop to sell more labour and parts, while providing an unequivocal condition assessment record.



### CitNOW Dashboard

The Dashboard is the key to everything video for all CitNOW users, providing the means to track and monitor video performance on an individual level and from a managerial, group or network perspective. Real-time data allows activity to be monitored across all products in use.

### CitNOW Academy

CitNOW's dedicated Academy team provides on-site training, so retailer employees stay on top of their video skills by maximising its use. Providing the means to brush up or enhance their technique also means retailers can be assured their investment is fully capitalised.

## ISO 27001

As a digital technology company, we are committed to high standards of information security, privacy and transparency and last year achieved ISO 27001 accreditation. Implemented as part of our GDPR compliance, ISO 27001 certification proves we can offer our quality product range with increased data security for our customers.

This certification, the highest international standard when it comes to data security, also means that businesses and customers using CitNOW



apps have a proven and independently verified system supporting them, keeping their data secure and private to the highest global standards.

## Amber Follow-Up add-on

Easily forgotten in busy aftersales departments, amber follow-ups offer an additional revenue stream if managed effectively. The Amber Follow-Up add-on to CitNOW Workshop helps service advisers to record and follow up identified amber work that is not sold immediately. A two-minute data entry task when the customer is collecting their vehicle will send an automated reminder at the point the work will become more urgent. Using this new feature, Norwich-based workshop Robinsons Škoda has seen an impressive 86% increase in work approved, resulting in an 11% boost to workshop labour hours.

## The power of SMS

Always siphoning our data means we can share insights, which often result in the smallest tweaks that have the greatest impact. One such seemingly minor change is sending a simple text as well as an email



to a customer to alert them to their personal video, thereby increasing watch rates. Our latest statistics show an average 57% watch rate of personal video when an email alone is sent, but that jumps to an incredible 74% if a text is sent along with an email.

## eLearning

The CitNOW Academy has played a central role in our development and expansion and has helped to establish video as an essential means of communication. We currently have a range of eLearning modules available on the Dashboard, meaning automotive professionals can access relevant training modules whenever necessary. 2019 is going to see us take this a step further by partnering with learning provider, Eloomi, to take our eLearning to a much higher level of sophistication including in-depth reporting, measurement and individual learning records.

Call: 0118 997 7740  
Email: [reply@citnow.com](mailto:reply@citnow.com)  
Web: [www.citnow.com](http://www.citnow.com)





# AM LIVE 2018 ROUNDTABLE

Legislative, political and economically driven outside influences could determine the fate of the new car market in 2019, said delegates at the Automotive Management Live roundtable

**R**etailers still reeling from the impact of the introduction of the new Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Test Programme (WLTP) in September, and the realisation that the fall-out from the new legislation could be felt well into 2019, were asked to reflect on both the past year and the challenges of the 12 months ahead.

While the slower evolution in making the digital-to-physical retail process truly seamless and the accompanying shift in staffing and remuneration policy were on the agenda, it was clear that many felt at the mercy of wider market forces.

As Brexit looms large, attendees were keen to share their experiences of the new emissions and fuel economy test regime during the final four months of 2018.

## WLTP: An ongoing issue

Nick Allen, who along with his wife, Annie, acquired Sportif Suzuki in a management buyout from previous directors John Miskin and John Boardman in April 2018, said: "We were first made aware of (WLTP) by the manufacturer in May."

"I thought 'we've just bought a business' and assumed that it was going to be a nightmare. We [had] 40 cars and I thought the market for them would dry up."

"We decided to see it as an opportunity and launched a big campaign. By the end of August, we had to pre-reg just one car. The money that we made in July and August stood us in good stead."

Others were left frustrated by a lack of communication, however, and the issues were not confined

to the Volkswagen Group brands who, as *AM* reported at the time, accounted for 49% of September's total UK market decline of 22%.

Marlone Joseph, manager, Marshall JLR Cambridge, said: "From JLR, the stock of hybrid vehicles, in particular, was severely affected by WLTP. It was frustrating. As dealers, we can only update customers on what we have and if the stock's not coming in then we have nothing to tell them. It's as simple as that."

Andrew Meaden, Hendy Group Kia and Honda franchise manager, said the problem with supply had been difficult for many retailers, but that consumer concerns surrounding changes to published emissions figures had not materialised. He said: "I'm not sure WLTP has come onto many consumers' radars. It has not been talked about by customers. It's a manufacturer and dealer issue."

John Tordoff, the chief executive of JCT600, voiced his concerns that WLTP's effects could be felt well into 2019.

He said what was originally a September problem had quickly morphed into "a Q1 and Q2 problem for 2019".

"We're hearing that it will take that



long for some product to come back online," he said.

## Is it too late for diesel?

Closer to home, Government policy will be divisive and possibly decisive in affecting car registration volumes in 2019.

Concerns continue around the pace of adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) and the effect of the Government's efforts to cut levels of harmful emissions by driving the motorist away from internal combustion engines (ICEs), and diesels, in particular.

Meaden said the national press had led the "demonisation of diesel" before reports of rising CO<sub>2</sub> led to the realisation that the latest diesels

are cleaner and the anti-diesel rhetoric lost momentum.

However, everyone around the table seemed to agree that it was too late for the fuel. In 2018, registrations of diesel vehicles fell 29.6%, from 1.07 million in 2017 to just more than 750,000 last year, according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

Meaden said the shift toward EVs could come too soon for some, with the infrastructure not yet ready to accommodate the number of plug-in cars now demanded by the market.

He said: "Again, we have an issue with a lack of consumer confidence because of the infrastructure that's required for EVs, but is not yet in place."

"According to the press, we'll need three quarters of spaces in car parks. Until BP and Shell and the like put charge points in filling stations, that will be a perceived problem. It's a perfect storm."

Tordoff said Government policy is the key to growing or falling sales of certain fuel types, with consumers' key concerns continuing to be cost.

He said: "I think the sales of diesel and EVs are tied into the tax policy. Nobody wants to buy a car now and find that next year the tax costs treble."



**I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I ASKED SOMEONE ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS AND THEY SAID IT WAS EASY** **ANDY BRUCE, LOOKERS**

## Positive about pre-owned

Fresh from a financial update that detailed the AM100 group's fortunes to the end of September, Lookers chief executive Andy Bruce said his business had weathered the worst of the WLTP impact of 2018 by turning its attention to used cars.

"I can't remember the last time I asked someone about their business in the automotive retail sector and they said it was easy," he said, adding that he believed franchised retailers' resilience and resourcefulness would see them weather the current market pressures – possibly with the help of a greater focus on pre-owned vehicles.

"What we have tried to do is approach everything with a positive state of mind. Audi was probably the most severely affected by supply [disruption after WLTP]."

"Our new car sales were down about 40% in Audi, but we made the same amount of money because we

raised the prices and said 'if we can't get the same volume, why would we discount them?'

"In used cars, we improved by about 30% over the same period. Audi has lots of used cars in stock. I think it's too easy for us to focus on the negatives."

Arnold Clark franchise director Russell Borrie concurred that used cars would lie at the heart of franchisees' business during 2019.

He said without the increased stock that might once have been sent to auction, Arnold Clark's sites would not only be deprived of sales, but also vital footfall that can often lead to the sale of a new car.

Bruce said even a "reasonable" Brexit deal could be enough to stimulate the new car market again, suggesting that sterling could rise above €1.20 once again.

He added: "Euro/sterling is the biggest influence on our market. When the rate was €1.60, this was the land of milk and honey."

"We were sitting on a 2.7m market

## ADVERTISING FEATURE

# Buyers get a New Year boost with new BCA Buyer app

**Dene Jones, chief marketing & data officer, BCA**



BCA's customers are benefitting from the launch of a new app, which is streamlining the buying process to ensure they never miss a vehicle.

The BCA Buyer app offers mobile access to the largest range of used vehicles in the UK, with the ability to search and track stock in real time. In an industry first, the app supports online and in-auction bidding by allowing users to track multiple vehicles in real time and be notified when bidding starts.

BCA put the buyer at the heart of the development process of the new app, involving significant input from a wide selection of buyer customers. It is designed to make the buying process as easy as possible by providing a best-in-class digital experience with an unrivalled selection of stock.

It offers a quick search for vehicles by make, model, auction centre, sale date and vendor. Users can view all the vehicles they want to bid on in one screen with a simple vehicle-tracking feature, and benefit from real-time running orders and vehicle notifications. Buyers can also access detailed vehicle information, including BCA Assured reports, vehicle grades and guide pricing.

The new app is free to download in Google Play and the Apple App Store and has been downloaded by thousands of BCA's customers.

BCA plans regular enhancements to the Buyer app based on buyer feedback, to ensure it consistently evolves with the needs of their buyers. The launch of the new app marks a busy 2019 for BCA that will see a wave of innovation, making it easier than ever to buy with BCA.





and rising, generally. I believe a 'No Deal Brexit' would send the exchange rate towards parity and that would really hammer the market."

### 'Some people don't want to talk'

The retailers around the table at Automotive Management Live 2018 clearly had one eye on the future of the new car retail model and the impact that may have on their facilities and staffing.

Jonny Bowers, group aftersales operations, Lookers, said many consumers no longer want to interact with service staff: "Some people don't want to talk to anyone. They just want to get in and get out. It's a stress purchase. If someone doesn't want to chat and would rather buy tyres that have been identified as red online over the internet then they are able to do that as well."

Tony Choppin, group compliance manager at Stoneacre, said as well as a disconnect between some dealership processes and the needs of modern car buyers, there is also a disparity between what sales executives and other members of staff are told to deliver and the reality of their interaction with customers.

He said: "Generally, what we're finding is that our sales executives still want to deal the customer too



quickly... They're doing their own thing and I think that's an attitude that dates back to the 1980s and 1990s when we had a surplus of customers walking into the dealership.

"I'm always suspicious of the sales executive who makes the big margins and just disposes of customers who might prove more of a challenge.

"Some of the most basic aspects of running a dealership seem to be the things we're moving away from right at a time when that should be

at the very core of what we do."

Borrie said the basics of customer care are being addressed by the adoption of 'product geniuses' at Arnold Clark.

They have been employed on a five-days-a-week contract and Borrie said existing sales executives were also given the option of changing their working patterns.

He added: "The move towards geniuses hasn't affected sales and the advantage is there to see. "They add a layer of detail to



customers coming to us towards the end of their buying journey and they are young and approachable."

While Tordoff acknowledged the advantage of younger, more product-focused staff, he questioned whether many franchised retailers are ready to make the move wholeheartedly.

Likening the 'genius' system to that of an Apple Store, where you might walk in and be served by "a young employee with a mohawk haircut", he said: "Five minutes into the conversation you're engaged and he's telling you what you need to know. What would we do if he came for a job in one of our dealerships?"

Bateman added that throwing away the stereotypes would be a great thing for car retail in general, but added that the sector was failing to attract suitable numbers of women, without venturing into other minority areas.

He said: "We simply aren't flexible enough. The change could be a great thing, but are franchised businesses eager enough to embrace it?" **TOM SHARPE**

## DELEGATES



**ANDY BRUCE**  
chief executive,  
Lookers



**NICK ALLEN**  
managing director,  
Sportif Suzuki



**NATHAN TOMLINSON**  
managing director,  
Devonshire Motors



**ANDREW JEFFERY**  
finance director,  
Carsave UK



**ANDREW MEADEN**  
Hendy Group  
Kia and Honda  
franchise manager



**MARLENE JOSEPH**  
manager,  
Marshall JLR  
Cambridge



**JOHN TORDOFF**  
chief executive,  
JCT600



**ELENA LOKTEVA**  
board member,  
Delta Motor Group



**TONY CHOPPIN**  
group compliance manager,  
Stoneacre Motor Group



**ANDY BATEMAN**  
customer experience director,  
JCT600



**RUSSELL BORRIE**  
group franchise director,  
Arnold Clark



**JONNY BOWERS**  
group aftersales operations,  
Lookers



**ANNIE ALLEN**  
director,  
Sportif Suzuki

# TALENT ON THE MOVE



**TREVOR FINN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
AT PENDRAGON

Pendragon chief executive Trevor Finn, 61, has announced his retirement.

Following 30 years with the business, he plans to leave his post by the end of March.

The nationwide AM100 car dealer group, which trades under the Evans Halshaw and Stratstone brands, has begun a formal process to appoint a successor.

Finn said: "Pendragon is, and remains, a great company full of talented people. I feel privileged to have led the business during its formative time and ignite the current transformative period of development. The time is now right to hand over to a successor to see the company through its next phase."

Finn and his chief operating officer, Martin Casha, 58, have steered Pendragon since it de-merged from Williams PLC in 1989, with 19 dealerships and a contract hire division.

Over three decades he and his team grew the business into a group which, at its peak, had more than 300 franchised dealerships, including sites in Germany and America, with turnover exceeding £5 billion.

Its major acquisitions have included Quicks, CD Bramall and Reg Vardy.

Finn directed Pendragon through several economic recessions, including the 2008 global collapse, when its share price slumped to about 3p, before rallying once the group had completed a refinancing. The share price peaked since, at 29.85p in May.

Finn holds more than 16.5 million shares in Pendragon, a 1.2% stake.

The dealer group's current strategy is to build a nationwide network of used car supermarkets, support its mainstream and premium brand franchised dealerships through physical and online retailing, and to build sales internationally from its software business, Pinewood.



**CAROLE MERRY**  
FRANCHISE DIRECTOR,  
MARSHALL MOTOR GROUP

Marshall Motor Group has appointed Carole Merry as franchise director responsible for its Volvo, Honda and Maserati division.

She replaces Shaun Allen, who held the role for the past three years. Allen will now head up Marshall Motor Group's Jaguar Land Rover division.

Merry has more than 20 years of motor trade industry experience, working with a number of leading dealer groups.

She joined Marshalls in 2014 as general manager for Marshall Honda and Marshall Maserati in Peterborough.

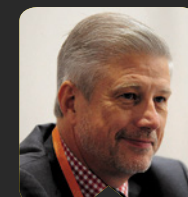


**ASHLEY ANDREW**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
HYUNDAI MOTOR UK

Hyundai Motor UK has promoted sales director Ashley Andrew to the role of managing director following Tony Whitehorn's announcement that he would step down from his post at the end of 2018.

Andrew becomes managing director at the South Korean brand a year after joining from FCA UK, where he held the same job title.

He has also worked at Seat, Škoda, Rolls-Royce, BMW, Mini and Ford during an automotive sector career spanning 20 years.



**SIMON BOTTOMLEY**  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
AT HENDY GROUP

Simon Bottomley has joined Hendy Group as its new chief operating officer.

He was previously group managing director at Thurlow Nunn, which operates 12 Vauxhall dealerships.

Both family-run dealer groups feature in the AM100.

Bottomley also served on the Vauxhall retailer board.

Hendy Group is a multi-franchise operation based in the south of England. It had a turnover exceeding £500 million in 2017 after quick expansion following its acquisition of Lifestyle Europe the previous year.

## ADVERTISING FEATURE

# Sales manager's job description

**You may have a million-and-one things to do, but never lose sight of your most important priority, says Simon Bowkett of Symco Training**



What's your role as a sales manager?

I'm sure your dealership, dealer group or manufacturer will have given you a job description. But I think your best job description is simply what it says on your business card.

### Manage the sale

Don't get me wrong, there are so many things you have to do as the sales manager in a modern car dealership. It's one of the busiest desks in the dealership. You've got WLTP and the stock you need to get. There's GDPR and other legislation. Then there are all the things that your manufacturer is asking you to do. You need to look at CSI scores, coach your salespeople on a daily basis and countless other things.

You have all these things to do, but when your job title is sales manager, your primary role is to manage the sales.

Do you make sure you have enough time to do that effectively? Are you doing the second and third reviews throughout the sales process, for example? Are you inspecting what you expect, and making sure your salespeople are following the process that you want them to follow?

Never lose sight of the fact that the most important part of your role is managing the sale. Day in, day out, that's the job. And that's the subject of my new sales training video on the AM website this month ([www.am-online.com/symcotraining](http://www.am-online.com/symcotraining), or at [www.symcotraining.co.uk](http://www.symcotraining.co.uk)).

### Sales cure everything

Here's a funny thing about the motor industry, and, in fact, probably every industry – sales cure everything. If you are selling a lot of cars, making a lot of profit and selling a lot of bolt-on products, somehow all the other stresses tend to go away. Sales cure everything.

Remember that every time you come to work. Focus on getting your salespeople to do what they should be doing every single time, and take a bit of pressure off your job.

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## FIVE QUESTIONS TO A...

# MCLAREN GSM

Mark Ballance, general sales manager, Parks Motor Group, McLaren Automotive Leeds, on working your way to the top



### What are the main responsibilities of your role?

**BALLANCE:** The opportunity to oversee operations at a completely new dealership is something that doesn't come along [that often], especially with such a young and upcoming brand and a family-run business. One of the key things for me was getting the aftersales operation up and running, because we know there are McLaren customers in the area who previously had to travel to Glasgow, Manchester or Birmingham. The other thing was raising awareness, but there is a very clued-up customer base here and as soon as we set up the temporary facility, we had a steady flow of two or three people a day coming in and introducing themselves to me and Nick [Strong, McLaren Leeds sales executive and a former JCT600 colleague of Ballance's]. During my time with Parks, I have employed some key staff members who were keen to move forward with me and I'll be responsible for ensuring they are in a position to oversee the departments as and when the new showroom is ready.

### What are the most significant challenges ahead in your field of work?

**BALLANCE:** How quickly the market can change. There are so many contributing factors that are out of your control. We've been experiencing strong demand so far in Leeds and have really high hopes for the facility when it opens, but it's impossible not to have an eye on Brexit and the economy at the same time.

### How might these challenges be overcome?

**BALLANCE:** One of the real strengths of the McLaren brand is the sheer interest that it has generated in recent years. The cars are fantastic and there always seems to be an exciting new addition to the range just around the corner. That's a great strategy and has really driven growth very strongly in recent years. As a supercar retailer, we must ensure that we maintain high standards, transparency, listening, learning and, as we are a family-run business, the ability to be flexible when required. Working with a brand such as McLaren brings us into contact with a remarkably wide spectrum of customers – from traditional luxury car collectors to real petrolheads – but all should expect the very best service from us. We have to be knowledgeable, passionate and capable of meeting all their needs.

### What attracted you to this area of expertise?

**BALLANCE:** Three years on the road, as regional manager for Bentley Motors – covering a lot of miles and staying in numerous hotels each week – was quite enough. I had worked with Parks Motor Group in that role and when the opportunity to be in at the start of a brand new franchise within my home city was offered, I jumped at the chance. Having started out in the motor trade from school on a YTS scheme, I guess you always have the dream of being general manager. Landing this role does go to prove that years of dedication to the various roles taken does pay off eventually.

### What's the most important thing you have learned in your career, and how have you made use of it at your company?

**BALLANCE:** I've had the pleasure of working with a lot of experienced and unique individuals over my career to date who have given plenty of advice... too much of it to remember.

But some of the main points that have stuck with me over the years have been: Be yourself and always remember that people buy from people. I like staff to be themselves and offer a service they would like to receive. **TOM SHARPE**

## QUICK-FIRE QUESTIONS

### What drives you?

Every day gives a different opportunity in this industry, no two days are the same. The ability to make a difference within your workplace.

### What's your favourite app?

WhatsApp is great for messaging work and private life and I like Strava to record walks/cycling/hikes.

### How do you relax?

With my family and occasionally a glass of something in hand depending on the day.

# AM

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### THIS MONTH'S QUESTION TO THE AM TEAM:

What's the oldest thing you own?

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**umbilical cord fairly recently...**

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► **Tricks in the books**

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► **My Grandad's bike, it's on the wall in my**

**dining room**

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► **Some rifle shells fired at my grandfather's**

**funeral**

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► **An original pressing of Led Zeppelin II,**

**from 1969**

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# AM AWARDS: 2019



## Havoline

## Welcome to this year's AM Awards sponsors

Preparations for the 2019 AM Awards are well under way. Plans have been drawn for the set design and production highlights for the event, which takes place at the Birmingham ICC on February 7, 2019.

There are 24 award categories, plus the Business Leader of the Year award and an induction into the AM Hall of Fame for a business leader who has made a considerable impact in motor retailing during their career. Categories are available for sponsorship, allowing suppliers to gain the publicity and exposure of being associated with the highlight of the industry calendar. This year:

**Texaco Havoline is sponsoring the AM Community Hero award**

We are delighted to receive the support of Texaco Havoline for this key award category at what promises to be an industry highlight of 2019.

For more information on the AM Awards, including the sponsorship packages still available and details of how to book tables, go to [www.am-awards.co.uk](http://www.am-awards.co.uk)





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