

“Experience-First” is the key to future-proofing 21st century dealerships

What is Experience-First and what does it mean for dealerships?

Experience-First marks a fundamental shift in how retailers and OEMs engage customers, driven by consumers who expect brands, from Apple to Zoopla, to provide highly experiential interactions and the best possible customer care. This approach is powered by the Keyloop platform, which builds an end-to-end automotive retail ecosystem.

In today's blended physical and digital world, delivering distinctive experiences across the complete consumer lifecycle is essential to cultivating loyalty. By unifying multiple data points throughout the consumer journey, dealers and OEMs gain a 360-degree view of each customer in real-time, enabling them to provide exceptional experiences.

Is it possible to keep up with the rapidly changing needs of the 21st century consumer?

Modern consumers demand convenience, responsiveness, and interactivity, often relying on technology to facilitate this. The great part is that consumers are willing to pay more for a good experience, but they will equally look elsewhere if unsatisfied. Whether it's banking via an app, food delivery, booking a holiday or mortgage searches online, consumers seek immediate and seamless fulfilment, and industries have had to adapt fast.

However, some retailers are not meeting these expectations and run the risk of losing their relevancy. To stop this from happening, they need to harness technology solutions to align products, services, and marketing strategies with customer preferences. By tapping into advanced data analytics powered by our Keyloop DMS, it's possible to gain a deep understand of customer behaviours and insights.

This enables automotive retailers to offer tailored experiences; fostering loyalty, repeat custom and ultimately, growth.

Automotive retail is a 'high-touch' industry, relying on a deep understanding of customers to nurture relationships and build loyalty, can technology help enhance these skills?

As technology deepens our understanding of the customer, traditional dealership roles are evolving to match their needs. Digitising documentation, automating purchasing prompts, enabling push notifications and finessing omnichannel experiences will give individuals more time to connect with customers and build relationships. Ultra-personalisation, whether served digitally or in real life, is the key to delivering brilliant customer service and becomes achievable when technology and human interaction combine.

By looking at other brands we can see just how transformative technology can be in crafting consumer journeys, and we are starting to witness this in automotive retail.

As teams are freed up to build relationships, they move from 'salespeople' to 'advisors'. Some are taking this approach to the next level, like Arnold Clarke, which now calls their team "Product Geniuses". This simple shift in language harnesses technology, unleashes expertise, builds understanding and is a key step in becoming a trusted advisor.

What should I be looking for in a technology partner?

Keyloop's Experience-First platform marks a fundamental shift in how automotive retailers and OEMs approach selling, driven by consumers who expect brands to provide high-touch interactions. The platform empowers dealers to focus on the human touch – surprising, delighting, and truly connecting with customers.

At Keyloop we've identified five key principles of success in building an **Experience-First approach**:

- 1 **Distinctive**: create an exceptional experience that sets you apart.
- 2 **Unified**: provide a 360-degree view of consumers across all departments to build understanding and target interactions.
- 3 **Frictionless**: streamline processes to empower customer service and efficiency.
- 4 **Connected**: embrace technology through a partner ecosystem, enriching your offerings with a broader range of tools and services.
- 5 **Simplified**: unlock your DMS investment and connect multiple points for smoother operations and better data utilisation.

What are the next great opportunities for automotive retailers?

Driven by issues including sustainability and cost-of-living concerns, consumers are quite rightly demanding more from their chosen brands. As spending tightens, customers need transactions to go further to validate purchases. This demand increases the need for personalisation, opening an opportunity for retailers and OEMs to meet and exceed expectations.

Some of the near-future opportunities we're working on at Keyloop include electrification, connected mobility and generative artificial intelligence (AI).

The march towards Electric Vehicles (EVs) presents a real opportunity for those who get ahead of it. Retailers should be thinking about anticipating customer needs, supporting them throughout their EV journey, and utilising machine learning and telemetry to forge a competitive edge. OEMs are embracing this by delivering connectivity apps straight into the hands of consumers, and retailers would benefit from doing the same. Lastly, there's no doubt that generative AI will greatly impact the car buying process and customer experience, from enhanced discovery, personalised recommendations and streamlined servicing.



Graham Stokes
VP Sales, UK&I and APAC
Keyloop

