

# Trust and transparency are key to customer confidence

Consumers have been able to price and choose hotel rooms and holidays online for years now but they can still struggle to digitally book a car's annual service with most franchised dealerships.

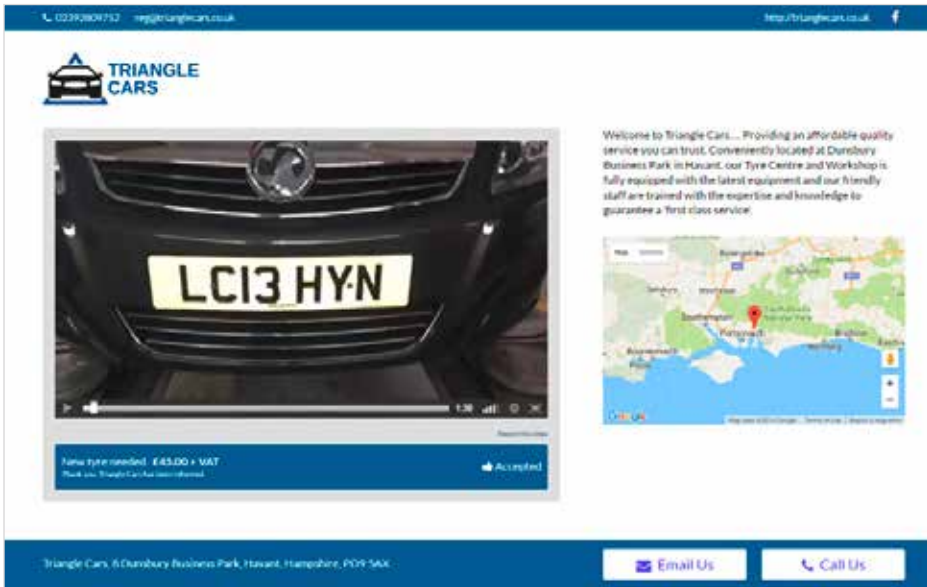
National fast-fit chains embraced online bookings more quickly than franchised workshops and independent garages. Now The Motorist's Organisation is aiming to help these catch up, by generating bookings for them and enabling them to properly promote services on their own websites and social pages.

Its website BookMyGarage.com allows a consumer to input their VRN and postcode to see all the participating garages in their area. From there, they can see the actual price of the job and when they can book it – as well as customer services such as loan cars or waiting areas.

Denise Patterson, development director, said: "Quite often, when you speak to garages and they say they have online service booking, you find it is merely a contact form that doesn't give the consumer any information about what service they might require. Too often we presume that people know what their vehicle needs."

The process helps the consumer identify their car and can qualify when its last service was and how many miles it has done since, and from that recommend either an interim, minor or major service.

Patterson said: "Sometimes we presume too much. Sometimes people in the automotive industry presume the consumer knows what type of service is due. We presume people know exactly what car they drive, and what the registra-



tion number is, and sometimes they don't. "It's giving the trust and transparency to garages to be able to give their consumers the information they're after."

After the launch of BookMyGarage.com, TMO realised there was real appetite from garages for having the booking tool on their own websites.

"This is where we're different from the rest who are focused purely on a B2C site and trying to push work to the garages. We're trying to make sure the garages can capture their own work."

"We started putting booking tools into a garage's

website in a simple i-frame, that means the back office they already have to control Bookmygarage.com also controls the booking tool on their own website. They can change their booking tools at any time."

Patterson added: "The focus is on trying to get these garages bookings 24/7. Many people are now booking online at the fast-fits and we wanted the small independent garages to have the same software that allows them to capture the same consumer information and enables them to book straight with them."

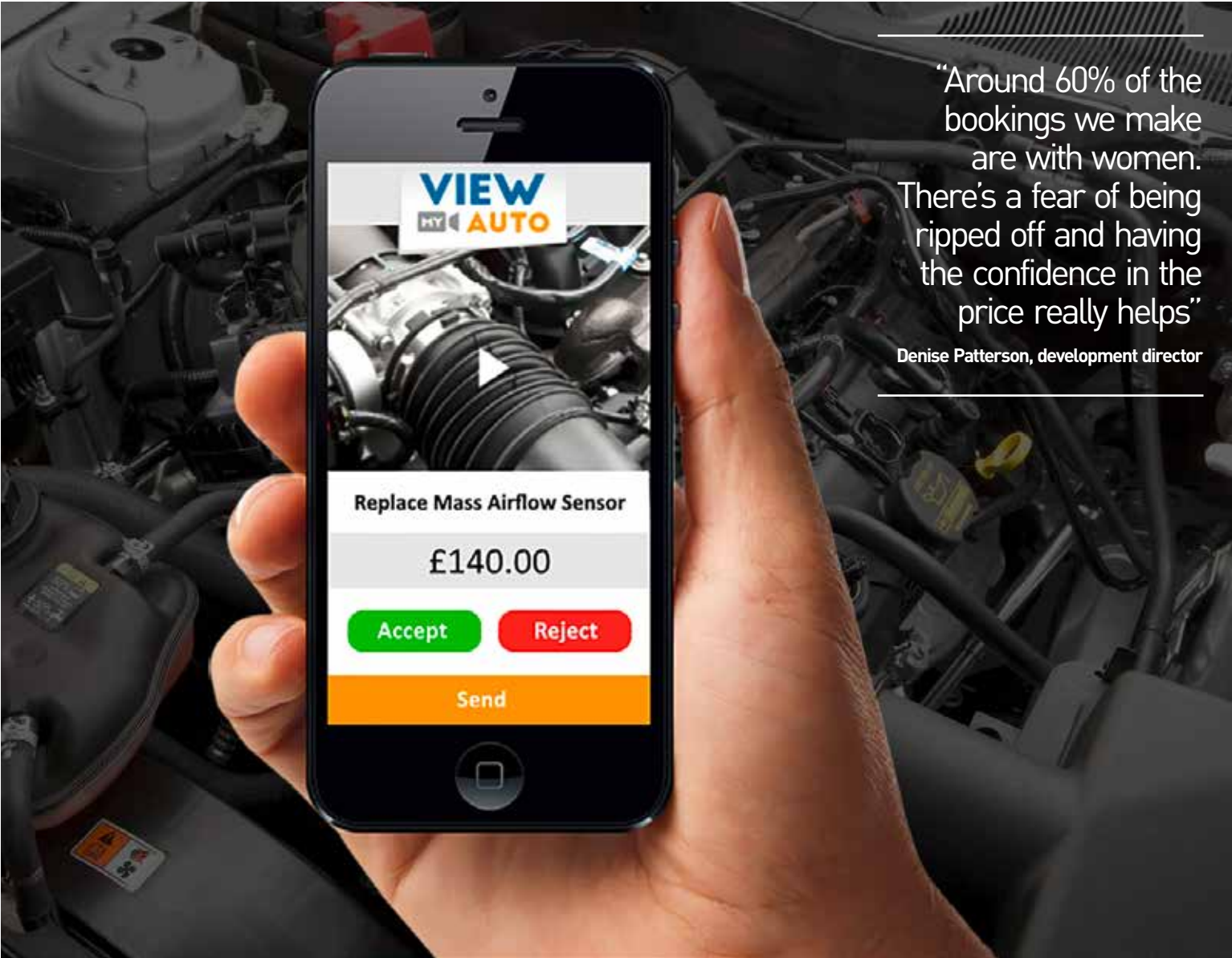
The function can also be added to the garage's Facebook pages. This led to TMO's move into website creation for garages, and supporting them with content for their websites and social media channels, and targeted marketing.

It has already been supporting franchised dealers too, with social content for Sinclair Group, Bassetts Honda and Cardiff Volvo, to name a few. TMO works with each to increase Facebook 'likes' and Google rankings.

Franchised dealers now using its booking tool include Bassetts Honda and Pebley Beach.

TMO is using SEO to put BookMyGarage.com in front of more consumers. Almost 1,000 people book through the site monthly. Some 40% of the bookings are made between 6pm and 9am.

Patterson said established garages could expect



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Denise Patterson, development director

at least one to two bookings a day through TMO's tools. She said: "Some 70% of the garages we're dealing with don't have a garage management system, they're still using a paper diary."

"They don't have a database or a social site and their website is really poor. We help them to progress on their digital journey, whether that is at the very start or helping those that are already digitally savvy with our hugely successful 'likes' campaigns."

The motor industry has been backward about making the price of its services easy to be found, but Patterson believes it's pointless to fight it.

"Whatever the industry wants, you'll end up doing what the consumer wants," she said. "From research we do we know the consumer wants to see a price. People will do this once a year; they haven't a massive interest in getting the car

served generally. The reason why 60% of bookings for fast-fits now are online is because they do give the prices and there's the trust element and the convenience."

"Around 60% of the bookings we make are with women. There's a fear of being ripped off and having the confidence in the price really helps."

Patterson said that with any comparison site, price is the main issue. However users can also compare the garage's ratings and whether loan cars, customer drop-off or collection and delivery are available.

After the service, the customer is sent a text message to give their service a star rating of between one and five for each element. The reviews are published straight to the garage. If it's a one or two-star rating the garage has 24 hours to provide a response or remedy.

TMO now has a video aftersales tool too, which – at just £50 per month with no additional equipment required and up to five users – provides garages with a budget alternative to other established aftersales video companies.

The system is downloadable onto iOS and Android and allows unlimited videos and emails and up to 100 text messages per month through the tool. It's already in use at over 80 garages following its launch in August.

Patterson said: "It gives a price for each job with an accept/reject button which gives faster repair authorisation, as well as transparency and trust for the consumer."

"One of the biggest problems for smaller garages is just calling the customer to tell them it's ready for collection, so it's not purely about the upsell, it's about the customer experience."

### The Motorist's Organisation

- The Motorist's Organisation was founded by Karen and Douglas Rotberg, who had previously run Jobsite and Tesco Cars. It ran TootCompare and RAC Garage Compare, and six months ago launched BookMyGarage.
- It already has over 8,000 garages on board, largely independents, and is now targeting the franchised dealer sector.
- Garages supply its back office systems with data such as hourly rates, service parts prices, MoT rates, details of waiting areas, loan cars, pick-up services and booking lead times, so consumers on BookMyGarage see the job price and which dates are available.
- Garages are able to adjust their prices and lead times in the back office to account for promotional campaigns and busy periods.

For all products and information, visit [tools.bookmygarage.com](https://tools.bookmygarage.com)

