

New app promises 'end-to-end' parts procurement

The pathways between body shops, manufacturers, parts suppliers and dealers throughout Britain's motor industry are notoriously complex and difficult to navigate.

Many dealers have tried to drive efficiencies into their own operations, but the absence of an effective procurement platform across the sector means repair information, data about parts availability, and orders typically rely on a chain of phone calls, emails and voice messages.

According to automotive data and software company Audatex, even the largest and most focused dealership groups have missed out on sales of manufacturer parts because the operating environment lacks transparency and certainty.

To bridge this gap, Audatex has created an app, InPart, that connects dealers, bodyshops and manufacturers.

"We are always looking to devise ways to increase satisfaction for our customers and partners; whether they are dealers, motorists, repair shops or other elements in the supply chain," said managing director Paul Sykes.

He said all of Audatex's solutions are created in-house and are designed to deliver "ever higher levels of accuracy and efficiency" by providing real-time management information.

"InPart is an end-to-end procurement tool, which

integrates with Audatex software, so you can check prices, buy parts and track orders through a simple electronic process, which reduces paperwork and time spent on administration, which in turn increases productivity," said Sykes.

"This new app was created to increase transparency, improve 'straight-through' processing and enhance customer service levels."

Reading-based Audatex entered the sector 20 years ago, operating at the vehicle damage estimating end of the market, but now provides products and services for all aspects of a vehicle's life-cycle.

Sykes said it works with 2,200 bodyshops, has relationships with every major insurer going back at least a decade, and processes 2.2 million claims a year.

Audatex also benefits from its place within the giant Solera Holdings group, which provides software to the motor claims processing industry, alongside Solera's other major UK subsidiaries – automotive data and services specialist cap hpi.

Sykes said feedback from its dealership and bodyshop partners calling for a more efficient closed-loop system, was one of the main catalysts for the new InPart app.

"We've been working on the technology behind this app since 2014, because we wanted to ensure it was as close as possible to what dealers



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Paul Sykes, managing director, Audatex

required before it entered the marketplace, and we then tested it via a pilot programme during 2015," he said.

Sykes said the trial went well and that dealership and bodyshop partners fed back positive comments about how it worked and the quality of information they were receiving.

"The pilot programme validated our beliefs that this was a tool the market would find extremely useful, and it identified one or two aspects where we could make InPart even better through fine-tuning.

"The input from dealers was not only very useful, but much appreciated because they're the ones in the front line."

Since the pilot programme concluded, Sykes said Audatex had introduced InPart to major dealers across the country. He added that it is already evident that Audatex is receiving higher-



Make	Model	Year	Part Number	Description	Status	Price	Stock	Lead Time	Supplier
Vauxhall	Astra	2015	12345678	Front Left Shock Absorber	In Stock	£120.00	50	24h	ABC Parts Ltd
Vauxhall	Astra	2015	87654321	Front Right Shock Absorber	In Stock	£120.00	50	24h	ABC Parts Ltd
Vauxhall	Astra	2015	23456789	Rear Left Shock Absorber	In Stock	£120.00	50	24h	ABC Parts Ltd
Vauxhall	Astra	2015	98765432	Rear Right Shock Absorber	In Stock	£120.00	50	24h	ABC Parts Ltd

quality management information, which is enabling users to increase their part sales and to improve their margins.

"Cleaner data is critical to increasing operational efficiency in any business sector, and as the level of transparency increases in the marketplace, then dealers, bodyshops and everyone involved in the process will be able to make better and more timely decisions, based on greater understanding," said Sykes.

He believes the arrival of InPart underlines the motor industry's gradual move away from being a business-to-business (B2B) provider to the business-to-consumer B2C marketplace.

"Audatex and cap hpi are market leaders. We are constantly looking to bring together an abundance of data, and to devise and deliver technological solutions and services which use that data for the benefit of our customers," said Sykes.

"In the widest sense, we see our role as offering our customers the chance to give their customers ever-higher standards of service, and a memorable customer experience.

"As the industry moves even further towards the B2C model, I am sure that dealers will increasingly turn to innovative digital technology to enhance their productivity and increase their customer retention levels."

Stewart Myles, head of Audatex's crash repair department

"From a dealership perspective, InPart has been designed to integrate seamlessly with their existing databases. We have regional development managers to assist dealers with the new system, but so far, they haven't been called in often, because the app is very intuitive to operate.

"At any one time, we'll have more than £1.32 billion worth of parts in the system, which is a remarkable figure, and underlines how important it is for every element to operate as efficiently as possible. Probably the biggest benefit for dealers is that the new app allows them to receive higher quality management information (MI) with regard to dynamic pricing.

"We feed this data back to individual dealers as a matter of course, but can also feed it back upstream to the manufacturers, if that is required, and the more traffic we can get through the system, the better the MI will be."

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"My background is in parts distribution and parts sales, for manufacturers and in the aftermarket. I've been in the industry for quite a while, but when I heard about this concept I was genuinely excited about the benefits it could deliver.

"I could immediately understand where Audatex was coming from, but also see how much this app would be appreciated by the main dealer groups and the bodyshops. I've seen many initiatives come, and seen most of them go, but am convinced this will be a genuine game-changer for our industry, because it finally brings forward the procurement platform which has been needed for so long.

"As I visit the major dealers, it's clear that they already understand the benefits of InPart and are keen to get involved."

2.2 million

the number of claims Audatex processes in the UK each year

2,200

bodyshops have signed up with Audatex

£1.32 bn

the value of parts processed per year in the Audatex system at any time

Audatex
a Solera company

To find out more, email rachel.pattison@audatex.co.uk, phone 01189 323 535 or visit audatex.co.uk/inpart

