



Automotive retail is at a pivotal moment – it's time to evolve together

The industry is becoming more complex, competitive, and customer-driven than ever.

Dealerships have invested heavily in technology to meet rising expectations – but is it delivering the return they hoped for? And are customers truly experiencing the magic of great service?

We surveyed over 250 automotive retail decision-makers across Europe and the UK to evaluate current technology performance, uncover key challenges, and understand their impact on customer experience and growth

System overload

Dealerships feel overwhelmed with today's complex technology landscape

The findings indicated that car dealerships have been investing heavily in technology.

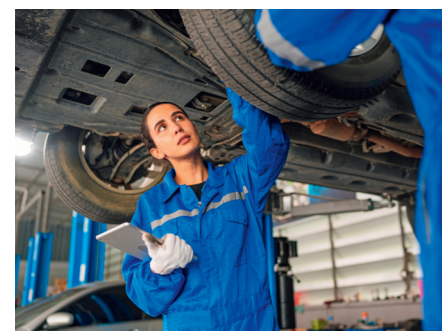
Surveyed decision-makers reported using an average of 50 systems across marketing, sales, and aftersales. Yet rapid tech growth of technology often brings inefficiencies and diminishing returns.

Fewer than half are very satisfied with their systems: marketing (46%), sales (47%), aftersales (48%), and reporting (48%). Back-office satisfaction is even lower at 39%. The main issue? Poor integration.

Frustration seemed widespread with 86% saying their tech stack feels ineffective.

Multiple interfaces cause inefficiencies like "double-keying," a pain point for 87%.

The impact is clear: 88% agree tech complexity significantly increases costs and erodes profitability.



Hungry for revenue growth (and tech consolidation)

Nonetheless, dealers agreed on the value tech can bring and continue to invest. Return expectations are high and budgets are growing – system consolidation was a priority.

Most decision-makers desired a streamlined, integrated tech stack to cut complexity and costs.

- 88% wanted fewer systems; while 90% prioritised supplier consolidation.
- They were backing this with investment: tech spend averaged 18% of revenue, and 85% reported budgets have grown in the past three years, with 88% expecting further increases in that time.
- Expectations are high: respondents target an average 8x ROI, and nearly 1 in 5 aim for 10x or more.

Data visibility is crucial to unlock growth

Improved data visibility is critical to improving the customer experience and powering growth.

Nearly all respondents agreed customer (99.6%) and vehicle (98%) data was critical, yet only 26% said they got excellent value from customer data and 42% from vehicle data.

The issue? Poor visibility and fragmented systems.

- 89% admitted lost sales and aftersales revenue due to limited data access.
- 86% wanted a complete customer view; 88% said the same for vehicle data.
- Every respondent (100%) believed unified access would boost revenue with 35% saying the impact would be "very strong."

The customer service gap

It is becoming clear that a great customer experience is a key differentiator

Our research revealed a strong consensus around the need for faster, smarter, and more data-driven engagement across the entire customer

journey and that technology will play a critical role in achieving that goal.

Speed and automation are key to unlocking marketing success

Marketing functions are facing mounting pressure to deliver measurable results, but fragmented systems are holding them back. 88% wanted faster lead response, and 91% seek greater automation, such as customer journey workflows. 88% needed clearer ROI on marketing spend.

Dealerships aim to optimise marketing with scalable, intelligent solutions but unfortunately, most lack the integration and visibility to make it happen.

Inefficient sales processes are undermining performance

Inefficiencies cost dealerships time, customers, and revenue.

- 84% said replies to customer enquiries took too long, and 86% agreed sales staff spent excessive time on admin, reducing focus on service.
- 88% admitted losing customers by failing to contact them at the right time, while 85% cited an inefficient part-exchange process causing further drop-off.

Underperforming systems were a key factor. Only 41% were very satisfied with their CRM, revealing a gap between investment and impact. The findings underscored the need for integrated, responsive systems that enable timely, effective customer engagement.

Boosting aftersales through integration and intelligent outreach

Aftersales was identified a key revenue driver but poor data integration slowed growth.

- 87% said a single, integrated view of each vehicle, including purchase and service history, was critical for aftersales success. Yet many lacked systems to deliver this 360° view in real time.

Latest Innovations from CitNOW Group

2-Way Messaging from CitNOW Sales and Workshop
Double your sales conversions by using WhatsApp instead of SMS.

CitNOW React360
Capture 100% of online leads – on any device.

CitNOW Marketing360
Deliver 15% more sales per month and cut campaign creation time by 40%.

Generative AI Backdrops from CitNOW Imaging
Sharper vehicle definition, enhanced lighting, improved silhouettes – all powered by AI.

Quality AI Features in CitNOW Sales & Workshop
Fully integrated into our video apps to help you make the best impression, every time.



"Our research revealed a strong consensus around the need for faster, smarter, and more data-driven engagement across the entire customer journey"

- To boost revenue, respondents identified the top strategies: reducing appointment no-shows (28%), timely contact centre outreach (28%), and increasing technician availability (26%).

These findings underscored the importance of timing, personalisation, and operational readiness in capturing aftersales opportunities.

Future investments

Dealerships are investing in customer-centric technology, specifically focussing on automation and AI

Over the next 3–5 years, our research identified the top priorities for dealerships:

- Expanding digital self-service options (30%)
- Increasing AI use in Sales & Marketing (28%)
- Improving the retail experience (28%)
- More effective contact strategies (26%)
- Enhancing aftersales technology (26%)

These priorities reflected a strategic shift toward automation, intelligence, and convenience – the hallmarks of a modern, customer-focused dealership.

A new era for customer experience

In summary, dealerships are struggling with fragmented tech stacks low satisfaction across core functions. Inefficiencies like double-keying, slow workflows, and poor data access are hurting ROI.

Evolution in customer experience via a unified, streamlined approach focused on automation, usability, and data intelligence can be a reality. CitNOW Auto360 is a purpose-built CRM for the automotive industry, to drive performance across Marketing, Showroom and Aftersales.

Built on Salesforce Automotive Cloud, it unifies customer and vehicle data into a single, intelligent platform, transforming how dealerships operate and engage.

CitNOW Auto360 empowers retailers to:

- Gain a complete, real-time view of every customer and vehicle
- Unlock insights that drive more enquiries and higher conversions
- Eliminate redundant systems and streamline operations
- Create value through a consolidated view of customer and vehicle data

By consolidating up to 10 redundant systems and saving up to £450 per site each month, CitNOW Auto360 delivers measurable impact, boosting lost customer engagement by 20%, accelerating campaign creation by 40%, and reducing call times by 30%. It's not just a CRM – it's the engine for faster growth and a new era in customer experience.

The elements to success

CitNOW Auto360 is built around three core modules: Marketing360, Showroom360, and Aftersales360, each designed to optimise a key stage of the customer journey and drive smarter, more connected dealership performance. These modules are powered by a unified data model that delivers a single, real-time view of each customer and vehicle across the entire CitNOW Auto360 suite.

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