

Dependability is a key strength of EMaC offering

In an automotive retail sector defined by seismic change EMaC is positioning itself as a supplier delivering consistently high levels of service and the tools needed to secure a consistent aftersales income for car dealerships.

While the Aftersales Partner has broadened its offering to facilitate the delivery of subscription-style, pay-monthly "ownership packages" offering transparency and peace-of-mind for motorists, managing director John O'Donnell believes the dependability of the EMaC offering is one of its strongest assets.

"I think we have a very clear vision of what we are and what we are here to do, and the business has done an excellent job of delivering that," he told AM.

"Right now, consumers are more inclined than ever to protect an asset that is probably costing them more than ever to purchase and they know spreading payments will help cover their motoring costs.

"At the same time retailers are really doing some fantastic work to leverage the potential of service plans and other add-ons to secure retention and – by using our tools – build a really strong service plan book that allows them see exactly when that service plan income will be realised.

"It's a great foundation for any dealership, helping to make them masters of their own destiny in a time of unprecedented change and uncertainty."

Following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in recent years and the consequences of limited vehicle supplies, EMaC has seen an increasing number of car buyers turn to service plans and additional warranty cover.

What was a 65:35, new-to-used car business when O'Donnell joined the company seven years ago has now evolved to be closer to 30:70 in favour of used.

EMaC is achieving greater penetration in a used car sector



where values are higher and the buying experience also better than ever, O'Donnell said.

"The idea of add-on products that can protect your purchase and guarantee it is looked after is made a far more obvious choice now that retailers have really succeeded in making a used car sale such a high-quality event," he added.

Consumer familiarity with subscription-style and pay-monthly retail models has steered EMaC to diversify its product offering in recent years, encapsulating an "All Taken Care Of" slogan.

Its stand-alone warranty, cosmetic, tyre and alloy products give dealers an opportunity to improve their profit per vehicle sale, while offering customers a hassle-free, easy-to-understand package.

EMaC's Subscription Warranty product for dealers offers servicing, warranty and breakdown recovery with no upfront fee at a £35-to-£45 per month typical price point.

The growing importance of an

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JOHN O'DONNELL



omnichannel customer offering has also affected how service plans are sold.

O'Donnell said he had been surprised at the volume of service plan sales being generated through an easy self-serve process offered on retailer and manufacturer websites.

EMaC partners more than 2,500 dealerships in the UK and has seen retailers take varying approaches to selling its products, with at least one removing all processes from the showroom to be delivered entirely by a remote contact centre.

"There is no prescribed best practice," O'Donnell said. "I think it would be disingenuous to say there was. The main thing is to be pro-active and transparent – ensuring all the information is in point-of-sale material and on the website – and, I would suggest, making sure staff are fluent on the subject of service plans and warranties so they can answer any enquiries."

EMaC recently received the AM

Dealer Recommended programme's Service Plan accolade for the 11th consecutive year, and its Drive Now, Pay Later product was also recognised in the Aftersales Finance category.

The past 12 months have also brought several successes for EMaC as it broadens its client base.

Long-standing client, Glyn Hopkin, has demonstrated innovation and product differentiation by working with EMaC on its "Ready to Go" Subscription Warranty product.

This all-inclusive ownership package provides customers with servicing, warranty, MOT and breakdown at an attractive monthly price-point.

Similarly, EMaC has a new client in The Trade Centre Group with the management team there demonstrating exceptional knowledge of their customers and providing a quality statement for their vehicle stock with the introduction of their Lifetime Warranty product.

O'Donnell added: "These are two examples of our clients taking control of their offering and standing out from the crowd with their product differentiation."

In January, the business also partnered with Toyota to offer its ToyotaCare Plus service plan with roadside assistance, which complements the OEM's innovative



Toyota Relax service-activated warranty scheme.

ToyotaCare Plus offers protection for up to four years or 45,000 miles from the date of first use.

"Toyota has been extremely progressive in its thinking on aftersales and customer retention, and this feeds directly into that," said O'Donnell.

"It's clear that Toyota is working hard to retain customers for its retailers and ensure that point-of-contact with the network is retained for a number of years. That's what service plans are great at."

Despite many of its products being white-labelled by car retailer and OEM partners, EMaC prides itself on a level of customer service that cements the strong reputation of its own brand.

A 4.7-out-of-five TrustPilot rating is



maintained by the business which handles all customer enquiries on behalf of its business partners through a 45-strong contact centre team. Plans are also being developed to provide a live chat service leveraging the same level of personal service.

Meanwhile, a policy of promotion from within a workforce of employees has helped maintain consistent levels of quality and specialist knowledge.

In June 2021 the business acknowledged Laura Cartwright's "in-depth understanding" of industry issues with promotion to operations director, 17 years after she joined the business.

Mike Foster was promoted to the position of national sales director last September, following 14 years in various roles, while John Glancy was recently made national sales manager for Scotland in his seventh year.

O'Donnell said: "Consistency has been one of the core elements of EMaC's success, in terms of the quality of products and service it delivers and the team behind it. There's a huge depth of knowledge and expertise in our team and we've been good at retaining that."

"At the same time, we've evolved and broadened our offering to ensure that we serve retailers in the very best way we can right now – ensuring they achieve excellent customer retention themselves."

"With a strong service plan book retailers have great foundations to build from to ensure 2023 is a year of real opportunity."



EMaC.

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