

Collaboration is key for Castrol

With UK new car sales under pressure and environmental issues in the headlines, Castrol feels well placed to help dealers overcome the challenges ahead.

Dealer profitability in the current trading climate, and particularly in the very competitive aftermarket, can be challenging. This is partly why Castrol will support its clients in as many ways as possible, according to UK sales manager Marc Perkins.

With operations such as Castrol Professional, Autino and the support of parent BP, franchised dealers which partner with Castrol have a suite of added-value products and services at their disposal, whether it be CRM tools, workshop process improvement programmes training for staff, or even loans for capital expenditure.

"It's not just about selling lubricants. Our focus with franchised dealers is using the people, expertise, and programmes we have to support them in making more profit from lubricants and our other services. That's what makes us different. It's about a partnership, selling through with the dealerships and using everything in our toolbox to help them make money," said Jeff Choularton, OEM and FWS activation manager.

Castrol owns a company called Autino, which provides digital marketing solutions. One of its products, Customer Lounge, uses technology which interlinks with the DMS to help dealers communicate better with customers before, during and after service visits. It also learns about customers to serve relevant information to the service advisor and help them work more effectively.

"It's about reflecting digitally what the best service advisors already do face to face," Choularton said. Dealers using Autino achieved outcomes including improved CSI scores, increased upsell success and engaged, productive service advisors.

Choularton added: "The reason we're involved in this is to reflect a modern Castrol and the way that we're changing to help franchised dealers in this ever-changing world. We're looking outside what we do traditionally. We're acquiring and partnering companies to expand the offerings we can give to dealers."

The company has partnerships with franchised dealers of different scales, including AM100 groups JCT600, Marshalls Motor Group, Trust Ford, Pendragon, Cambria Automobiles and Motorline.

And Europe-wide Castrol has after-

market partnerships with Ford, Volvo, JLR, Honda and Volkswagen Group. There's a new one coming too, with Groupe Renault. Castrol has had a partnership with Renault's F1 team for several years, and now the relationship is being expanded globally. From 2020, franchisees will gain a brand new range of oil products jointly branded by Renault and Castrol.

Mark Hodgson, European OEM sales director, said the company is particularly excited about the new opportunity to work with the Renault dealer network. The mix of OEM agreements with the strength of the Castrol brand gives dealer networks more reasons to communicate with their customers, he said.

With a need to ensure customers are choosing the right oil for their car, Castrol provides dealers with point of sale materials plus an online training programme, Oil Essentials, to help service advisors understand the different specifications and product ranges, why oil needs changing and what the additives do.

But the training resources available to service advisors are much broader than that. They can access an app-based learning suite of more than 30 modules as and when they wish, to

learn in bite-sized chunks when it is convenient for them. The modules were created based on feedback from service advisors on what they hoped to improve, and topics range from communication skills to technical knowledge and objection handling.

Senior managers at dealerships can access Castrol's consultancy services. A Castrol consultant can observe the business's processes, and create a programme of improvement to work with the dealership over a 12-month period. "It's very much part of our mantra of delivering where our customers' needs are," said Perkins.

Perkins reiterated Castrol has a suite of services it can tailor to the needs of individual customers. "It's about ensuring that we understand this business and we look to deliver against their specific objectives and priorities. This isn't about delivering the same offer for all partners, it's about tailoring to them – such as improving CSI scores, enhancing profitability and revenue, developing in-store processes and best practice, or giving them financial support."

Funding lines are available too. Castrol provides more financial

support to dealers than any other company in Europe, said Perkins. Cash is key for dealers, and having trade loans from Castrol can support them for a variety of CapEx activities, such as acquiring new sites, CI updates and investment in IT systems or electric vehicle charging points.

"We are market leading in the UK in terms of the services we provide," Hodgson said of Castrol and its parent BP.

Choularton suggested that the global environmental agenda can provide a further opportunity for dealers. Selected Castrol products are carbon neutral. The company also operates a carbon offsetting programme, BP Target Neutral, in which dealers can participate to demonstrate their own interest in protecting the environment for the future.

Another element of that programme allows dealers to offer to customers the ability to offset their fuel consumption for the next 12 months. That's been available for a couple of years, and uptake is now strengthening, said Perkins.

Castrol will play a role in the

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motor industry's reduction of CO₂. Choularton said there are multiple points here – the carbon offsetting, developing effective fluids including those greases and coolants required by emerging electric vehicles, and helping carmakers improve their hybrid and internal combustion engine vehicles.

Dealers can help by convincing motorists to maintain the high standards their car was built to, said Choularton. "The more you move away from using genuine parts and the fluids the car was built around, you start to lose those benefits. We put a lot of effort into reinforcing that we can keep that car factory-new – it's the only way to guarantee the performance."

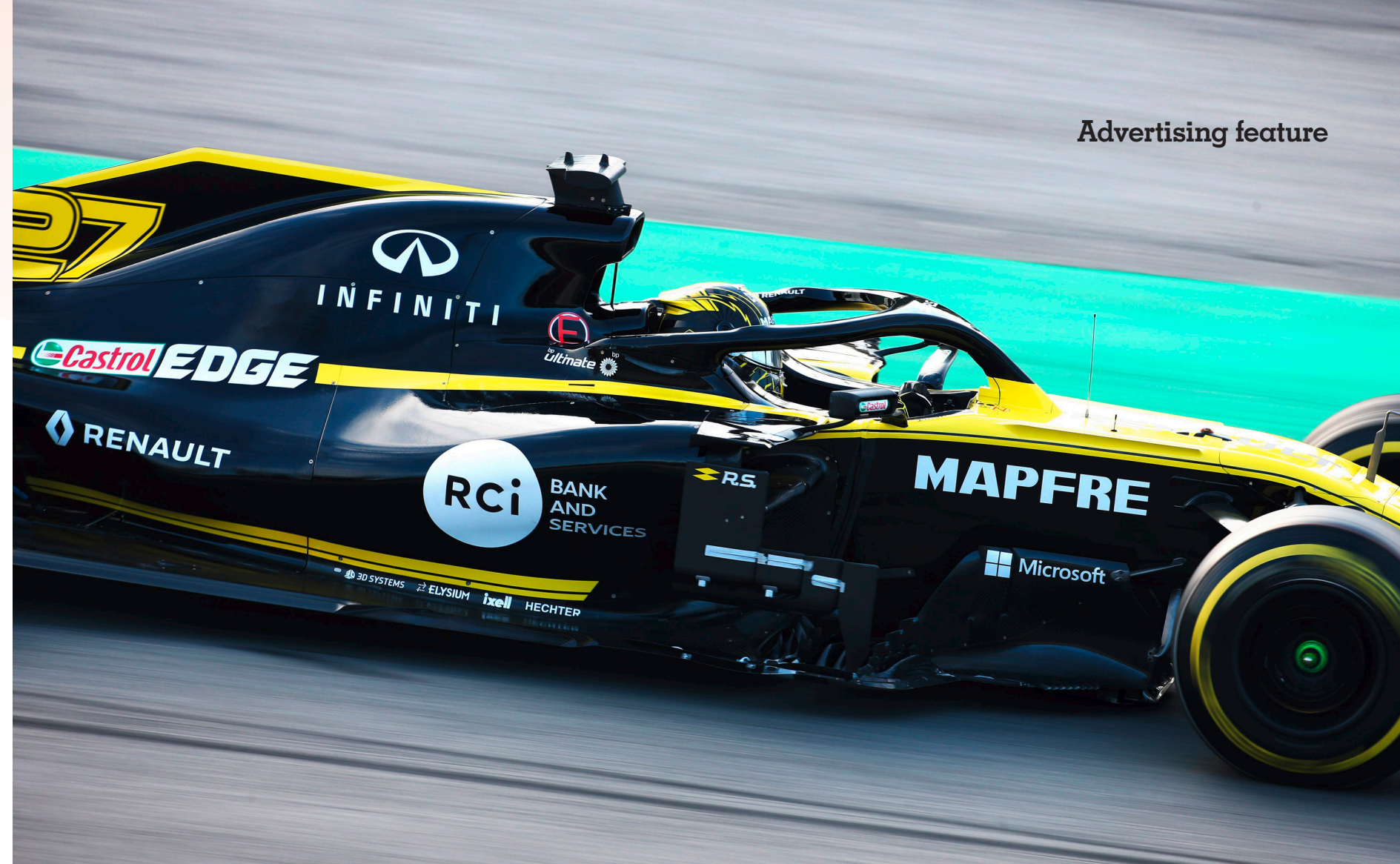
With feedback from customers, and an eye on sector and global developments through research organisations with which it works, Castrol is well positioned to help motor retailers adapt for the future.

Perkins added: "We like to get ahead of the curve to ensure that, whatever trends are coming through, we have a solution or added-value offer that's ready to go."



“WE’RE LOOKING OUTSIDE WHAT WE DO TRADITIONALLY. WE’RE ACQUIRING AND PARTNERING WITH COMPANIES TO EXPAND OUR OFFERING”

JEFF CHOULARTON



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