

# Online training boosts sales



**T**he best salespeople need two things to convince customers to buy – a detailed knowledge of what they sell and a belief in what the product does. The forthcoming training platform from exterior and interior protection product maker Supagard aims to address both areas with UK car dealership staff.

Craig Hepworth, national sales manager, said Supagard believes that selling is a skilled job, so training sales and service personnel to present the product correctly and clearly to the customer is essential.

The new platform, due to be launched in October, will split the training of sales and service staff into two parts, an easily accessible e-learning module that covers product information and benefits – such as on paint finishes, fabrics and leathers and identifying and demonstrating the best Supagard treatment for any application, regardless of the age or style of the vehicle – and an in-dealership module that takes

dealership staff through a proven sales process to ensure success.

“What you want when you turn up at the dealership to do the training is that the people in the room have an element of product knowledge already,” said Hepworth. “Online training can instil and embed the product knowledge and then the in-dealership training that our field teams do will turn that knowledge into a belief in the product that they are able to demonstrate and present to a customer.”

Hepworth said the new training programme was devised partly in response to the increasing number of demands on dealer staff.

“The business has changed massively over the past five years. Everyone’s time seems to be getting more precious.”

One of the biggest challenges is the high turnover of the workforce in motor retail, said Hepworth.

“We have a field team of 16 people, and with staff attrition you can never get to people as fast as you would like

## KEY CONTACTS



**Alan Graham**  
Head of Global Sales  
Tel: 07801 536 238  
alan.graham@supagard.com

– either new starters or for refresher training. We are finding that we will train somebody on a dealership today and we’ll have to go back in three months’ time to train two or three new starters. We’re trying to be smarter in the way we do it.”

Following the online training, dealership staff take a test, said Hepworth, “so we know they have achieved a level of knowledge”.

“This isn’t taking away from what we do in the dealership – that has to remain, because it is a critical part of the training. This online platform will supplement that, not replace it.”

Valeters, detailers and paintwork specialists also earn a certificate of competence, that can be displayed in the showroom once they have been trained by Supagard’s team to professionally apply the relevant products.

The system will also carry a best practice guide, “a reference point for all things Supagard”.

It sees the training platform as a way for sales and service staff to keep dealers at their penetration



benchmark of 40%, said Hepworth. He said under the current system, the rates go up immediately after a visit from the field team, but they naturally begin to fall again over time.

“We see this platform as a way of maintaining the performance. If we cannot physically get in to see someone, they can almost do a virtual training session – looking at the online training, refreshing their knowledge and getting some pointers.”

Established in 1988, Supagard is the market leader and the longest established supplier in the UK’s paint and interior protection sector – it does business with 1,200 dealers in the UK alone and its products have been applied to more than five million cars in the company’s lifetime. From its

**“THE BUSINESS HAS CHANGED MASSIVELY OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS”**

**CRAIG HEPWORTH**

Glasgow headquarters and research and development labs, it is continuously developing new technologies for paint, interior, glass and wheel protection.

The training modules will be constantly reviewed and updated to reflect those new products, current market conditions and trends that its market research identifies.

Hepworth identified one such piece of market research, which showed that just because a customer declines a product at the point of sale, it does not mean the sale is lost forever.

“There is market research that demonstrates that when people get home and consider the purchase, they are in a much more likely state of mind – between order and delivery – where they would buy the product. It’s getting sales teams to do the basics consistently. It’s about making sure they talk about the products to every customer, every time, to put that belief in their mind that the customer, even if they didn’t buy it at the point they ordered their cars, they may well consider it if you revisit it in the future.”

That constantly refreshed focus on product knowledge and the in-dealer training will be bolstered by Supagard’s marketing app.

Designed to take potential customers on a self-guided journey, the iOS, Apple and PC-capable app allows sales and service personnel to demonstrate the benefits of Supagard exterior and interior protection to customers in the showroom, but is also available to customers at home, via Supagard’s website at [www.supagard.com/app/](http://www.supagard.com/app/).

Using text, graphics and videos, it shows potential customers the advantages of having Supagard protection applied to their car, with split-screen tests illustrating how well the finish of the paint, alloys, glass and interior compares with an unprotected vehicle.

It also carries testimonials from existing customers and links to purchase replacement products online.

Hepworth said the marketing app will support the training platform on re-soliciting customers after the point of sale.

He said: “We see the e-journey that this app can provide us with – if somebody is not taken at the point of sale, but you send them an email with a link to the app, it’s a softer way of trying to sell the product.”

“Our product is an excellent product, but it’s only going to sell if you’ve got the sales teams at the businesses doing what they need to do to sell it – instilling the belief, instilling the sales processes, demonstrating the sales techniques.”



**Call: 0141 633 5933 Email: [info@supagard.com](mailto:info@supagard.com) Online: [www.supagard.com](http://www.supagard.com)**