

# The appliance of science

**S**cience and sustainability are the motor industry's driving forces as it emerges from lockdown – and Supagard typifies the new mindset. Its latest product launches also underline the transformative power of innovative research and the crucial importance of embracing customer feedback.

James Smyth, the Glasgow-based company's long-term technical director, almost overflows with passion as he describes the evolution of the latest additions to its product range – a heavy-duty hand cleaner and a hand barrier cream.

"I was originally working on a new ozone-based treatment for cars which could take lingering odours out of the interior, particularly for removing the smell of stale smoke from pre-owned vehicles," he recalls.

"Then, when Covid arrived, and the focus was more on chemical products to protect people, we were able to tweak some of our existing technology and create an advanced formulation to help remove dirt and grime from hands and a cream that would help sanitise and restore the skin safely.

"One brand has dominated the market for years, but in the post-pandemic environment, no one will want to dip their hands into a large tin of gloopy gunge which has previously been used by others.

"We were determined to create a solvent-free product which could be dispensed safely and efficiently, so we worked with a specialist company to design a secure container which could easily be wall-mounted."

The impetus for the development of the barrier cream came from customers, particularly body-shop technicians and auto engineers, who rapidly began using multiple products during their working day under the restrictions imposed to tackle Covid-19.

"We received feedback from dealerships about staff using one product to clean their hands, another to act as a barrier against germs and then a third at the end of each day to repair the damage done by so much washing and cleaning," says James. "It took months to develop creams which sanitised, moisturised and added a barrier to the skin in one.



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"I don't think anyone, especially in a busy workplace, wants to be using several different products each day, but this is a complete package in just two products. Our heavy-duty hand cleaner can be used on either wet or dry skin, so you can use tissues if you prefer them to water and it leaves a lovely smooth feeling.

"A crucial element for both the cream and the cleaner during our research was the speed at which they acted. Companies often claim their products can kill 99.9% of germs, but never say how long they will take to do so. These act instantly."

**NO ONE WILL WANT TO DIP THEIR HANDS INTO A LARGE TIN OF GLOOPY GUNGE WHICH HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN USED BY OTHERS**

JAMES SMYTH



# A philosophy that delivers

**I**t's two years since Craig Hepworth became Supagard's sales manager for its UK operations, and it took no time at all for him to appreciate the company's philosophy.

"I obviously knew the brand, its history and its reputation, but, until I arrived in Glasgow, I hadn't realised what I think should be its biggest claim to fame," he admits.

"We might take time to devise a product, test it and then bring it to market, but you can absolutely guarantee that it will do what it says. The research and the science leads the marketing here, which really makes this business stand out."

Craig was equally impressed by the speed at which Supagard adapted its long-term business model when the pandemic hit the UK.

"For more than 30 years, everything had been about creating products to protect paints, fabrics, leather and glass, but the focus is now also on protecting people," he says.

"The events of the past 18 months have really made everyone realise that sanitisation is paramount in the workplace, especially in automotive dealerships and workshops where oil, grease and solvents are always present.

"What you can't see has become the most important aspect and these new products take out bacteria, oil, grease and grime like nothing I've ever seen. The barrier cream which James (see facing page) created is smoother than expensive cosmetics."

Craig even put the new Grit hand cleaner through its paces at home after a long and wearisome session of gardening.

"I'd been digging and pruning and just happened to have a tube near the sink. I squeezed a little onto my hands and rubbed them under the tap to see what impact it would have," he says.

"I was amazed. They were absolutely clean at the first go and there was no residue, which never happens with the usual hand-cleaning products.

"I tried it again after I'd been fixing my bike-chain, when my hands were covered in oil and tiny bits of gravel and had the same results.

"I was telling everyone, even before



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our field team took the new products out in June, that this was perfect for technicians, valeters, the reception staff and anyone else in dealerships who wants to be certain that their hands are bacteria-free."

Craig is also confident that the new products are pitched at the right price-point, which has been strengthened by the feedback from customers.

"Staff at every dealership and technicians in every workshop are cleaning their hands several times a day, often using expensive products and tied into a long-term contract," he says.

"We wanted to create something which in terms of quality and speed could match anything on the market, but also at a price point which made them affordable and excellent value."

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**EVENTS OF THE PAST 18 MONTHS HAVE REALLY MADE EVERYONE REALISE THAT SANITISATION IS PARAMOUNT IN THE WORKPLACE**

CRAIG HEPWORTH

**Supagard®**