

Supagard is determined to keep reputation untarnished

After 34 years serving the automotive sector with its vehicle protection products Supagard is conducting its business on the motto that “reputation is everything” as it asserts its presence in the car retail sector.

With its paint and upholstery protection products having been applied to more than five million vehicles and approved status secured in long-standing partnerships with no fewer than 15 OEMs, the Glasgow-based supplier continues to raise standards to exceed the expectations of car buyers and dealers alike.

UK national sales manager Craig Hepworth said that Supagard products’ speed and simplicity of application makes them the ideal product for the modern car retailer.

And a “class-leading, no-quibble lifetime guarantee” ensures the business will never stand by to see customers disappointed.

“It’s a real point of differentiation for us,” said Hepworth.

“Our guarantee not only covers the price paid for application at the retailer – as many of our rivals do – but up to £5,000-worth of remedial work to set right any issues a customer might have.

“It really is a no-quibble guarantee. We are determined that customers who use our products are wholly satisfied. Because we’re such an established and well-known name in the sector, we’d never want that reputation to be tarnished.”

Hepworth added: “We’re able to do this largely because of the quality and the simplicity of application of the product.

“Supagard isn’t the cheapest paint and upholstery protection in the market – nor would we want it to be – but we believe it is of a higher quality and we stand by that. If we ever need to respray a bonnet or roof to guarantee customer satisfaction, we’ll do it.”

Among Supagard’s OEM customers are Kia, Ford, the full line-up of Stellantis brands, Mercedes-Benz,



UK national sales manager Craig Hepworth (left) with James Smyth (job title to come) xpxpxpxpxpxpx

Nissan, Toyota & Lexus and Volvo, some of which feature sell its products under their own vehicle protection branding.

After launching overseas in 2015, the car detailing specialist now operates in China, Italy, Malaysia, the Middle East, Philippines, Vietnam, India and the Czech Republic.

Hepworth said that the positive response of car buyers to Supagard products over the decades has helped to deliver its success, alongside car dealers’ appreciation of the products’ ease of use.

Supagard’s paint sealant creates a high gloss barrier that bonds to the paintwork, seals the surface against harmful UV rays, acid rain and atmospheric pollution in a simple one-stage process that takes 20-to-25 minutes and requires next to “no skill”, he said.

Its upholstery protection, meanwhile, is delivered by a resin-based formula



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that can be applied in minutes and dries – ready to be driven away – in just 90 seconds.

“We understand the issues that many car retailers have with paint and upholstery protection are associated with the team charged with the application process,” said Hepworth.

“Often a valeting team might be made up of people who regularly move between sites and brands using different cleaning and protection products. Using Supagard makes life easier. It takes virtually no skill to apply, and the process is completed very quickly, delivering added efficiency and flexibility.”

He added: “Ultimately, members of the sales team need to have absolute faith in the paint protection products they are selling to customers and having that quick, easy application process helps to ensure consistent quality is easy to achieve.”

Although Hepworth stands by his assertion that it takes “no skill” to apply Supagard products, the business does offer training and support to both vehicle preparation and sales teams.

Posters are provided to adorn valet bay walls, featuring QR codes which link to short, six-minute videos offering best-practice advice.

A new 45-minute virtual training session – delivered via a training room at its headquarters – has been developed to advise on the best sales methods and application techniques, meanwhile.

This is designed to back up the efforts of a 14-strong field team who visit retail sites to help sales teams boost the sales penetration of the Supagard products they offer, and valeting staff deliver the best results.

Hepworth said that Supagard sale penetration levels vary from franchise to franchise.

Mercedes-Benz dealerships average around 60% penetration, he said, with 45% to 50% of new Toyota sales generating a paint protection sale. Other mainstream brands are delivering closer to 40%.

Hepworth said that Supagard does all it can to help those dealers that are “languishing at 20% penetration” to improve towards 40% or 50%.

Key to this is demonstration of the product at the point of sale.

“That really is the thing that makes



the difference: having a half-treated car in the showroom and the dip cards we provide to demonstrate the upholstery protection,” he said.

“Showing how water runs off – or a cup slides off – a treated bonnet can be enough to convince the customer that they want to protect their car and it’s the same with the fabric. They need to see how a treated surface will repel water and



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protect their seats against stains.

“All too often we hear that manufacturer standards mean a half-treated car bonnet isn’t allowed in a showroom, but it can be done discreetly and the difference to sales will be huge.”

Hepworth conceded that the Covid-19 trading restrictions had seen a “slight dip” in the sales of protection products in the past two years as sales executives working with remote customers struggled to demonstrate the value of Supagard.

But he said that the most successful retailers had continued to ensure the products were offered using video links or CitNOW demonstrations to demonstrate their effectiveness.

He suggested that ensuring add-ons were included in any online or remote sales process was vital to maximising sales at a time when the volumes of new cars passing through dealerships was at a low level due to the current supply constraints.

“There’s no substitute for showing what Supagard products do, in person,” he said. “But online sales can ensure that paint protection is consistently put in front of a car-buying customer, albeit with the offer of a video demonstration.

“Consistency is what we want to be known for. Consistent sales opportunity for retailers, and consistent satisfaction from customers. It’s what makes us the best in the sector.”



Email: info@supagard.com

Visit: www.supagard.com

