

Trainer finding success with dealership group program

DUANE MARINO SAID GROUPING SERVICES SAVES MONEY

▲ Jackson Hayes

In the face of a changing automotive ownership landscape, Duane Marino said he knew he had to adapt.

The popular trainer has been finding success for years teaching his comprehensive processes in dealerships all across the country, but the proliferation of dealership groups proved a great opportunity for Marino and his team to find a niche and carve it out.

“We started with this group approach a few years ago as we saw that was where the industry was headed,” Marino said. “And recent history has certainly proven us right.”

Duane Marino Automotive Solutions has a dealership group-training package he said is generating more and more interest from Canada’s growing network of groups. Because of the combination of services he can offer – a permanent training centre in Toronto, online training courses, in-dealership site visits and more – a bunch of the services can be stacked together and then priced accordingly for the size of a group.

“It can be as much as an 80 per cent reduction in cost when services are bundled together instead of paying piece-meal,” he said.

The system is comprehensive, incredibly detailed and what he calls “full spectrum.”

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The sales component teaches everything from rebuttals and closes to things like time management, goal setting and body language. The philosophy is shared down the line with F&I managers and service advisors.

Marino has called his form of training FLOW. The idea, he said, flies in contradiction to a number of legacy systems still in practice today. FLOW works to get the customer from end to end quickly and easily.

“In the past, we trained everyone to slow down the sale and avoid price, but today this results in customer disengagement and improper selection,” Marino told Canadian AutoWorld.

“When a customer gets bored or when the salesperson starts to lose credibility, the buyer jumps on their smartphone, and it all goes downhill from there.”

He said his goal is to get an average sales transaction complete in under an hour. The pitch from the business office should be no more than 20 minutes.

He argued the fastest sales transactions are the most profitable, particularly since customers don’t arrive at the F&I office door exhausted from a back-and-forth price negotiation.

The full-spectrum approach (training sales, service and F&I) also works for groups because it promotes continuity of process and a consistent base from which to measure.

That means groups can promote staff laterally between stores in the network because everybody is using the same system. It was that goal that led Ontario’s Raceway Auto Group to reach out to Marino more than three years ago.

“Our goal was to have all of our stores operating with the same sales systems, so we could more easily develop and promote our team members from within,” explained company president Gord Nimeck.

“We have seen some drastic improvements in sales, gross and pace of sale, in particular with two of our dealerships. Having open access to all of the Academy workshops, on-site training and MarinoTV has been great. I have also made sure I attend and involve myself in the group training sessions we hold every 60 days so I can inspect what I expect and build rapport with all of our



Duane Marino

team members.”

Nimeck said they noticed the biggest improvements and growth with new hires that consistently deliver 15 to 20 vehicles a month within their first 90 days.

Marino noted his team is focusing a bit more on online training and started doing more live video-meetings where he is piped directly into the store for sales meetings. **CAW**

For more information about FLOW or Duane Marino Automotive Solutions, visit duanemarino.com

TSI showcasing new solution aimed at groups

A new product from TSI Auto Solutions is giving dealership groups the power to compare financials of different stores to determine their best and weakest performers.

Called TSI echo, it automates and normalizes financial statement data across dealerships and brands allowing for a meaningful comparison of key performance indicators.

Though it officially launched at the start of this year after a pilot with two large groups over the latter half of 2016, Seana Chadwick, executive vice-president of sales at TSI Auto Solutions, said it has gained traction in recent months and is ready for a full launch.

“TSI recognizes the challenges faced by automotive groups to manage risk and profitability across their diverse dealer portfolio,” she explained.

“The importance of validated clean data and detailed reporting of analytics is an absolute necessity in order to conduct accurate performance comparisons and forecast with confidence.”

Although TSI has been providing solutions for dealers to easily provide financial statements to their OEM for 15 years, Chadwick said the recent automation of this process via a new technology platform has enabled TSI to gain market share.

“Not only does the TSI platform allow for easy transmission and reporting of financial data, OEMs can add data pipes for market share, CSI data and more to get a 360-degree view of the performance of their dealerships,” she said.

“Add a contact and planning tool to the mix and they can start to improve the performance of their dealerships.”

Two new OEMs were added to the roster in the past six months bringing the total to 11 manufacturer clients. Also added to the Canadian operations was industry veteran Geoff Helby, who was named director of business development in early July. Helby, whose previous positions included executive roles with J.D. Power and ALG, is tasked with building out the dealership group market.

And timing could not be better.

Chadwick said the disruption seen in auto retail – online research, digital retailing, reduced foot traffic, dealer group growth, etc. – has made tracking a store’s KPIs even more important.

“There has never been a greater need to analyze, forecast and prepare to pivot quickly to protect against these disrupters if and when they materially affect the dealership’s bottom line,” she said. **CAW**