

New partnership for IA-SAL

IA-SAL said it has partnered with MJL Enterprises to launch a new marketing and development platform called iSTAR as part of IA-SAL's STAR performance program.

The company said the software will feature an extensive video suite for training and coaching, internal messaging, and a detailed reporting module.

"MJL Enterprises is able to provide us with an innovative software solution that can add significant value to our national training program. At IA-SAL, we work closely with business managers and dealer principals to set goals that can improve business office profitability. With iSTAR, our ability to engage with dealers and provide targeted strategies based on clear analytics will be greatly enhanced," Gordon Swail, senior director of training and brand performance at IA-SAL.

Dealers who sign on to iSTAR will have access to customized, mobile menu selling and online personalized coaching from IA-SAL's performance specialist team.

The software's reporting suite will also make it possible to execute follow-up sales based on system generated data.

The dealer performance platform is hosted on servers at the Atlantic Technology Centre in Charlottetown, P.E.I., and the software will be available to dealerships throughout Canada.

Niagara Falls Nissan sold

Dealer Solutions Canada said James Collins of Niagara Falls Nissan recently sold his dealership to Olympic Motors.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Niagara Falls Nissan, located south of the downtown area end of the city just off the Queen Elizabeth Way, had been rated tops regionally by the brand for service and sales satisfaction survey, Dealer Solutions said.

The franchise had operated in Welland for 34 years (as Welland Nissan) before recently moving to its current location on Oakwood Drive.

In a release from Dealer Solutions, Collins said the process was "smooth and quick."

Dealer Solutions Canada is Canada's largest volume dealership sales and acquisitions firm specializing in automobile, motorcycle and off-road dealerships, as well as leasing company portfolios.

The company completed 11 transactions in 2012 totalling over \$100 million. To date in 2013 they have successfully closed additional nine transactions.

Financial service manager training: Have you started your journey?

Dealer principals and financial services managers have many choices for training programs and I strongly believe in training and in its numerous benefits. A problem occurs, though, when the focus is on a supplier's products rather than what is important to the dealership and its customers.

With manufacturers focused on CSI, customer loyalty at a premium, and conflicting competitive intelligence, it is important to have clear training objectives. I was recently asked to share my insights on what a dealer principal or financial service manager should consider when evaluating a training program.

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY

No efficient, deficiencies-focused training can be a one-day or one-week affair. Training is a journey, not an event. It should be ongoing, tailored to the individual and include a commitment to in-dealer and face-to-face support. Experience has shown a condensed learning session followed by regular one-on-one follow-up visits to the dealership delivers increased profitability, higher CSI and promotes customer retention.

INTERACTIVE FORMAT

Evaluate the design of your next training program. Participation is one of the leading ways to enhance learning, while video recording and playback reinforce best practices and allow the financial service manager to practice without the risk of financial loss.

Also look for collaborative group discussion, role-playing and performance evaluations; these methods are proven to drive long-term behavioral change and deliver the desired results.

CURRICULUM IS KEY

A vital component of evaluating any training curriculum is in knowing how it was created and asking for proof of its results. Even if you aren't exactly sure on what your training course

should entail, you have a pretty solid idea of what skills you want to walk away with.

A good training provider will understand this and will be able to share testimonials or other examples of proof that substantiate their educational claims. When assessing your next training event, ask for evidence of sound fundamentals and proven results.

TRAINING FOR RESULTS

A successful training event provides the attendee with a proper evaluation, a plan to execute, and tools to measure results.

As the pivot point between the sales department and the service department, the successful business manager plays a key role in not only generating profit but also sustaining customer retention and fostering dealership loyalty.

Customers walk into the business office with, consciously or unconsciously, a set amount or tolerance for how much they will spend. It is important for the financial services manager to be shown how to maximize this threshold to the benefit of all parties involved.

CHOOSE WISELY

I cannot stress the importance of selecting a proven and effective training program. Look for a comprehensive follow-up plan, a commitment to ongoing dealer support, an effective evaluation and expert field support. Choose wisely and an increase in dealership-wide profitability will follow.

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ADP buys ONE-EIGHTY CORP

ADP acquired customer relationship management and related software provider ONE-EIGHTY CORP for undisclosed financial terms.

Based in Waterloo, Ontario, ONE-EIGHTY specializes in cloud-based, mobile-enabled applications used by Canadian automobile dealers in the sales process.

According to Kerry Mueller, senior director of operations at ONE-EIGHTY, it is business as usual for current customers that will eventually "see benefits as we bring more resources to bear to help accelerate ONE-EIGHTY CORP business objectives."

There are approximately 325 dealerships in Canada now running the com-

pany's software.

Donna Combs, VP of marketing for ADP Dealer Services, said Canadian stores running ONE-EIGHTY would not be required to run ADP software and stressed that it would continue to support multiple DMS integrations.

When asked whether the cost to run ONE-EIGHTY would change, she echoed Mueller noting it was it was "business as usual right now for ONE-EIGHTY dealers and the new ones coming on board."

ONE-EIGHTY's A-Z Sales and DLS Accelerator will not be changed but branding will alter slightly to refer to ONE-EIGHTY as an "ADP company."

Founded in 2000, ONE-EIGHTY supports nearly every major manufacturer

brands and has been an approved ADP Dealer Services' vendor since 2010, as part of ADP Dealer Services' Third Party Access Program.

ADP says ONE-EIGHTY's solutions allow dealers to manage CRM, menu-based selling, finance and leasing, inventory, leads, business development centre and credit applications.

"The purchase means ONE-EIGHTY will become an integral part of the ADP Dealer Services Canada market presence and as such we work collaboratively to leverage the business combination to provide dealers with the best most innovative solutions that will help them grow and sell more cars, parts and service profitably," Combs added.