

CANADIAN AUTOWORLD



aspen
MARKETING SERVICES
A DIVISION OF **epsilon**.

October 2012 • Volume 21 Number 10

WWW.CANADIANAUTOWORLD.CA

\$3.00

The Facebook Giveaway Dealership sets new standard for social media contests

PAGE 12



focus on Finance & Insurance

PAGE 28



Walkaround Subaru Legacy

PAGE 26




Hip new MINI store now open for business

BY GERRY FRECHETTE

RICHMOND, B.C. – Theme parks and green walls. Beehives and solar panels. Digital customization and ordering a car. Welcome to the dealership for the new millennium. Or, more accurately, welcome the new MINI Richmond store in Richmond, B.C., the newest and largest MINI dealership in Canada.

The facility is the latest in the Auto West Group of dealerships that also includes BMW and Infiniti, run by Joachim Neumann since 1986. Several years ago, in a

growth-based decision, Auto West moved its BMW store out of the Auto Mall (replacing it with Infiniti) to a stand-alone location at the corner of Cambie Rd. and Shell Rd. in northeast Richmond. The property had space for a MINI store, too.

While that facility was reasonably funky enough for the youthful MINI brand, he explained that “there was a development request from the manufacturer, in order to deal with the projected growth in the MINI line-up in the near future. There will be eight different car lines in the MINI world, and we needed to have the fa-

SEE PAGE 18

Innovative app offers mobile F&I menu selling

BY JACKSON HAYES

A new app that promises a fundamental shift in F&I selling and profit is about to hit the Canadian market after a summer pilot program at two Ontario dealerships.

Kiss the static paper brochure and the calculator-aided payment number crunching goodbye, explained Jim De Luca, business development manager for Vehicle Armour.

“This is the F&I office unplugged and online,” he said. “This is a business office revolution.”

Called iTapMenu, and the product of Vehicle Armour, the app is set for a fall launch nationwide in Canada following a summer working out the methodology and programming quirks.

De Luca and his team secured the rights to the technology late last year and have invested heavily to Canadianize the app for use here.

“The response has been overwhelming,” he told *Canadian AutoWorld* during a full product demonstration. “I have presented it to about 100 dealerships so far and 98 per cent want it.”

NUTS AND BOLTS

De Luca said the system essentially digitizes the dealership’s F&I menu selling program and product suite. Completely customizable and brandable, the iTapMenu app works only on the Apple iPad and turns F&I options – warranty products, insurance offerings, protection packages, etc. – into an interactive interface where

SEE PAGE 32



SMARTCOVERAGE
INSURANCE™



ASSURANCES
PROTECTIONAVISÉE MC

“I offer SmartCoverage Insurance to clients as part of the sales process. This helps ensure they return to us for repairs. Clients recognize I’m helping to get them suitable coverage.”

Marilena Landry, Gus Revenberg Chevrolet Buick GMC, Windsor, Ontario

For information call **1-877-251-0959**

www.SmartCoverage.ca

SmartCoverage Insurance Services Inc. and SmartCoverage Insurance Agency Inc. offers peace of mind personal insurance in Alberta, Ontario & Quebec. TM Trademark of SmartCoverage Insurance Agency Inc. - used under license

Quantech Software launches dealership app

Quantech Software is now offering a smart-phone application of its Q-GPS CRM/lead management system for dealers.

Developed in partnership with smartphone app developer Advanced Mobile Apps, Quantech said its new app differs from similar smartphone applications in that the Quantech option contains features for both customers and sales staff.

"There's a no-cost dealer-branded customer app and a set of sales tools integrated with Q-GPS," explained Mike Martin of Quantech Software.

"Customers can use the app to view inventory, schedule a test-drive, book service appointments or request a quote. Sales functionality includes common Q-GPS tasks like viewing inventory, entering new opportuni-

ties and managing tasks."

The company said the app makes it easier for customers and sales prospects to connect with the dealership. Martin said dealers would like it because it helps with branding and is easier for customers to use than a web browser on their smartphone.

Quantech Software calls itself a "boutique software developer" with a primary focus being on auto, RV, power sports and marine dealerships. It currently produces a number of products including F&I, menu selling, CRM/lead management and dealership management software.

Dealer response to the non-integrated app has been "positive" with reported results seen in the service department and on the sales floor.

Quantech Software is marketing and selling integrated and non-integrated versions of the app to North American dealerships. The app is currently available without CRM integration now but the company said it is in the final testing of the integration.

The cost of the app is \$399 for setup, with monthly fees of \$159.

"A lot of our customers will want this. The larger market however will be outside our present customer-base. There are so many customer and dealership benefits I expect every dealership will have their own app within a year," Martin said. "We would like some of that business."

For more information, go to quantechsoftware.com.

Innovative app

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

icons can be moved in and out of the customer selection column.

"The problem with the static three-column menu is just that. It's static. It is written on paper. If you want to make any changes to it, out comes the pen and you have to disengage yourself from the customer and crunch numbers. The system is flawed."

The app offers either two or three column options, though Vehicle Armour recommends the two-column feature for ease of use and a clean look. To build a custom program, users manipulate the program with simple tap-and-drag movements common on most smartphones and tablets.

Simply choose the desired products by tapping. Then drag the customizable icons into the customer choice column. And since payments are tallied automatically when products are added and removed, there's no need for a calculator, he said.

Price can be shown as monthly, daily or total cost over amortization period. Business managers can also change the amortization period, payment schedule, term, rates, frequency and down payment.

"Want to show your customers more about each product?" he said. "Just tap the icon and a brief synopsis of benefits pops up. Videos can be linked in as the team works towards YouTube integration so business managers can play any custom dealer or OEM videos posted online."

De Luca said icons could be changed to represent the provider or the dealership, should it have a white label program.

Take, for example, the problem of extended warranties. Proactive business managers will have a set of basic repair orders pulled straight from the service department detailing what some average costs can be and the value of the extended warranty, he explains.

For iTapMenu users, the system will automatically show the average cost of repair work when not covered by the extended warranty on screen.

'GAME CHANGER'

While the functionality is innovative on

its own, De Luca said, the app's influence would go much further than the digital confines of a tablet.

"Look at the system we have created for the business office today," he said. We have an antiquated system in place called chute-and-box that we designed in the 1970s to intimidate customers. We came up with the ambiguous term of business manager so people wouldn't really know what it all meant, and then we ambush them after negotiating the price of the vehicle thinking that it was the best way to get more money out of them."

Now, customers are plugged-in and log dozens of hours of online research about their vehicles before the purchase. In many cases, he said, they have an good idea of what will be offered in the business office before stepping foot in the dealership.

The app helps further that notion of online research and eliminates the desk as a physical barrier.

"There is no more power position," he said.

ALTERING THE PROCESS

De Luca said Vehicle Armour has more in store for iTapMenu users.

Mobile menu selling also presents two additional changes to the conventional F&I office. First is the timing of the pre-turnover interview.

Traditionally, the customer would still be in sales when the business manager would come by for a quick chat. Based on the results, he said business managers who are on the ball would have a menu constructed based on their needs when the turnover happens.

"Now, it is as simple as handing them the iPad, telling them to go get a cup of coffee in the lounge and take a look at their options. You would still make a custom plan based on the pre-TO interview, but instead of a menu with a bunch of chicken scratch writ-



Jim De Luca



Now, customers are plugged-in and log dozens of hours of online research about their vehicles before the purchase.

ing on it, you could provide a tablet with a custom digital menu and payment scheme."

For each icon, there is an explanation on the product. If interested, they can click yes and it will scroll to next product, he said.

The second alteration is the location of the sale. Vehicle Armour said the unplugged operation is just that, unplugged.

"F&I managers could offer and sell their suite of products in the dealership lounge if they wanted. It empowers the customer in every regard, from the products they want to where they want it to happen to the creation of their own monthly payment."

When a package is agreed upon, iTapMenu includes an option for the customer to sign their name on the contract directly on the screen. That signed commitment with full disclosure would then be emailed to them instantly.

De Luca said costs start at \$299 per

month. Dealerships can have as many users on the system as they want but stores have to buy their own iPads.

Data extraction is optional and an extra \$100 per month.

"This system addresses all the fundamental challenges I have faced as a trainer. We would eliminate shortcutting by having the entire product offering at your fingertips; we could do an interactive needs analysis on the customer so the menu offered is tailored instead of broad offering; and it improves CSI as the customer has a direct role in tailoring the package."

For more information, email Jim De Luca at jimd@premiumservicesgroup.ca.