

DMS installation is an opportunity to review business processes

Talking program rewrites, the independent market and DMS tips with Richard Duench of Oasis Auto Complete Systems Limited

Oasis Auto Complete is an Ontario-based DMS provider with over 20 years in the market. Canadian AutoWorld recently chatted with Richard Duench, business development manager at Oasis Auto Complete to talk about the software market.

Canadian AutoWorld: Can you tell us about Oasis, its history strengths?

Richard Duench: OASIS started providing F&I Systems for Ontario Dealers in 1992 through a TADA endorsement and quickly evolved, adding many leading features. OASIS recognized the need for a full DMS with robust features at a great value for dealers and acquired Auto Complete Systems in 1996, an accounting, service and parts DMS which had been delivering software solutions since 1987.

The systems and companies were amalgamated and moved to London, Ont., to become Oasis Auto Complete Systems.

How many stores run Oasis DMS currently?

We are a Canadian provider traditionally focused on the Ontario market. Over 175 clients use our software daily in their dealerships.

Oasis rewrote its DMS from scratch a few years back. What kind of new features did that result in?

Since consumers changed the way they purchase vehicles and service, they are well informed and spend less or no time at the dealership we added many features to speed up the vehicle purchase process and enhanced the ways that dealers communicate and market to their clients.

Some of these features include: Laser or emailable forms including bills of sale, proposals and the ability create customized dealership forms; personalized emails for follow-up service reminders and events such as targeted sales or customer birthdays; updated vehicle data, including pricing, options, logic, images and Squish VIN Explorer using Chrome Data's tools; the ability to quickly close deals using cloud-powered rates, residuals and incentives; robust and flexible reporting using Chrystal Reports along with automatic data exports and imports with leading third-party interface providers.

In today's world, advancement of technology is necessary. Our desire to evolve to serve the growing needs of our dealers prompted us to create our Advantage platform. Since we are now on a robust .NET platform and SQL database, we are now able to update future versions of our system easily using available programming tools.

Can you tell us something about Oasis' efforts in the independent market?

That is a traditionally underserved market in terms of software. Independent dealers are unique in the sense that their needs run from quite basic to very extensive, but most of them recognize the need to have a central system that runs their business.

Quite often they are running multiple applications to perform different functions or even homemade solutions that don't talk to each other. That creates manual input



Richard Duench, business development manager at Oasis Auto Complete

with multiple customer databases.

Franchise dealers understand the merits of having a DMS, and select an OEM-approved vendor. Forward-thinking independent dealers see the value of automating day-to-day tasks, freeing up their staffs time so they can focus on profitable endeavours.

Do independents typically run a scaled-down version when compared to franchised shops?

Along with having special pricing for Independents, we price our system by the module, scalable by the amount of users. Since many Independents don't have an in-house parts and service department, this model is equitable as they may only require our showroom package to start with and are able to add our accounting module as they grow.

Our pricing model also suits larger volume independents who have similar needs to franchises with unique processes, larger staff as well as full service departments.

If a dealer is thinking about switching DMS providers, what is the first step? Demos? Price quotes?

I would recommend that a great first step would be to speak with your key staff to develop a needs assessment including required and "wish to have" features in their DMS. This is very helpful when reaching out to prospective providers and confirming the abilities or limitations of your current DMS.

Typically, having a demonstration prior to comparing pricing will be helpful for both dealer and the vendor as demos also give vendors an opportunity to learn about dealers needs and processes. Pricing may be dependent on this and it would be a shame to not consider a vendor solely on price if they deliver all of your desired features.

How will they know if a product is right for them?

If a DMS supplier can deliver your desired features at a

reasonable price you've made a match! View your DMS as a key supplier/partner and you will reap added benefits from the relationship. Consider soliciting referrals from other dealers (and their staff) from your market, brand or within your 20 group.

What sort of built-in programs should a dealer look for in a DMS? CRM? Deal deskings?

It really depends on budget and desired features. If a dealer is looking for a single-source provider, yes, having built-in CRM and deal deskings with robust features is crucial.

Make sure that you take the time to review how these features perform. Many larger dealers and groups utilize various specialty applications for a variety of reasons. In these cases, it is critical that they communicate with their core DMS. Integration can mean lots of things and having a clearly defined explanation of the extent of the integration is important.

What are some of the common problems a dealership would experience when switching providers?

With appropriate planning and training, a DMS installation can be a great experience for a dealership.

An installation is an opportunity to review business processes and ensure that all staff is trained on your internal system. Data conversion and training are two areas that can create a negative installation.

Data conversion is not sexy, but a critical, labor-intensive process since you need your customer database and historic transactions on your new DMS.

Some vendors outsource or gloss over the details of this key part of transitioning. I have been told horror stories by dealers who have been charged a lot of money for data conversion only to have very little to show for it.

Always confirm that this is completed prior to going live on a new DMS.

Training is one area that dealers cut back on. Your staff can be "good at computers," but ensuring that staff is properly taught the ins and outs of a tool they will use daily is money well spent. We prefer to do our pre-training on the converted data to ease the transition.

Trust your selected vendor's advice; remember that this will be a long-term relationship. Make sure that your key staff members are involved from the outset and are part of the final decision.

What is your best advice for a dealer who is unhappy with his current DMS provider?

If you have found that your current supplier does not have the features that you desire or that training cannot increase utilization of your current DMS there is positive news.

This is a great time to be looking as there are more DMS options at a better value than ever. While some folks don't like change, by not rushing the process and understanding the desired outcomes, vendor's capabilities and commitments you will have a gratifying transition experience.