

GUIDE TO THE SALES PROCESS

TRAINING

Born salesman? Not always

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You have probably been in the motor industry for a while, and for you selling a car to a punter is probably as easy as riding a bike. But while you might be very good at it, new sales executives joining your team might not have the skills to cut the mustard. But that's not their fault, believes Martec Europe's managing director Neil Pursell.

'It strikes me that people don't come born with an innate knowledge of how to sell cars,' he explains. 'Some people have better communications skills than others, but they don't necessarily have all of the raw material to be a fantastic professional car sales person. So when they join the motor industry they need to be trained how to do these things correctly. And they especially need to be trained if they have had sales experience in the past because it needs to be converted into the industry of selling cars and they need to be mentored into the emotional side of our business.'

Emotional? Absolutely so.

The car industry is one of the few sales arenas where a part exchange is involved and where the customer has an emotional attachment to it. 'People need to have training in how to translate their skills they currently have into motor industry applicable skills,' says Pursell.

But how about salesmen who have been in the industry for a long time? Surely they don't need to be trained too?

'When you've been in the industry for years, if you don't practise your skills in a training environment then the only place you can practise them is live with customers,' explains Pursell.

'What tends to happen is that you only practise the things which seem to be working with the customers you are talking to at that moment. If we take the scrappage scheme as an example, the things that sales people did when they were talking to a customer about a scrappage purchase would have been quite different from how a sales person would talk to a customer now who's not buying under the scheme. What they did was to



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learn over a nine-month period how to sell cars on the scrappage scheme. And now, without the scrappage scheme, they have got to re-learn the tactics.

'That's not to mention the way dealers deal with customers' expectations which are constantly changing – so unless dealers hone their skills, quite frankly, they will be left behind.'

Pursell can speak with authority here. He has been working with the firm for 16 of the firm's 20-year existence – and in the past two decades, Martec has proved it knows what it's doing.

Their trainers, for example, used to be car sales people themselves so they understand dealer's lives and they have done their homework, too.

'One of the things we have done is to carry out customer research and listen to customer telephone calls,' says Pursell. 'Every year we are listening to around 500,000 customers on the phone to find out what they are asking dealers and what they want. Because we listen to this many people we can spot trends in consumer attitude quicker than anyone else.' This enables Martec to train dealers in the customer of the here and now.

'But our main thing is that managers can manage the process that we put in place. Simple and elegant sales processes – which customers enjoy being taken through – can only be simple and elegant if managers manage them. This results in a consistent and simple sales process.'