

Essex Auto Group

Delivering efficiencies and better key security

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Traka Automotive's vehicle key management systems has been rolled out across Essex Auto Group's entire estate of seven sites including its Vehicle Operations Centre in Rayleigh and head office at Basildon, Essex. The decision to go with Traka Automotive came after more than a year of detailed research and visits to dealerships already using Traka Automotive.

Traka systems have already secured 83,300 unique keys and more than 116,500 key assignments since EAG's first pilot began in October 2008. Some 466 users are now registered to the system and over 200 PCs have software installed onto them for viewing the exact location of car keys and vehicles at a touch of a button. Each week EAG adds more than 600 new keys and generates 7,900 transactions (keys movements in or out of a cabinet) through Traka Automotive.

Traka offers access to key cabinets via fingerprint recognition and PIN code entry which together ensures car keys are tracked to individuals, as well as departments, as they move around the site and between sites for servicing, test drives and sales.

EAG have also integrated Traka with their DMS to give them even greater visibility of car movements across the business. Not having to look for keys group-wide has already translated into several working days saved by EAG each day. This means real productivity gains for EAG. This ultimately feeds through to bottom-line profits.

For EAG the savings made it possible to see return on investment before the roll out was even complete. Benefits include:

1. Ability to track cars so accurately helped EAG reduce insurance premiums group-wide
2. Using Traka Automotive information on the timing and number of car movements between sites enabled it to increase efficiency and reduce full-time driver numbers
3. Optimisation of retail space. EAG uses the system to ensure cars are held at places where there is not such a premium on space and only moved to sales locations when cars are needed.

4. Better customer service – customers are kept waiting less time for their keys
5. Improved workshop efficiency as technicians are informed by Traka Automotive when cars have arrived at the site, exactly where the keys are located and in what area of the site they are parked. They are also able to use the system to automatically inform the after-sales desk when servicing has finished, simply by returning keys to a cabinet.

Paul Smith, Director - Traka Automotive:

"EAG proves what we've always said about Traka Automotive – it's a productivity tool as well as a fully traceable key security system. It offers them an ability to improve productivity across the board – selling more cars, improving workshop efficiency, delivering customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention and ultimately generating more profit."

Mark Reilly, Finance Director, EAG:

"Traka has delivered us rapid return on our investment by saving staff time. It allows us to measure activity with jobs, find keys and vehicles quickly and deliver an improved service for our customers."

Essex Autogroup doubles capacity of key management solution

Traka Automotive, the premier provider of key management systems for automotive dealerships, has installed its key management system at Essex Auto Group's Vehicle Operations Centre (VOC) in Rayleigh, Essex. The new 720 key system at the VOC is networked to the pre-existing 520 key system at Essex Auto Group's head office at Dunton Ford Link, Basildon.

Traka Automotive has completed installation of a 720 key management system at Essex Auto Group's (EAG) Vehicle Operations Centre (VOC) located at Hambro Hill, Rayleigh. The site is responsible for holding group stock and undertaking sales preparation work prior to delivery to one of the group's five multi-franchise retail sites and eventually on to customers. Inevitably this means the centre experiences a high volume of vehicle and key movements in



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and around the centre and to and from retail locations. The site can hold around 700 vehicles from any of the group's franchises which include Ford, Volvo, Kia, Mazda and Fiat.

The site is extremely busy with vehicle transporters arriving and departing throughout the day. Using the Traka Automotive software and key cabinets strategically located through the site, car movements are tracked as staff remove and return car keys to the cabinets. Access to the cabinets is controlled by biometric readers which validate the fingerprints of individuals before providing access to keys.

Traka Automotive has networked the two key management systems at the VOC and the Dunton location, so both sites can see key movements and car locations in real-time via Traka Automotive software. Further integration with EAG's dealer management system (DMS) enables live key and car location information to be viewed by sales staff and technicians from their PCs enabling them to pin-point the exact location of a key and parking location of a vehicle on site

Within the first five weeks of operation, the VOC site processed 2,416 keys through the Traka system and completed 27,574 key removals and returns. Across the whole group, Traka has so far clocked up over a quarter of a million key transactions, proving its reliability as a system and importance to daily operations. EAG is committed to continue implementing the system to its other retail locations throughout 2010.

Paul Smith, Director - Traka Automotive, said:

"The VOC is an exceptionally busy site for EAG with many new cars coming into and leaving the site every single day. We are delighted that our system is helping EAG keep keys secure while helping them to manage the complexities of key management and vehicle movements. I have been impressed with the commitment to process improvement demonstrated by EAG – they have shown a keen appreciation of the benefits and financial return new technology can bring to their business."

Mark Reilly, finance director, Essex Auto Group, commented:

"Traka's installation at the VOC has worked very well and the system is invaluable in managing the flow of cars to and from our site. Integrating Traka Automotive into our DMS is paying dividends as our staff can instantly look at their DMS screen and find real-time data on a car's location and status. We are excited by the returns Traka can give us and look forward to continuing the rollout across the group."

Essex Autogroup implemented the Traka key management system covering the workshop (160 keys); new car sales (110); and used car showroom (250). The dealership provides new car sales, new commercial sales, full workshop facilities for passenger cars and commercial vehicles and a dedicated used car building with over 200 cars on display.

The site, which is only a year old, also serves as the primary base for the Essex Auto Group's senior executives and has offices which are built to the highest specification. It is also the largest site in the group and is based just outside Ford's operations at Dunton Engineering Centre.

Traka Automotive software and three electronic key cabinets have been deployed strategically around the site. Access to the cabinets is controlled by biometric readers which validate the fingerprints of individuals before providing access to car keys. The system tracks movement of keys between cabinets as vehicles are moved between various parts of the site. The whole system is being integrated with EAG's proprietary Dealer Management System (DMS).

A 19-day system pilot proved highly successful, generating on average 4,525 transactions (key movements) per week. A total of 79 users have been authorised to use the key management system and the number of unique PCs being used to view and manage the system is up to 43.

Paul Smith, Director - Traka Automotive, said:

"I am very pleased with the 100 per cent adoption of the system by sales and after-sales staff. The usage figures suggest enthusiastic acceptance which will increase further now the system has gone live."

Mark Reilly, finance director, Essex Auto Group, commented:

"The smooth installation by Traka and rapid take-up by our staff following their user training suggests that we will get very quick return on our investment here. Every five minutes that a salesman can save not hunting for keys but serving customers, creates opportunities for more sales and higher quality servicing."

"There are other spin-off benefits – for example we are developing a customer-facing screen showing specific vehicles we have prioritised for sale. By integrating this with Traka's key management system we will be able to show the customer exactly where the promoted vehicle is parked if they want to go and have a look. Effectively the system becomes a virtual sales assistant for us."

"At completion of the pilot, following a period of evaluation, we are planning to roll this system out across our six others sites."



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