

Harry Fairbairn

Eliminates key losses and aids efficiency drive

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Harry Fairbairn is Scotland's leading Mini and BMW dealership group with four major sites in Inverness, Kirkcaldy, Irvine and Giffnock. The group was purchased by Europe's largest independent franchise dealer group Arnold Clark in 2006 and has continued to go from strength to strength since its acquisition. Arnold Clark now has more than 170 dealerships across the UK. More than 130 of these are in Scotland. Its first dealership was established by Sir Arnold Clark in 1954 in Glasgow.

Harry Fairbairn Giffnock (Glasgow) is selling up to 100 cars per week today and more than 300 per month across its BMW and Mini showrooms, located within 300 yards of each other in southern Glasgow.

The dealership's strong prospects this year will be boosted further by the imminent launch of the Mini Clubman 5-door hatchback; the new BMW 2 Series Gran Tourer 7-seater people carrier just out; and a new BMW 7 Series which will roll off production lines towards the end of this year. These launches all come hard on the heels of the successful introduction of the BMW i3 high performance electric car as well as the eye-catching, top-of-the-range, petrol/electric hybrid i8 sports car.

Harry Fairbairn's Dealer Principal Callum Rankin has been with the group for nearly 10 years and joined straight after leaving the University of Dundee in 2006. He was promoted to DP in early 2012. He has presided over a continuous period of growth and expansion. He has a sales and management team of over 40 people today. The other 105 employees are spread evenly between after sales, sales, parts, valet and administration.

Stock levels

More than 300 cars are being prepared and sold from the Mini and BMW showrooms each month which normally

means customers leave their old cars with the dealership for sale or part-exchange. So, a further 300 used cars are being processed or sold across these two sites each month.

These cars are dispersed between Harry Fairbairn's Mini and BMW showrooms, and the dealerships' main car parks.

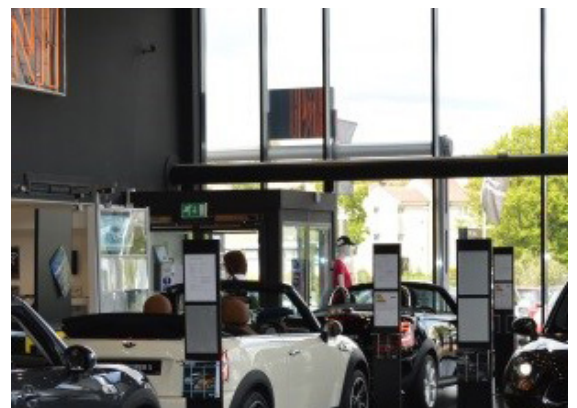
Problem: Key management

Callum and his management team recognised that their existing manual key management system was not working well for them. Whilst it is not unusual for keys to be misplaced within dealerships, even the very few that were misplaced within Harry Fairbairn had a detrimental impact.

Callum Rankin explained:

"Our previous key management system had a knock-on effect in terms of lost sales. So if a customer comes to the dealership to test drive a specific used car that they had researched on your website, if they cannot access it in the 20 minutes they've set aside in their lunch hour to test drive it they may not come back and that sale could be lost. CSI score can be negatively impacted, which can have a negative impact on sales momentum and agent morale."

Any new key management system at Harry Fairbairn Giffnock needed to offer secure key storage and tracking for at





least 750 sets of car keys from day one, with space for over 1,000 keys to handle anticipated surges in stock numbers associated with the plate change peak months of March and September as well as the continued growth of the business.

Solution: Traka Automotive networked key management

Harry Fairbairn evaluated one other key management system before selecting Traka Automotive's fully networked key management system.

Callum Rankin adds:

"We are getting to the point when we are using over 750 slots routinely and so we anticipate, with the plate change months creating a 20-30% surge in cars being processed here, we could need up to 1,000 slots to ensure we don't run out of capacity this September."

Management Information boost

The great thing about the new system is that managers can limit the user interface according to the role of each user. But for administrators that need full access there is a great deal of management information to mine.

DMS integration

All vehicle data is transferred automatically from Harry Fairbairn's Kerridge Dealer Management System (DMS) as Traka Automotive's software is fully integrated with most leading DMSs including Kerridge. This means once a new car is logged onto the DMS it takes less than 60-seconds for it to relay all this information into the key management system.

Smooth installation

Callum Rankin again:

"The planning pre installation was terrific and the install itself was super-slick. The location of the key cabinets was planned very carefully to optimise productivity. The actual installation of cabinets and re-location of keys from our old manual key cabinets was completed in just two days and the whole system went fully live within three working days. Disruption was kept to an absolute minimum. We were impressed by the speed and efficiency of Traka's installation team."

Results: Business case for investment proved

Since the new key management system was installed in January 2015, just six months on, more than 3,000 unique keys have been added to the system. Key movements (when keys are taken from or returned to cabinets) are now in excess of 50,000 in the first six months of use which indicates 100% adoption of the system by all staff handling cars. Such is the value of the system to all users that everyone is using it to manage and access keys quickly and easily.

The system also offers department heads vital management information; Callum Rankin explains:

"Each of our department heads (including our BMW sales manager, Mini sales manager and PDI manager) run checks each evening to establish which car keys are out and

how many have been out for more than 24 hours. If cars assigned to PDI cabinets are out for more than a day it is generally only because they are in the body shop."

"If keys are not in the cabinet at the end of the day, managers can quickly probe who had those keys last and make enquiries. Likewise, I can run a quick report to check if a new demonstrator key is out over the weekend. Abuse of our best stock over weekends, which was not a big issue before, is now non-existent."

Harry Fairbairn was able to build a business case for investment in the new Traka system in just a few weeks by estimating the rising losses they were exposing themselves to without streamlining their key management system.

Areas of measurable improvement have been seen early in:

1. Elimination of lost sales due to not being able to locate keys in a timely manner
2. Speed and percentage of stock imagery being posted onto our online store which itself boosted online sales and test drive bookings - also leading to more sales
3. Speed of preparation of vehicles and improved PDI completion numbers, again improving sales and after sales volumes

Callum Rankin sums up:

"We now know all the efficiencies that the Traka system has helped us unlock, has contributed significantly to improved sales online and in the dealership. Quite frankly installing the Traka Automotive system has been the single best business improvement investment I've signed off since I became DP over three years ago. It's not cheap but it's proved its value to the business several times over already."

It's made a real difference to efficiency, productivity and morale here. Everyone sees the benefit of having access to the information it provides - right from the chief executive to the valet and visiting stock photographer. In fact, those responsible for preparing, moving and valeting our stock probably see the most benefits as they save time, every time they need to locate a vehicle which they do many times each day."

One of the main advantages of the system is that the audit trail that it provides means that Harry Fairbairn's staff are able to see very quickly who had each set of keys last, by running a real-time report on their desktop PCs.

Online sales improved by timely stock photography

Callum Rankin again:

"We have a photographer who visits both dealerships to take photos of our newly-arrived new and used car stocks for posts onto our internet site. It is critical that this photographer gets smooth and rapid access to perhaps 40 freshly-delivered cars. These cars need to be valeted and then shuttled into a specific location on our BMW site which presents the ideal backdrop for display."





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"If we don't get those images taken we cannot expect to sell those cars online anytime soon. You have to recognise today that up to 95% of our sales come from initial viewing and research carried out online. Most of our used car enquiries are now for specific vehicles that have been viewed first on our website. So not having rapid access to these vehicles by the photographer hits our bottom-line."

"Again the Traka Automotive system enable us to locate where each car is parked and who had the keys last. It also tells you which cabinet the keys are now in. It takes a couple of minutes to get all relevant keys together for a shoot now. With our previous system it could take over an hour to locate all keys for each car being photographed. Some cars would not be photographed on the first trip – delaying sales."

PDI efficiencies delivered

A technician might spend over an hour trying to find keys for a car they need to get into the workshop. Once he has finally located that car he might find it is blocked in by two others. Then in the past he would have to call back into the dealership to get others to locate those two sets of keys. These requests might tie up several other agents' for a further five minutes per query -suddenly you've lost well over an hour of productivity to move one car into the PDI workshop. It starts to get really wasteful and it gets worse the busier and closer to capacity the dealership gets.

Summary

Callum Rankin, Dealer Principal of Harry Fairbairn, sums up:

"For Harry Fairbairn the Traka Automotive system has been about far more than safely storing keys. The new system has actually increased the efficiency right through the business: in valeting, the workshop, and showroom floor."

"Ask anyone here what they think of the new system they will tell you it is the best thing that has been added to the business for years. Everyone uses it to find where every set of keys is stored in which cabinet in seconds from their desktop."

"I would not have invested in this system unless I knew it was both fool-proof and future-proof. The fact that we have not lost one single set of keys in over six months since we put the Traka system in speaks for itself. Overall results so far give me confidence that I made the right decision and I'm now recommending that Arnold Clark roll the system out group-wide."

Going mobile

In the near future, Traka Automotive system users will also be able to access the system via a tablet or smart phone. This will enable staff moving cars out of outlying car pounds, for example, to find out which cabinet is holding relevant keys in seconds via their mobile right there and then, rather than calling a colleague who is at their desk to raise the query - saving the business even more valuable time.

Standalone User Quote:

David Segal, sales executive at BMW Harry Fairbairn, said of the new Traka Automotive key management system:

"I've been in the trade for 20 years and I've yet to come across a dealership system as good as this. It cannot go wrong. Key details held on the Traka system are totally comprehensive. Once the DMS passes the information on a new car through it is possible to view that car's registration, chassis number, make, model and even colour – all via the application. It is virtually impossible to mistake one car from another now. It saves time. I also know if the key is not there in the cabinet I can find out who took it out when and what cabinet they took it from. There are so many ways to track our keys that finding a set rarely takes more than a minute now. It's impressively quick. It's so simple it's fantastic.

It would be even better if it was rolled out across the whole of the group. We are the group's pilot and I'm sure they will go with it across many Arnold Clark dealerships after seeing the early results here at Harry Fairbairn."



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