

FullAuction Case Study

Vines of Guildford is a highly successful BMW, Mini and BMW Motorrad dealership operating from two sites in Surrey. The business focuses on providing a high level of customer service to discerning drivers and motorcyclists alike.

Employing over 135 staff at its Guildford site, Vines has been established for over 35 years. It is also one of only 42 BMW i-series dealers in UK, and has had considerable success selling the new BMW electric car range.

While the business has gone from strength to strength in recent years (2015 has been its best ever year for sales), the senior team is committed to continually improving its customer service and performance. And this ethos covers much more than simply new car sales.



Issue

Used vehicle appraisal and disposal is an area that Vines identified as an opportunity for improvement. As a well-established transaction within dealerships, the process of valuing and selling part-exchange vehicles is often overlooked by dealer principals. Certainly, the part exchange process is rarely seen as a profit opportunity!

Mark Hollands, head of business at Vines, explains:

"Like many dealerships, our appraisal process was done using a pen and paper. This was open to human error, with our sales team filling in pro-forma pads, then passing completed forms on for management valuation. It was not an auditable process and key vehicle details were sometimes missed out. In a nutshell, we all agreed that there had to be a better way!"

"We'd always seen trade cars as a way of enabling a new car sale – a necessary evil if you will. As long as it washed its face, we were reasonably happy with our trade performance. But we knew that an automated system could really improve the efficiency of our evaluation and disposal process."

"Traditionally, we'd followed the well-trodden path of valuing the car ourselves, then calling local traders to give us their best price. Our adoption of FullAppraisal and FullAuction has turned this outdated method on its head; putting our part-exchange cars in front of not one or two traders, but thousands."



Solution

Vines now utilises **FullAppraisal** using six tablet devices that are shared across the business. All of the sales managers and executives have been fully trained to use the new touch pad system, which (after some initial resistance) has now been enthusiastically embraced by all, enthuses Hollands:

"As with any new innovation, there was some scepticism, but now the sales team would have nothing else."

"Once car appraisals are submitted, they are then logged onto the shared platform at Vines. Any subsequent updates or changes to are then registered. FullAppraisal enables the user to take up to fifteen photos of the car, recording all damage and the general vehicle condition, which is then reviewed and approved by the customer. The new solution also improves process efficiency, allowing sales managers to market vehicles immediately following appraisal. Even better, the remarketing process can begin at any time, as the cloud-based FullAuction can be accessed from any location, day or night, not just at the dealership."

"We can also complete the valuation process with the customer to agree the condition of the car together before sharing the valuation. The customer then signs a print of the car's profile which gives both parties a record of the transaction."



Vines



Outcome

Having used **FullAppraisal** for nine months, Vines has already seen a huge change in its approach to vehicle valuations. While the adoption of the system has sharpened the sales executives' attention to detail, it has resulted in far fewer errors, improving the overall efficiency of the appraisal process.

Linked to **FullAppraisal**, **FullAuction** has transformed the way Vines disposes of all of its part exchange stock. Once an appraisal has been completed, 95% of the input required to launch an auction has been done, making it an extremely efficient overall process.

Managed by the dealer's sales administration department, all disposals now come through this team, allowing sales managers to focus on customers. Once the sales management team decide whether the car will be retailed or traded, it can be entered into a **FullAuction** sale.

FullAuction is an online trade auction site which makes cars available to approved trade buyers only. Lasting up to seven days, each vehicle auction listing is live in just minutes.

Hollands explains:

"Previously, we relied on traders to give a value for our used vehicles. We don't deal direct with traders now, which has really simplified the process. Moving over to FullAuction has also raised the skills of our used car managers, who are now in control of each used car sale."

The complete process is controlled by Vines' sales admin department, which can now easily match vehicle appraisals to cars and thus go live on the auction site within hours of the car being valued.

Once the auction has finished, and the winning bidder is informed, the buyers' collection of the car is then organised – all by the sales admin team at Vines.

In the unlikely event that a car does not meet its reserve, the **FullAuction** brokering team contact the highest bidders to see if they will pay more for the car, thus significantly improving the likelihood of an eventual sale, first time.

"It's a very automated, slick system, that massively benefits from the efforts of the brokering team who



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have excellent relationships with buyers and sellers so the transaction isn't simply online but a real world, people process."

says Hollands.

"When we first moved over to FullAuction, I have to admit there was some resistance. But after a few weeks of experience, backed up by training and lots of support from Cooper Solutions, the team wouldn't have it any other way. I'd say it's one of the most successful programmes we've ever launched."

Having traditionally seen used vehicles as a cash neutral activity, Vines is now making a significant trade profit on part exchange vehicles. By using **FullAuction**, Vines is no longer relying on a handful of local traders to bid for used cars and is exposing stock to over 2000 buyers across the country. This has seen Vines turn around its trade performance.

After signing up to the **FullAppraisal** and **FullAuction** tools, Vines saw a variance in value of anywhere up to £150, compared to the book value. Hollands explained:

"In reality, our previous process was not very efficient and the likelihood of human errors creeping into the system was significant,"

"Now that our sales admin department is running the complete operation, our entire process is more efficient, transparent and profitable."

"Overall, it's helped with new car sales too. As we're now stronger on part exchanges, our sales team has a better chance of selling new cars. Sometimes you may want to give another £500 for a part exchange. In the old days, a single trader would say no to a price on an incoming car. Now thanks to FullAppraisal, we can have 2000 pairs of eyes on a vehicle and so make a more confident call ourselves on the value. It's this flexibility that that puts us in control."

Before adopting **FullAppraisal** and **FullAuction**, most cars would break even, generating approximately £50,000 on trade profit. Last year, in just nine months of using the new solution, Vines posted a trade profit of £278,000.

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