

A COMMENTARY

If your DMS could talk



Introduction

There are lots of ways you could describe the relationship between your dealership and your DMS: adversarial, beneficial (if you're lucky), excruciating, etc. Chances are, you've found yourself yelling at your computer screen once or twice...OK, maybe more. But what if your DMS could hear your frustrations and concerns and be able to communicate back to you? What would it tell you? Maybe it would provide secrets to improving your workflow or increasing your profits. Or maybe the DMS would admit to its shortcomings. We compiled a few possible statements your DMS might make, and asked some of our dealership experts for their thoughts.

Experts:

- **Ken Rock**
Customer Care Manager
- **Gina Garry**
Product Knowledge Expert - Sales and F&I
- **Vince DeMare**
Product Knowledge Expert - Fixed Operations



“ Your DMS says:

If you make more time to explore and tap into all of my capabilities, I can make your dealership more efficient and profitable.



Ken Rock

If you can figure out how to maximize the use of the software, then you can certainly maximize the efficiency of your employees. And in doing so, you can increase your dealership's profits. Finding the time to dive into the software, though, is the responsibility of the end user.



Gina Garry

When I was still in the dealership, I knew how to perform just one task with the DMS we used. I'm sure I could have learned how to do more, but I didn't know where to get that extra knowledge. It's difficult to take advantage of the entire DMS without a clear and comprehensive learning path in the system.



Vince DeMare

If people take the time, they can probably try and learn more. But because you've got employees writing up ROs and selling work, they don't have time to explore the DMS, make a support call or take advantage of training opportunities.



DMS pro tip:

Dedicate time to participate in product demos with other members of your team and your DMS. This should help you identify parts of the system you're not taking advantage of.

“ Your DMS says:

Look at reports more regularly and I guarantee you'll be able to make better business decisions.



Ken Rock

This should be pretty obvious, but there are people who don't look at their reports. They'll tell you they don't have time, that they have a good feel for business so they don't need to or that they don't understand how the report system works. But you can't make business decisions based on something you're not measuring.



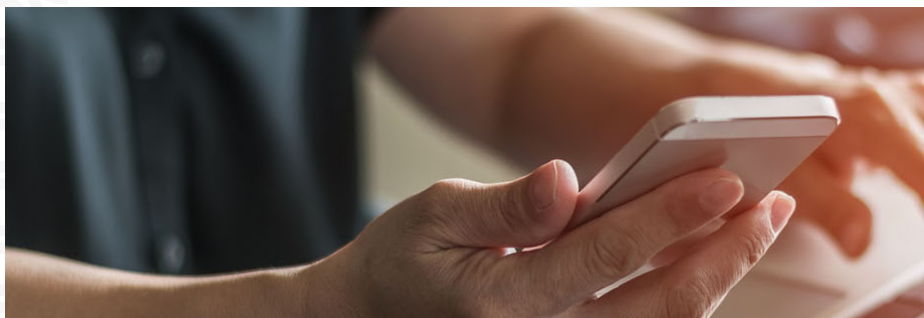
Gina Garry

If I had access to more sophisticated reporting tools, I could have been a lot more successful. When you have something like a dashboard, daily email or even a printed report, you're able to make much better business decisions than the person who either doesn't care or doesn't have time to view their reports.



Vince DeMare

I was actually taking a look at a service advisor's sales analysis the other day and noticed his hours per RO were high but his effective labor rate was in the can, which indicates theft. And if that person made the correlation by viewing his reports regularly, he would have caught it much sooner. There's more benefits to looking at your reports than the obvious ones.



DMS pro tip:

Your ability to generate reports is dependent on the simplicity of your system. This means additional training may be needed

“ Your DMS says:

I'm making you jump through several hoops to accomplish the simplest tasks because I wasn't designed around your workflow. I hope you don't have a lot of cars to sell or fix.



Ken Rock

The DMS should be designed around the workflow of the dealership. The software should work for you. You shouldn't have to work for the software. But if you're experiencing workflow issues, an important question to ask yourself is, "Is it the software's process or the dealership's process that isn't working?" That's what you need to analyze.



Gina Garry

Why can't my DMS understand the workflow of the dealership? I mean, there are a lot of steps that go into selling a car, but there's no reason why I should have to go through dozens of screens to get the customer out the door. That's why the DMS needs to be designed by car people because they're going to know how to make the workflow smoother.



Vince DeMare

You shouldn't have to jump through hoops in order to complete simple tasks. The DMS should provide flexibility and choice to its users. We have old-school people who are used to their keyboard commands controlling every aspect of the system. And then you've got the younger generation of people who want everything to be point and click. If your DMS isn't flexible, half of your employees are going to suffer.



DMS pro tip:

Assessing your processes as a team is a great way to identify new best practices or the need for new technology.

“ Your DMS says:

It’s great that you’re used to me after so many years, but who’s going to train the new guy that just walked in?



Ken Rock

Most DMS providers charge you to retrain or train new employees. The DMS needs to provide a way to train new employees at no cost. Usually, the dealership just has the outgoing employee or their resident DMS expert train incoming employees. And that’s not practical, since they don’t provide 100% of the details needed.



Gina Garry

That was usually my role. People would just come up to me and say, “Hey, we have somebody new. Can you show them how to use the system?” Even though I had my own job to do, the dealership didn’t want to spend money on training. Really, the DMS should have an easy free tool for new employees to absorb the knowledge they need for their role.



Vince DeMare

You shouldn’t have to train new employees. The DMS should train them for you. It should be as easy as calling in and joining a web conference or taking a series of on-line tutorials. But I see a lot of dealerships that have a point person who is responsible for training others on top of their normal day-to-day tasks. That’s not efficient at all.



DMS pro tip:

The presence of a formal onboarding program leads to new hire satisfaction, knowledge of the software and often lower employee turnover.

“ Your DMS says:

Let me show you valuable tips and tricks to make your life easier.



Ken Rock

After years of performing tasks a certain way, people in the dealership become complacent with what they already have in place, and they don't feel like they need more. This issue could also stem from the whole idea of fear of change. It sounds silly, but a process change in a place like a dealership is a frightening concept for most employees.



Gina Garry

Time is money. People aren't going to take the time to try and improve efficiency when they have numbers to hit. And when you have a whole team of people who are used to doing something one way, it's so difficult to get them to change. But I think people need to realize that if you do take the time to let the DMS improve your workflow, it can enable you to increase your profit more easily.



Vince DeMare

I don't think that people necessarily refuse to learn tips and tricks, but they forget to apply them to their existing processes. Tuesday can be a fairly light day for you, so you try and implement a new best practice. But the next day you get slammed with work and you revert right back to the way you did things before because it's second nature.



DMS pro tip:

Most DMS providers offer consulting solutions. Depending on how much you're struggling, it might be worth the money to have an expert assess your processes.

“ Your DMS says:

You wouldn't believe how much money I'm charging you in integration fees for the vendors you want to do business with.



Ken Rock

Very few people in the dealership have probably thought about that statement. But this is such a huge issue and it's a "bad profit" for DMS providers. They're charging dealers thousands to use the core system, and on top of that, you're charging them to communicate with an outside vendor.



Gina Garry

The DMS is right. I'd never think of that because the user isn't the one looking at the bill each month. I just know which vendors are going to help make my job a little bit easier. And if my DMS doesn't let me integrate with that vendor, well, then that's not very fair. It's not fair that I'm limited to just two vendors when there are 30 or so choices out there.



Vince DeMare

This is a lose-lose situation for dealers, unless your DMS has a true open API. You're either going to pay an outrageous amount of money for all of the integrations you need, or you're going to waste hours on double entry if you choose not to pay for the integration. Dealers can have the best of both worlds, but I'm not sure they realize it.



DMS pro tip:

The average dealership spends between \$10,000-30,000 annually in integration fees. A true open API presents opportunities for significant cost savings.

“ Your DMS says:

Need help in Accounting? Take a number, I'll get back to you when I feel like it.



Ken Rock

The problem with so many DMS companies is that they forget who they're there for. It's hard to get people to use the software efficiently if there's no one there to support them.



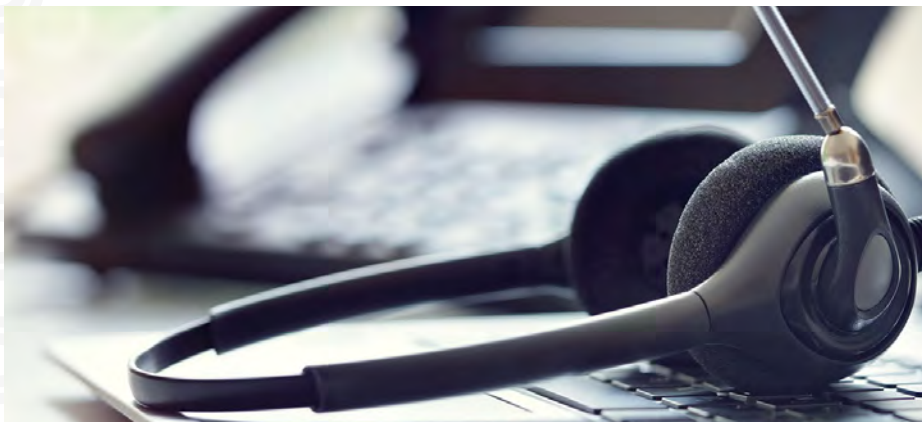
Gina Garry

If my DMS vendor ever treated me like that, I'd stop calling and just figure out my problem myself. And that scenario is the farthest thing from support. If I can't figure out the answer myself, now I have to ask somebody else in the dealership who might know. It just becomes a huge domino effect.



Vince DeMare

DMS vendors shouldn't make dealerships wait to get the answers they need. What we're seeing a lot of today are companies pushing users to an online chat tool. So now you're not only losing that personal touch, but you have to write an essay to explain the issue you're having to a person with zero car experience.



DMS pro tip:

If your DMS vendor's support line is automated, calculate the time it takes your dealership to get support. You'll be shocked when you think of the tasks you could have completed in that time frame.

The absence of a mutually beneficial relationship between dealership employees and most DMS providers is apparent. Without the tools and proper knowledge in place, users may never be able to take full advantage of their DMS. This causes efficiency and profitability in the dealership to stagnate since the level of curiosity toward the software's capabilities is generally low. If your team relates to any of these challenges, it might be time to assess your software and internal processes.

About our dealership experts:



Ken Rock

As Auto/Mate's Customer Care Manager, Ken helps dealerships evaluate their processes and identify departmental best practices to maximize efficiency. Prior to joining Auto/Mate, Ken worked at four different dealerships as a Fixed Operations Director, General Manager and Warranty Administrator over the course of 25 years. Ken enjoys the rewarding feeling of helping dealerships become more successful as a result of his consultative approach to training.



Gina Garry

Gina is one of Auto/Mate's Product Knowledge Experts, specializing in Sales and F&I processes. She spent three years as a Finance/Business Manager and Product Specialist at Fuccillo Nissan before joining Auto/Mate. Gina is passionate about applying her dealership experience to show dealerships how Auto/Mate can benefit their business and improve their workflow.



Vince DeMare

Vince is the Team Lead of Auto/Mate's Product Knowledge Experts. Having spent 12 years working in the Fixed Operations Department of three different dealerships, and 13 years at Auto/Mate, Vince understands the challenges dealerships go through on a day-to-day basis. He uses this experience to demonstrate how Auto/Mate can help accomplish organizational goals and overcome any struggles dealerships are going through.

Recommended reading:

[The Auto Dealer's Guide to Team Building](#)

[Auto/Mate's Dealership Management System Empowers Managers, Increases Productivity at Five Star Dealerships](#)



A DMS That Does Business Differently

Auto/Mate by DealerSocket is a leading dealership management system provider. Our innovative software delivers the functionality, flexibility, and value dealers need to maximize profits, optimize processes and enhance the customer experience while saving thousands on their monthly DMS bill.

The addition of Auto/Mate to DealerSocket's suite of products creates a new choice for dealers seeking a connected platform that's driven by innovation and backed by award-winning customer service. Together, we serve more than 9,000 dealerships and 300,000 users. For more information, [contact us here](#).