

# Five Star Dealerships

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Five Star Dealerships Empowers Managers and Increases Productivity with Auto/Mate's Dashboard



**“If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up someplace else.” Yogi Berra’s quote resonates perfectly in auto dealerships. For Five Star Dealerships in Aberdeen, WA, transforming its culture to one of managerial empowerment and increased productivity was the result of powerful reporting and dashboard features in Auto/Mate’s DMS.**



“Any time you make a big change like a DMS, it takes some getting used to,” said Mike O’Dell, corporate general manager of operations for Five Star Dealerships. “I expected it would take some time for employees to learn how to do certain things differently, but what surprised me was how the changes empowered our managers by making access to information so much easier.”

Mike O’Dell  
General Manager  
Five Star Motors, WA

**The Need:** Five Star Dealerships is an auto group with two locations on the coast of Washington. Three years ago, the group’s contract with its legacy DMS provider was nearing its end. And for the first time, the principals realized they had additional vendor choices, as Auto/Mate and another DMS provider had recently been approved by Toyota. After a thorough review, Five Star principals chose Auto/Mate for three reasons: significant financial savings, robust capabilities of the DMS and its reputation for superior customer support.

Once the switch was made, O’Dell immediately realized a benefit he had not anticipated – the simplicity of Auto/Mate’s Daily DOC (Daily Operating Control) reporting system. Previously, if managers wanted to view financial reports, they’d have to refer to a chart of accounts with different account numbers, they’d have to know which general ledger the information was located in, enter the account number, pull up a separate executable, enter dates and then finally get the detail of what was posted into that account. “Out of 120 employees, there were probably four in accounting who knew how to run those reports,” O’Dell said. If accounting employees were busy with payroll or other priorities, report requests would have to wait.



**The Solution:** With Auto/Mate, if a manager wants to view financial reports, all they have to do is pull up the Daily DOC and choose the report they want from pull-down menus. If they want to drill down to see more detail, they simply click on the dollar amount or line item of interest. O'Dell said the ability to run their own reports makes both the managers and the accounting department more productive, yet an even bigger benefit has been realized as departmental managers have become more empowered.

"Now, managers run financials more often and can easily see where they are spending money, where they are saving money, what the trends are and more," O'Dell said.

For instance, if a sales manager wants to see what his advertisement expenses are for the month, he can pull up the DOC in a few seconds, double click on the expense line, then double click on any expense to see the detail. It's also easy to choose different timeframes; with a simple click, the report can be changed from a current month view to a 12-month trend.

The ability to pull up DOCs on demand allows managers to instantly know which models are selling, how the sales department is performing relative to the forecast and which service invoices are paid or unpaid. The level of knowledge enables managers to identify and address problem areas immediately, ultimately leading to better decision-making and higher profitability. "It's really a whole shift in culture and has changed how we run things in a way that wasn't possible with the last DMS we had," O'Dell said.

Another feature that O'Dell quickly appreciated is Auto/Mate's dashboard. Users can virtually define any metric they'd like to track, such as rate of new vehicle sales, the percentage of gross estimate met in the service department or the number of vehicles sold with extended warranty contracts. The user can choose a widget to represent each metric in the form of a bar chart, thermometer, digital clock or other graphical element. This allows users to view critical metrics at a glance.

"The dashboard gives us a snapshot of everything we need to see on a daily, weekly and monthly basis," O'Dell said, who routinely looks at total store sales and total store gross figures, as well as the expense and net figures for every department. "Ten days into the month, I can glance at these widgets and know in my head where we are relative to our forecasts without having to run any reports. If there's a weakness somewhere, you can see it right away and go talk with that department manager."

The dashboard also enables users to directly click on the widgets to drill down for more detail. "Let's say I'm looking at finance chargebacks for the month," O'Dell said. "I click on the widget, and it will take me directly into that account. I can see immediately what has been posted, such as insurance contracts, finance products, a gap chargeback, etc. Then I click on a posting and I can see there's been a warranty cancellation, and I can see the dollar amount, customer name and other information. In four clicks, I can get every detail without having to run a report."



**The Results:** O'Dell compares Auto/Mate's reporting and dashboard features to buying a new computer that's 10 times faster than an old computer. "Imagine when you click on something on your computer, and you have to wait for the circle to stop spinning. It slows you down. That's similar to how the wrong technology can slow down processes in our store," O'Dell said. "Imagine if someone is trying to do their job and then has to stop and wait for something. But with the right tools, there's no slowing down. It makes all of our processes faster, and the time and cost savings from that are immeasurable."

In addition to the DMS reporting and dashboard features, O'Dell enjoys Auto/Mate's customer support. "What we like the most is that for anyone to work in Auto/Mate's customer support department, they had to work in a car dealership," he said. "Their Fixed Ops support person used to be a Fixed Ops Director, and same with the F&I support and hardware guys." Prior dealership experience enables Auto/Mate's customer support team to understand the questions, challenges and problems their clients may be having. "Their level of personal involvement with their customers is great; it doesn't feel like you're dealing with a big corporate entity at all," O'Dell said.

The principals at Five Star Dealerships chose Auto/Mate for three reasons, all of which have proven to hold true. The auto group has achieved significant cost savings, enjoys the DMS' robust capabilities and Auto/Mate's exceptional customer support. In addition, O'Dell was pleasantly surprised by the accessibility and ease of use of the reporting system and dashboard. "It's changed the way we run our business, empowering managers to make better decisions while increasing productivity."

### About Auto/Mate

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, visit [www.automate.com](http://www.automate.com) or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.