

AS SEEN IN



Reynolds' road shows debuts new technology

BY JACKSON HAYES

Software giant Reynolds and Reynolds recently held the first two in a series of travelling road show events aimed at revealing to current and potential dealer customers a slew of new solutions.

Kicking off the tour in Montreal followed closely by a larger event at the convention centre in Toronto in mid-November, the full day gatherings included discussions on the state of the retail industry, the evolution of dealership software needs and full presentations of the company's latest applications.

"We wanted to get in front of our customers and show them what we have done and where we are going," explained Ron Lamb, Reynolds and Reynolds Company president.

"During the recession, Reynolds decided to invest heavily in new product development. We decided to re-architect all of our solutions from the ground up. The focus was to drive greater efficiencies in the dealership and better consumer engagement by bringing them in as part of the process. The road shows allow us to show off all of those products to our customers."

According to the company, roughly 150 people attended the Montreal show and more than 220 checked the goods in Toronto.

Lamb said they talked through universal changes all dealerships are going through and how advances in technology have shaped what the company is doing moving forward.

Company communications director Tom Schwartz said a separate room was set up at both locations to showcase about a dozen new solutions.

"Dealers could talk to the product directors who had overseen development of the solutions at their leisure," he said.

Arguably most important to the company is the launch of its comprehensive retail management system (RMS). The program includes more than a dozen separate solutions that run the gamut of dealer operations including a service sales kit, electronic document management, parts bar-coding, training, remote backup and more.

The company insists the linchpin of RMS is the ERA dealer management system.

Lamb said the RMS is designed from the ground up



Ron Lamb

to handle DMS and CRM needs while "going well beyond the traditional systems Reynolds has provided in the past."

The system is modular, meaning it can work as one unit or, should the dealer choose, as standalone pieces selected as use determines.

Dealer attendees were also shown the Reynolds integrated telephone system (RITS). Another ground-up build, RITS acts as part of the dealer management system and CRM tool.

"Every phone call that comes in can be recorded, tracked and followed up," he said. "We also have concierge service to remind customers about appointments."

Reynolds also teased two new products not yet available in Canada. The DocuPAD, a flat, desktop computer device that allows for interactive presentations and videos to upsell F&I products, was first widely showcased at NADA in 2012.

Despite nearly two years since that launch, Lamb said

the product is still not ready for Canada. He concedes it is getting closer and that it was included in the road show to gauge demand.

"We had a lot of dealers pulling their pens out wanting to buy one right away."

Another product set for a later Canadian release date is the radio frequency identification for service application. Dealerships can put an RFID tag in the customer's car and in loaner cars so when consumer drives on the lot, the service advisors are alerted so they can walk out and greet the customer by name.

"If you set the appointment up, your service advisor will already know why the customer is there and be able to offer a totally custom experience."

Schwartz said the plan is to visit the top 20 largest cities across Canada over the coming year, adding that not every stop will be as elaborate as in Toronto or Montreal.

"We had a lot of dealers ask about whether we would do it next year."