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Dealerships of all sizes can benefit from retail mindset



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FROM THE
CORNER OFFICE

Across Canada, there's an accelerating trend toward consolidation in dealership ownership. That trend is expected to last into the next decade as larger, well-capitalized dealership groups buy more single point, privately owned stores.

Besides the obvious benefit of economies of scale, larger dealer groups also stand apart because of their mindset toward automotive retailing. It's one that continually seeks to improve business efficiency, employee productivity, and the customer experience.

Dealerships, regardless of size, can benefit from adopting a similar retail mindset.

First, focus on continuous process improvement. Successful groups are persistent in creating smoother processes and more efficient operations to bolster the bottom line and improve customer satisfaction.

Where can your dealership make process improvements that lead to gains in cost saving or customer satisfaction?

Second, leverage the benefits of centralization.

From the business office to the service department, dealer groups pool resources and assign like tasks to a single person or team.

Are there functions your dealership can combine to save resources and improve efficiency?

Third, harness the power of standardization and streamlining. Groups value standard processes and procedures that create savings in time and money. That's in everything from business suppliers to technology tools to customer service policies.

They also streamline operations by reducing the number of systems employees use, the number of steps it takes to complete a task or how many employees are involved in a process.

Where can your dealership standardize its processes and streamline how work gets done to gain operational efficiencies and improve the customer experience?

Finally, dealership groups take a holistic view of their operations to spot issues before they become

larger problems.

This holistic view often is supported by technology tools that enable managers to access business metrics at their fingertips in real time.

In fact, it's the dealer group's retailing technology platform that often is the underpinning that enables the enterprise to do things well, and then find ways to make things even better.

Is your dealership using a retailing platform built to help your dealership standardize processes, streamline work, and help employees make better business decisions – all of which can lead to an improved customer experience with your store?

The trend toward consolidation will continue to change the dealership landscape. Dealerships of all sizes can benefit from adopting a retail mindset that helps them increase business efficiency and profitability and improves the customer experience. **AW** Ian Reilly is vice-president of sales for Reynolds and Reynolds (Canada) Ltd.