

# AS SEEN IN

## CANADIAN AUTOWORLD



**Ian Reilly**  
FROM THE  
CORNER OFFICE

As Scotiabank noted in its November *Global Auto Report*: “The North American auto industry is a key driver of economic activity. It is a bright star in the current sluggish overall economic environment, and is outperforming other industrial sectors.”

At the same time, the automotive industry continues to be a “bright star” in the retail sector, with car sales helping to fuel increased, yet modest growth.

Despite the positive news, there is pressure on dealers that will persist over the next few years and continue to create business challenges.

That pressure includes a continued squeeze on dealership profit margins and the changing expectations from consumers about buying and servicing a vehicle at the dealership.

## As the industry remains a bright star, dealers also look to shine

The dealers I talk to recognize they’ll likely need new technologies, processes and services to better manage their entire retail enterprise going forward.

First on their list are better retailing technologies to help employees work more efficiently. The best technologies also can help employees complete tasks in fewer keystrokes and put more information at their fingertips. These tools can help employees serve more customers without the dealer adding more staff.

Second, dealers are choosing retailing tools that enable their employees to deliver a better experience to consumers that more closely matches their expectations shaped by other retailers.

Today’s consumers expect instant answers, increased transparency, and greater symmetry between their online and offline experiences.

For dealers, it’s not simply about helping employees work faster; it’s also about making their work more effective and delivering on customers’ heightened expectations.

Third, they also are expecting technologies that provide a more complete, holistic retail view of their business. Plus, they want tools that deliver the right information at the right time to dealership employees so they can better serve customers and make better business decisions.

Finally, dealers are looking for the tools and processes that deliver results: increasing sales leads, selling more products and services, and handling profit leaks more quickly and effectively.

As we look to the new year, automobile retailers are primed to shine. They’re doing so by adopting the technologies, processes, and services that help them face business challenges head on, adapt to changing market conditions and customer expectations and achieve better business results, now and in the future. **AW**

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