

Sinclair Group

The Sinclair Group is the largest and most successful motor group in Wales, representing Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Volkswagen, Seat, Skoda, Smart and Volkswagen Commercial vehicles. With a long heritage stretching back to 1945, Sinclair is conscious of its role both within the communities in which it operates and its reputation. Strong family values and exceptional levels of personal service guide its approach.

When it came to selecting a business to support its goal to increase the sales of added value insurance services, Sinclair's Head of F&I and Compliance Edward Ellis, who himself had an extensive supplier side F&I career history, had a clear insight of what he wanted. AutoProtect delivered and in some areas over-delivered to capture the account and partnership with the Sinclair team. Today AutoProtect is considered a key business partner – supporting Sinclair beyond just sales. Ellis observes;

"Sinclair is a strong local brand, our business is well known in the South Wales community and we were keen to ensure that our added value services should support our customer focused approach. At the same time, we were and remain very conscious of increased financial services regulation. In reviewing our insurance suppliers, the capacity to support us through regulatory change was crucial. We aim not just to comply with the letter, but rather the spirit of regulation." Adding;

"I didn't know it at the time, but it was clear that we also wanted to work with a business where our voice was heard and respected. From the outset, they provided us with access to their senior business leadership and indeed to their underwriters. No other company provided us with this level of access."



Mercedes-Benz of Cardiff, Sinclair Group

They proved to us that they really wanted our business. In today's environment, a great deal of store is placed upon CRM, in truth the 'Relationship' aspect of CRM is enhanced considerably when you have a strong relationship with partners who help and support the business. It remains very true that AutoProtect is more than a supplier in the way they have actively supported our wider activities, in areas such as our Sinclair Foundation charitable activities."

The relationship with AutoProtect began in 2009 based on the way in which it ticked all four of the principles Edward was seeking:

Good products, people, processes and a fair price.

For the latter, this included a fair pricing approach for GAP cover. AutoProtect was uniquely able to offer Sinclair a universal purchase price claim limit, without price bandings of £60,000.

Given the Sinclair franchises, this has enabled the Sinclair businesses to offer a single product business-wide, facilitating sales and creating better customer experience.

A better consumer experience is central to the FCA regulatory environment and Ellis points to compliance support in terms of training and guidance as another key area in which AutoProtect has become a valued partner.

“AutoProtect has a strong compliance ethos and their support has stretched beyond training. They have happily shared their insights and expertise to help us to meet the ongoing change in regulation.

I like the way AutoProtect has looked to the future and helped us to mitigate against potential risks. In the case of their GAP product, their early adoption of ABI guidelines to provide a product that enabled the customers to gain a pro-rata rebate in the case of cancellation, whilst protecting our commission,

has proved to be well ahead of the wider market. This was also in advance of the widely anticipated changes to the sale of GAP we expect this year.”

Going beyond the brief, AutoProtect has worked to support Sinclair in the provision of merchandising as well as imaginative and timely MIS.

“We are in a data obsessed industry and I’m happy to say I like this!” Notes Ellis. *“Providing accurate and timely data has always been easy with AutoProtect. Not that I get information overload, theirs is very much a ‘Keep It Simple’ approach.”*

Ellis closes by noting;

“I think the ultimate accolade I can give AutoProtect is that I am happy to recommend them to other dealers because I think it is important we work to enhance the profile of our industry to the wider market. And I have happily done this on numerous occasions.”

