

Wessex Garages

Increasing the Value of Added-Value Services.

“Learn the fundamentals of the game and stick to them” - Jack Nicklaus

Introducing Wessex Garages

Established with a single site in Bristol in 1986, Wessex Garages has grown to become a well-recognised, regional, multi-franchised group across South Wales and the South West of England.

In 1997, Keith Brock joined the business and when it was acquired in 2016 by VT Holdings he remained as Managing Director, providing continuity and valuable insight into the UK retail landscape, such as the challenging market retailers see today.

The Role of Added-Value Services

Keith is very clear in recognising that changes in motor retailing over the last 18 months require a different retailing approach; *“The intense pressure on volumes over recent years has arguably seen us overlook some core fundamentals such as added-value services. To paraphrase a Jack Nicklaus quote; we need to re-focus on the fundamentals of good car retailing. We have been quick to address the challenge and areas such as used cars and added-value services lead our strategic agenda.”*

Focusing on Fundamentals

The renewed focus on used cars and increasing the number of products per customer has seen Wessex Garages address both internal and external resources. Keith has been quick to ensure that his added-value service providers matched his approach, noting;

“A core part of our fundamentals approach is an obsession with being Best in Class. This extends to our people, products and processes as well as in performance; it also embraces our partners. Not all added-value products or suppliers are the same and



Keith Brock, Managing Director Wessex Garages.

we have looked to ensure that both the cover and support services on offer match our ethos.”

The fundamentals approach is illustrated in the business' used car strategy, which now includes a closer attention to the up-selling of used car warranties. A quality product forms part of the core car purchase package, but every customer is presented with the option of a premium warranty with wider benefits. By helping more customers make an informed buying decision, sales of the premium product are growing.

The Role of the 'Hub' – 'what gets monitored gets done'

The 'Hub' is Keith's solution to driving Best in Class performance. Developed in-house, the Hub software provides an instant Group-wide benchmark of the business' performance by product at sales executive, business manager and sales/general manager level. The technology is helping the Group move from reactive to proactive, increasing performance transparency and competition. Everyone in the Group can see the KPIs on their tablet. The Hub has created one novel bi-product, 'Bingo' as Keith explains; *“The Hub has quickly created an expression that now forms part of the Wessex lexicon – 'Bingo' – everyone is out to get a full line of positive indicators! I see this element of fun and competition as a key to our success; I'm chuffed to see the team take the new approach on-board with their normal humour!”*

As well as KPIs, the Hub helps the sharing of best practices; *“The Hub is teaching us what works best. Again, these often represent fundamentals, for example; introducing GAP and warranties early in the customer dialogue, means these products become a natural part of their buying experience,”* Keith reflects.

The Role of Compliance

Compliance is an area that has not required renewed focus. As Keith observes, it is very much a core part of the way Wessex Garages works and is a strength which is helping to underpin the business’ confidence to increase its added-value product activities;

“We continue to work diligently to provide a highly compliant approach to our entire F&I operation, protecting our brand and reputation. For us, ‘doing the right thing’ for every customer, every time, without exception is embedded into our business as usual approach. To help us, our friends at Autoprotect and i-Comply online are on hand to ensure we never take our eye off this ball!” observes Keith.

AutoProtect works across the Wessex business, developing compliant promotional processes, monitoring activity and providing training to the Wessex Garages customer-facing team members whilst i-Comply support the Board with governance and advice on navigating the regulatory landscape.

Looking Ahead

Keith concludes; *“We need added-value products to add even more value and with the fundamentals back in place, we can measurably see we are on the right road; it is one we need to stay on.”*

