



WHY BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE IS ON AN UPWARD CURVE

BI providers thrive as they strive to slake the thirst among dealerships for better and more easily understood data

As data has become increasingly more valuable to car dealerships, so the business intelligence (BI) industry has grown exponentially to meet their needs over the past 12 months.

This growth has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued rise of the smartphone, with more people than ever ordering and making bookings and/or payments online.

With demand for more analytical insight of data growing by the day, so new and existing BI providers are moving to capitalise on these opportunities.

One such beneficiary is Keyloop. The company has grown at a rapid rate over the past year, acquiring enquiryMAX, RAPID RTC, MotorDocs, FISC, Silver Bullet and Canadian dealer management system provider Serti.

In terms of new contracts, it has rolled out its Voice Connect telephony product to Steven Eagell, as well as providing Keyloop Documents to Park's Motor Group and Snows Motor Group to help digitally transform their document management.

Škoda has also endorsed its Rapid RTC Lead Manager and is using it to improve its lead management process and customer interaction.

In addition, Keyloop has made significant new hires including Stuart Mills as chief customer officer, Amit Monovich as chief technology officer, Elena Rodriguez as chief product officer and Charlotte deMetz as chief people officer. Megan Harvey and Puneet Soni have also joined as vice-president alliances and vice-president M&A respectively.

"Our focus on the consumer and a clear understanding of their needs when it comes to car purchasing and servicing means we can lead the way in removing the frictions that exist along the journey," said Keyloop chief executive Tom Kilroy.

"We believe that when we support retailers with the right technology to make incremental improvements across the many steps that cause consumers frustration during the car buying and ownership

experience, then we can help them and the industry overall achieve a significant increase in customer satisfaction and, in turn, business performance and profitability."

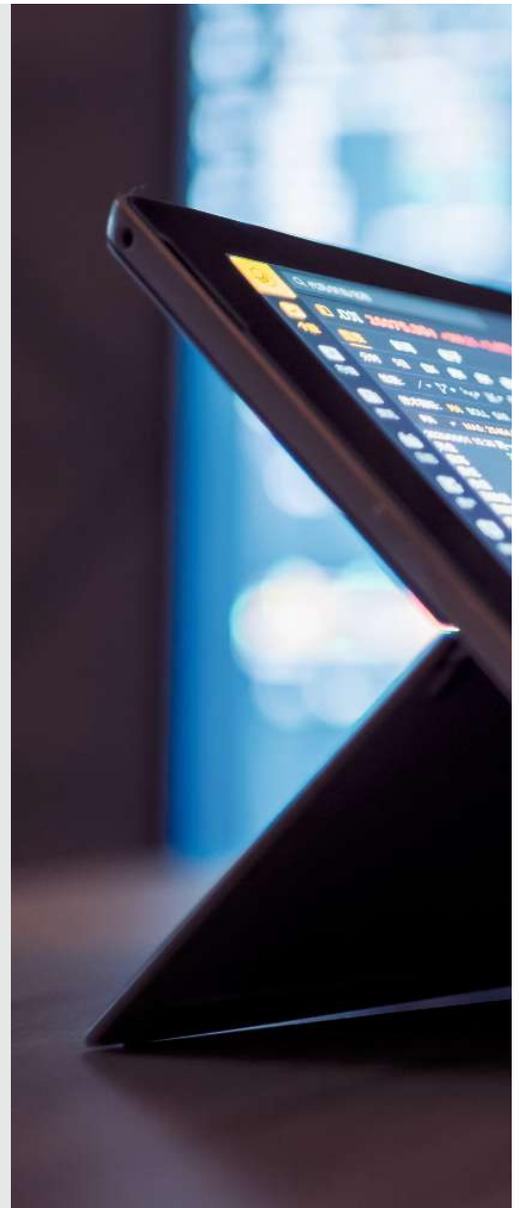
Another provider at the forefront of BI is Reynolds & Reynolds. Among its biggest achievements has been the completion of upgrades to two major OEM (original equipment manufacturer) hubs and associated reporting tools.

The company has also developed a suite of upgraded APIs (application programming interfaces) to ensure it absorbs richer data sets for the OEM and provides better insight into the sales process, marketing efficiencies, lead volumes and model splits.

In addition, it has created a UK version of the Reynolds Integration Hub to enable quicker integrations with third parties and the presentation of key data from within the dealer management system (DMS).

A number of dealers that use Reynolds & Reynolds' Power DMS have already adopted Claro, its cloud-based customer relationship management (CRM) lead and enquiry management solution. It has also revamped its Claro e-commerce API, allowing the import of everything from a basic lead to a full digital transaction from a third party application and, thus, enriching the data sets available for analysis.

Meanwhile, a significant hire was the appointment



of Rob Lewis as Reynolds & Reynolds' managing director, succeeding Adele Feeney after 23 years in the role.

AutoBI, which only launched in 2019, has gone from strength to strength over the past year. It was formed to bring all the information together that the dealer needs and present it clearly to enable them to make an informed decision about their business.

Set up by Jonathan Sharman and his four-strong team of automotive experts, the initial focus has been on providing aftersales BI to a range of dealers including: Acorn Motors Group in Cheshire and Staffordshire; Halliwell Jones in the North West; Sandal BMW in Harrogate and Wakefield; and Soper of

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Lincoln. It has since branched out to Jaguar Land Rover and Barretts Group's Honda and Citroën franchises in Kent.

Globally, the company has built a BI platform for an OEM in the Middle East. It has also developed a second version of its initial BI product, which covers everything including sales, aftersales, stock and CRM, which it has rolled out to Arthurs Motor Group in Oswestry, Newtown and Wrexham, and Prentice Group in Northern Ireland.

Now AutoBI is actively looking to recruit developers to build new solutions for its customers. As of February 2021, it also engaged Drive Agency to manage its branding, website, case studies, advertising and social media.

Working on a subscription model, the company has established a direct phone line to management, enabling customers to register any problems, and it works to provide solutions based on their insight and feedback.

Another provider that has prospered is River. In the past 18 months, it has secured a three-year contract to provide its Loop BI platform to Volkswagen Group and Volkswagen Financial Services in the UK for eight of their brands, as well as global contracts with Lotus and Aston Martin Lagonda.

Over the past year, the company has focused on proving the return on investment that its system provides, including evidencing that actions set against key performance indicators in Loop make performance three times faster. It has also improved its dashboarding capacity, added more self-serve features to its models and invested in adapting and speeding up its onboarding process.

Significantly, River has brought in Ben Miller, formerly of Autovista Group, as a dedicated marketing expert. With more than 15 years' B2B marketing experience, the aim is for him to raise the company's profile in the automotive space and win new customers by focusing on updating its website and improving brand awareness.

"One of Loop's most powerful benefits is the insight it provides into the activity going on at every level of the hierarchy," said River managing director Simon Porri. "We're planning to do more with this information and look more closely at whether the activity at a local level is strategically aligned with that of the manufacturer, for example, whether dealers and OEMs are aligned in their focus on EV readiness."

Real World Analytics is also going places fast. After launching the automotive part of its business in 2018, this has been a key driver.

Since the start of 2021, the company has doubled its customers to 17, taking on a range of different sized dealers from those with six or seven outlets, such as TMS, to others with more than 40 sites, and it expects to double that number again this year. It has also branched into Canada, building out a BI system called PBS for Bruce Automotive Group.

In addition, Real World Analytics has forged partnerships with Auto Trader and Pinnacle. With Auto Trader, the main focus has been on its enabling dealers to maximise data provided by its Accelerator product to achieve a better price for their vehicles dependent on the region and demand.

Over the past 12 months, new product launches have also doubled. The company has introduced a product called PriceSmart, which uses Auto Trader data to enable dealers to better price used cars and manage their inventory. It has also launched Management Accounts, which automates retailers' management accounts and presents them all in the same place in an easy-to-understand visual format.

Real World Analytics has increased its team from 10 to 20. It will also invest €200 million (£165m) in artificial intelligence and machine learning this year to determine its potential use in automotive retail.

ALEX WRIGHT