



THE PLATFORMS HELPING DEALERS KEEP TABS ON BUSINESS

Suppliers are set to support dealerships' data analysis capabilities

As data has become a key driver for car dealerships' success, so business intelligence firms have thrived over the past 12 months. Given the current economic environment, anything that can give dealers the edge over their competitors is vital.

As a result, dealerships have been tapping into every kind of business intelligence solution, from stock management to sales analysis.

At the forefront of this drive to enhance motor retailers' data analysis capabilities is River, which has increased its quarterly recurring revenue by 45% over the past year. The company has also boosted its main platform Loop's user base by 140% to more than 140,000 users, with more new customers in the pipeline.

However, River's biggest win has been launching a new set of performance dashboards for the Audi sales and aftersales operation network. As a result of its success and Audi, receiving a gold star in its internal audit, several other brands now have similar dashboards in production with Loop.

As well as adding new customers, River has refined its platform, enhancing its reporting features and functionality and making other tweaks

and improvements to provide better results. It has also improved its dashboarding capability, added more self-serve features to its modules and invested in speeding up its onboarding process.

"Many of the brands we work with have reported poor experience when implementing a new software platform with an external supplier, so we pride ourselves on our seamless onboarding process, which was reviewed and updated 12 months ago," says River managing director Simon Porri.

"The feedback we receive on this part of the service is exceptional, to the point where our VW Group stakeholder recently held us up to the rest of its business as a best practice example of how to seamlessly onboard a new software platform with an external supplier, in a virtual environment."

RAISING ITS PROFILE

Additionally, the company has rebranded itself, dropping the BI from its name to reflect the fact that it goes beyond just providing traditional business intelligence. It has also raised its profile by featuring regularly in *AM*, exhibiting at AM Live for the first time and being shortlisted for five different awards.

Rather than growing the team to meet the needs of its fast-expanding customer base, River has

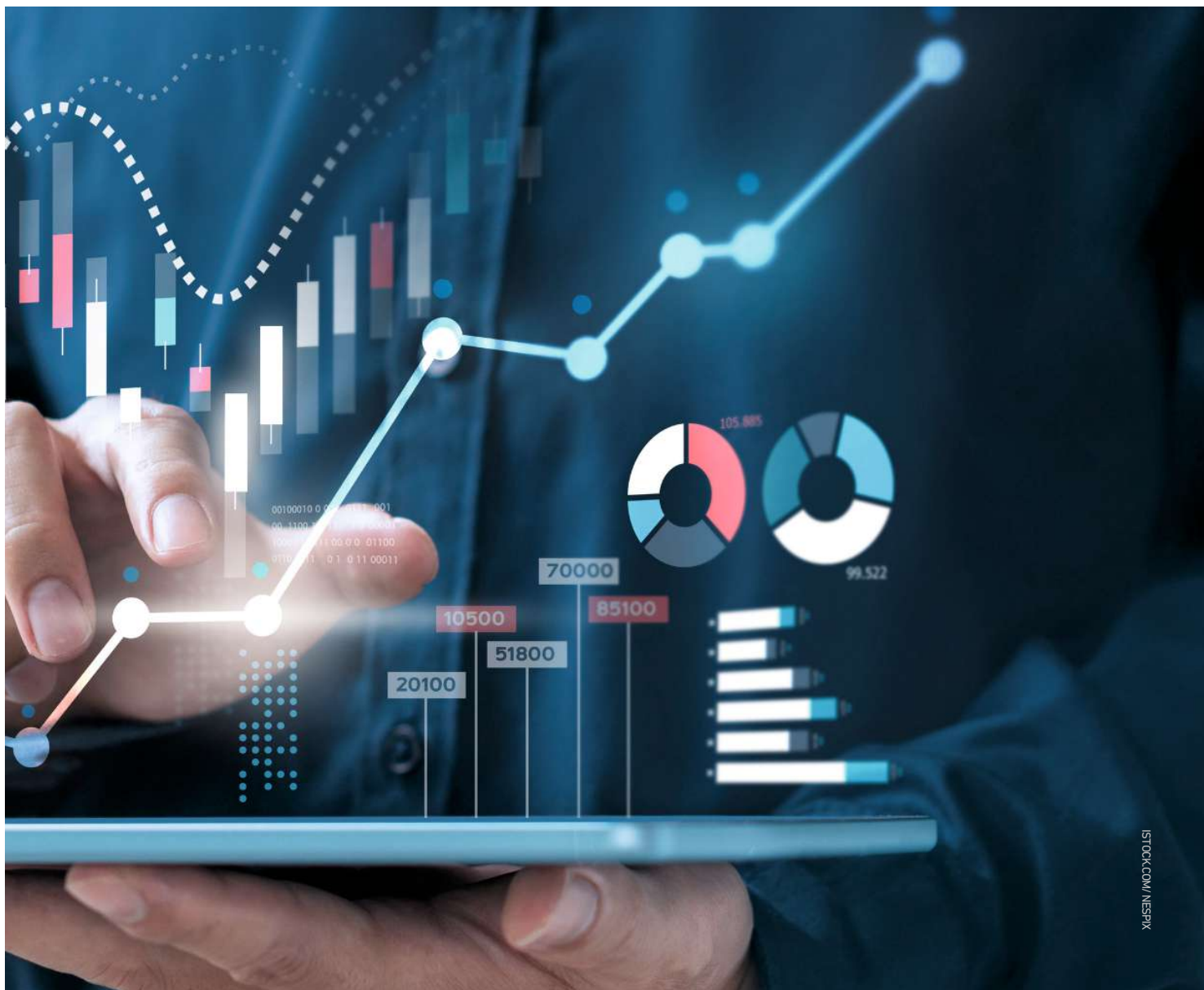
focused instead on investing in the scalability of its product. This has enabled it to keep the team lean while retaining high customer service levels.

Moving forward, River's product road map for the next 12 months focuses mainly on introducing predictive data and analytics and bringing in more system-led actions and insights. It also plans to look more closely at whether dealer activity at a local level is strategically aligned with that of manufacturers in areas such as electric vehicle readiness.

Another firm that has prospered in 2022 is AutoBI. During the year, it has continued to develop existing customer relationships and form new ones as part of its growth strategy, taking on two companies in the AM100, and adding more than 200 sites and 800-to-900 daily users.

The company has focused on growing its business intelligence and analytics expertise to enable motor retailers to make more informed business decisions, almost in real time. That has helped it to identify opportunities to improve performance by reducing costs and time, bridging knowledge gaps and being able to see the impact of their changes on the business.

Specifically, AutoBI has launched additional modules focused on enquiry management and



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customer retention to assist sales and aftersales teams as manufacturers move to agency-style models.

It also has several developments in the pipeline for 2023, including significant improvements to its vehicle stock, profit and daily operating control reporting, including integrating with other platforms such as Auto Trader, and plans to launch cashflow management and management accounts too.

SELF-SERVICE PORTAL

In addition, the company has implemented a full self-service portal for customers to raise support queries, change requests and suggest product improvements.

They can also use it to check the progress of their queries and which suggestions have been taken up and when they will be implemented.

This year, AutoBI has also taken on three new staff members and will add another two next month (April) to allow it to focus on developing its product to meet customer needs. To enable this, a customer success manager and principal business intelligence architect will work with existing customers to understand and deliver on their needs, as well as continuing to provide ongoing support and training.

“WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON OUR SEAMLESS ONBOARDING PROCESS, WHICH WAS REVIEWED AND UPDATED 12 MONTHS AGO

SIMON PORRI, RIVER

In June, the company will also add a head of customer acquisition and success strategy to work with new customers.

Dublin-based Real World Analytics Automotive (RWA Automotive) has also enjoyed exponential growth over the past year, tripling its revenue. During that period it has also increased its customer base to 25 dealer groups from within the AM100.

Several big names, including Allen Ford, AvailableCar, Brayleys Cars, Eastern Western Motor Group, Hatfields, John Clark Motor Group, Peoples Ford and Steven Eagell have all signed up to RWA Automotive's PriceSmart business intelligence solution in the past 12 months and that number is still growing.

"The biggest development for us has been our new pricing algorithm for used cars, which we have built from scratch," says John Hogan, chief executive and co-founder of RWA Automotive.

"We have done a few iterations to make it simpler and more accessible to enable dealers to ensure they can keep hitting their financial targets every month."

Over the 12 months, the company has taken on six new staff and promoted others. Among the key appointments is Neil Murphy as chief operations officer, who came up with the idea of moving into the automotive space.

RWA Automotive has also enjoyed significant success with its marketing, both in the UK and overseas. It has picked up significant business from attending the National Automobile Dealers Association Show in Dallas last month (February) and also won an IT innovation award at a prestigious industry event. **ALEX WRIGHT**