



New Network Launch: A Conversation with Michael Collins

By now you are probably aware that we will soon be launching our new DealerTrack Canada network - one that combines the best of both our current applications. For more insight on this major milestone and how it will help our dealer clients, we sat down for a short conversation with Michael Collins, general manager with DealerTrack Canada.

Q: We've heard a great deal about the new system. Can you give us an update?

MC: This launch is the culmination of a lot of hard work and input from all our stakeholders. We are on schedule to pilot the new network to selected dealers this fall, with the goal of full implementation to our entire network of 5400 Canadian dealers starting in January 2010. Our current plan is to discontinue both the DealerAccess and Curomax platforms no later than end of Q2 next year.

Q: What's behind the new product launch and what has you excited about it?

MC: This new system will, for the first time ever, allow dealers to access all of our lenders and other strategic partners through a single system. Until now dealers have had to match the lenders they wished to use with the technology they were using. This has created challenges and duplication of work. No longer will you need to use multiple systems to compare some lending solutions. Ultimately, it all goes back to our mantra, which is to present Canadian dealers with a superior workflow and process using carefully designed products and services with a single goal of improving your business efficiency and profitability.

We all know that the old Curomax and DealerAccess systems had some limitations. The DealerTrack Network retains the best features of the previous systems so there will be a lot that remains familiar to users. And we want to emphasize that the new system is in no way meant to influence the choices you make with regards to lenders or other

partners with whom you choose to work. We know that you have existing relationships and the new launch will not interfere with those relationships in any way. We simply want to facilitate and streamline the manner in which your business office works.

Q: Many end-users dread technology upgrades and new system "improvements." That's just human nature. What are you doing to ensure a smooth transition for dealers?

MC: Ensuring that dealers can quickly and easily adapt to the new system is a major priority. Of course there will be a learning curve with any new system; however, the application was designed with significant feedback from dealers, and it is very intuitive, according to those who have participated in testing.

There are a few inherent advantages with the new system as well. For one, it's a web-based application. That means all you need is the browser on your current PC and Internet access. There's no need to buy and download new software. And it's unlikely that you will need any new computers or other hardware whatsoever.

We have also created a host of training aids, webinars and other helpful tools that will enable dealers to quickly learn the ins and outs of the new system. A central part of this rollout strategy is our Dealer Support team, who are based in Toronto and whose hours of coverage, in both languages, cover normal business hours for every dealer in Canada—that will be available to assist dealers with specific questions.

Q: Are there any security concerns with the new system?

MC: Dealers should have no security concerns whatsoever. In fact, one of the benefits of this new system has been the ability to leverage the existing security platform from the U.S. DealerTrack solution, which processes a much higher volume of applications simply due to

the sheer size of the U.S. market. Our new system is infinitely more scalable and brings with it many state-of-the-art security tools. It's very much forward-looking, with an ability to adapt and react to newer security threats.

Q: Is there anything else noteworthy about the system that you would like to mention?

MC: Indeed there are many new features, but another time-saving benefit that dealers will notice almost immediately is the added functionality that allows the user to do more things on his or her own. For example, simple requests like adding new users or resetting a password previously required a phone call to our Dealer Support team. With the DealerTrack Network all this can be done through self-help. Dealers will have more control over who uses the system, in effect offering a level of customization appropriate for each store.

Q: Providing access to all lenders under a single platform while improving security and functionality have obvious advantages. But can you give us a hint as to what's in store for the future?

MC: Actually, looking into the future is really what gets us excited with this new launch. In Canada, DealerTrack is known for our ability to facilitate the consumer lending process—making the vehicles that dealers sell deliverable and fundable at the lender level. That's always been our core business, and our new system will help us do this even better.

Soon, however, the DealerTrack Network will enable us to go way beyond that. We will be able to leverage this new system to bring all sorts of revenue - generating product solutions from a variety of insurance and warranty providers across Canada and to integrate the delivery of these key product offers into the workflow solution of the new application. We call this the Aftermarket Network and will make this new feature available next year.

Envision a time when dealers will be able to quickly build a comprehensive credit application through DealerTrack—and then with the click of a mouse seamlessly bring all the necessary information into a deal for

an extended warranty, credit insurance or some theft protection product. That type of workflow solution is one that not only makes you more efficient but also creates lucrative cross-selling opportunities for our dealer customers.

Beyond that DealerTrack Canada will get into even more comprehensive product solutions. The new system will be able to support whatever sales method a dealership uses—step selling, menu selling or whatever strategy is best for that dealer's customers. While now we are known primarily inside the F&I office of a dealership, the day is not far off where DealerTrack Canada will deliver more robust solutions that encompass broader dealer management system and inventory management solutions as well.

Q: Exciting prospects indeed. Any last words of wisdom for the launch?

MC: Inevitably, we understand that change creates some level of angst, but we are genuinely committed to making this transition as seamless as possible. Throughout this process we hope that all dealers keep in mind both the immediate benefits and the long-term potential of the DealerTrack Network. Ultimately, our mandate is to build and deliver low-cost solutions that make our dealers' lives easier and more profitable. If we do that, everything else takes care of itself. We think this news is a big step in the right direction.