



2023 ISSUE 2

IRISH MOTOR MANAGEMENT

THE SOCIETY OF THE IRISH MOTOR INDUSTRY



Women @ SIMI 2023

INDUSTRY NEWS

SIMI AWARD
WINNER PROFILES

DRIVETIME



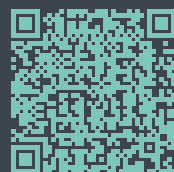
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Cover image: Women @ SIMI speakers, left to right, Norah Casey Broadcaster, Entrepreneur & Human Rights Campaigner; Louise Grubb CEO Trivium VET; and Mary Kennedy Master of Ceremonies.

POSITIVE MOMENTUM REQUIRED AS WE MOVE TOWARDS 232



SIMI's preparations for Budget 2024 are underway, with our recently submitted Tax Strategy Group (TSG) Submission, highlighting the key measures our sector needs in Budget 2024 and beyond. The Tax Strategy Group (TSG) papers are released annually in advance of the Budget by senior officials and political advisers, with responsibility for various options for tax policy changes prepared by the Tax Strategy Group prior to Budget. While the TSG is not a decision-making body, the papers produced include a list of potential taxation options and issues to be considered during the budgetary process.

Members will be aware of the Government's hugely ambitious climate action targets for transport emissions, with the electrification of the fleet being the most important mitigation measure between now and 2030, having the largest target of an abatement by 2030 of 47% of the total transport abatement. A joint approach between the Government and Motor Industry is required along with the right measures which need to be implemented to encourage behavioural changes. The momentum behind new Electric Vehicle (EV) sales is clearly there, but we need to continue to incentivise EV purchases if we want to continue the growth of the new EV market share, but also to create an active used EV market. In this context it is vital that Government continues to support consumers in the transition to zero emissions by retaining current supports and not increasing taxes. In fact, more could be done, in particular an increased focus on incentivising the business fleet. Tax efficient schemes such as a partial VAT reclaim on the purchase or lease of an EV, salary sacrifice schemes and extending the current €45,000 0% threshold on BIK, will increase the number of EVs in the national business fleet.

The Government announcement of the reduction in the SEAI consumer EV grant from July 1st was disheartening. Upfront purchase costs of new Electric vehicles in Ireland remain very high. The market demand curve for EVs is limited, with early adapters having already purchased their EV and potential EV buyers more sensitive to the cost of purchasing an EV, as well as the increase in energy costs, which will diminish the benefit of low running costs.

Ireland is well placed, to become a leader in the number of EVs in the national fleet. We are a small sized country with a moderate climate and over 80% of homes have a driveway access for home charging. Government taxation and incentive policy can take advantage of this dynamic. Get it right, and the Industry will deliver more and more zero and low emitting cars at a variety of price points. Get it wrong, and new car sales will remain suppressed, negatively impacting not just Climate Change ambitions, but also on employment and Government revenues. As always, we will engage with members as to how they can assist the lobbying effort over the coming weeks.

Since our last edition, the Society has hosted several events. Our Women@SIMI event took place recently, delivering an impressive panel of guest speakers and shining a light on the strong opportunities available for women in the industry. The National Executive Council and Annual General Meeting was held recently in Killashee Hotel, Naas, Co. Kildare. Paddy Magee, Country Operations Director of Renault Group Ireland, was elected SIMI President. I'd like to take this opportunity

(continued overleaf)



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(continued from page 3)

to thank our outgoing President Antonia Hendron for her contribution to the Society and to wish our newly elected President Paddy Magee the best of luck for the term ahead and we look forward to working with Paddy more closely throughout the year.

Brian Cooke
Director General,
SIMI

MOTOR INDUSTRY APPOINTS NEW SIMI PRESIDENT PADDY MAGEE

Paddy Magee, Country Operations Director of Renault Group Ireland, was elected President of the Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI) at the organisation's AGM held recently in Killashee Hotel, Naas, Co. Kildare.



SIMI President, Paddy Magee.

Speaking at the event, Paddy Magee President, SIMI, commented: "As President, I look forward to working even more closely with the Society over the next 12 months. My focus will be on continuing the work already undertaken in helping to position the Motor Industry as a leader and enabler of the green transition.

"The Motor Industry remains fully committed to working with Government to help achieve their Climate Action Targets. The industry is playing its part in the electrification process, and we need to build on the momentum already in the marketplace, with the right economic and taxation environment to support the uptake of new zero and low emissions vehicles."

EV supports must be maintained

Mr Magee continued: "We are already starting to see a reduction in EV support. Our primary focus is on Budget 2024 ensuring EV incentives/supports are maintained, there

are no VRT/VAT increases and to see the BIK's recent reliefs extended for the foreseeable future. Company vehicles will play a key role in helping to escalate the transition of electrification of the fleet. By increasing the number of new vehicles, we can also help supply and secure the used EVs market in the future."

Mr Magee has enjoyed 25 years working within the Motor Industry and 20 years with Renault Ireland. He remarked: "I have yet to see one year which has been normal and without challenges, but I would also say that these challenges have always brought opportunities. It is exciting times, as we are seeing many changes within our industry; the continued journey towards electrification is now joined by changes in distribution along with many daily challenges"

In conclusion, Mr. Magee said he is looking forward to his term as President, serving the membership and the industry he absolutely loves and wanted to thank members of the Society for this opportunity.

Celebrating a decade at the helm in Renault Ireland

Paddy Magee is the Country Operations Director of Renault Ireland, based at their headquarters in Dublin. He is responsible for the Renault and Dacia brands in Ireland and a network of 33 dealerships around the country. The Wicklow native has worked in the Motor Industry for 25 years, 20 years with Renault Ireland. A graduate of DIT Bolton Street, Paddy was Sales Director of Renault Ireland until he was appointed as the group's Country Operations Director in 2013. This year, Paddy celebrates a decade of leadership with Renault & Dacia Ireland, working alongside an excellent team and an extensive dealer network which employs over 600 people. Renault Ireland is currently the third largest network in the industry for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles. Paddy has previously served as Chairperson of the SIMI's Vehicle Distributors Committee and is a current member of the Society's Management Board. He is married to Claire and has two daughters, Katy May and Rhona.

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SIMI AGM 2023

SIMI held their annual AGM at Killashee Hotel, Naas, Co. Kildare



Gerard O'Farrell, SIMI Importers/Distributors Committee and Anne Marie Murtagh, Chair, Independent Sales and Service Committee, pictured at the SIMI NEC and AGM.



Ronan Flood, Honorary Treasurer, SIMI; Paddy Magee, President, SIMI; and Jonathan Meade, Deputy President, SIMI.



Anthony Boggans and David Gorey, Kylemore Cars.



SIMI Past Presidents Brian Fanning and Gillian Fanning, Serfac Ltd.

ELECTRIC AND HYBRID VEHICLES COMBINE FOR OVER 50% OF MAY NEW CAR MARKET

The Society of the Irish Motor Industry have released their official 231 new vehicle registrations statistics for May. New car registrations for the month of May were up 42.7% (7,557) when compared to May 2022 (5,295).

Registrations year to date are up 18.2% (74,542) on the same period last year (63,057).

For the month of May 1,725 new electric vehicles were registered compared to 743 in May 2022 (+132.2). So far this year 12,875 new electric cars have been registered in comparison to +55.9% (8,258) on the same period 2022. Electric Vehicles, Plug-in Hybrids and Hybrids continue to increase their market share, with a combined market share (year to date) now of 42.74%. Petrol remains dominant at 32.36%, with Diesel accounting for 22.17%,

Hybrid 17.51%, Electric 17.27% and Plug-in Electric Hybrid 7.96%. Brian Cooke, SIMI Director General said: "New car sales increased again in May when compared to the same month last year, and now new cars sales are edging closer to pre-COVID levels. Some easing of supply difficulties has resulted in improvement in delivery times, and this has led to a significant growth particularly in Electric Vehicle (EV) registrations. Year to date EV sales are now 56% ahead of last year, representing over 17% of the new car market. Nearly one-in-four new cars sold in May were electric, outperforming diesel sales for the month. Combine Electric Vehicles, Plug-in Hybrid Vehicles (PHEVs) and Hybrids, which use battery technology for driving, account for over 50% of the new car market for May."

BMW PARTNERS WITH PRIDE BLOCK PARTY

BMW Ireland is taking its first step in becoming active supporters for the LGBTQ+ community by partnering with Mother for its annual Pride Block Party, the biggest ticketed event at the Dublin LGBTQ+ Pride Festival.

This event annually raises vital funds for GCN (Gay Community News), Ireland's national LGBTQ+ publication - a valued free community resource and registered charity. This 'mother' of all Pride parties will be held from the June 23 to 25 at Collins Barracks in Dublin and will feature a BMW iX1 installation with the theme of #UnitedwithPride, BMW's global campaign to support LGBTQ+ community.

Speaking at the launch of the partnership, Helen Westby Managing Director for BMW Group Ireland, said: "Diversity is incredibly important for the BMW Group as a business. It is incredibly powerful, but for us to be successful we all need to take steps to challenge the status quo. We can do this by giving everyone the confidence, support, and a platform to share their ideas and perspectives.



(L-r) Lisa Connell co-founder of Mother and Helen Westby, Managing Director BMW Group Ireland.

GOWAN AUTO CONSOLIDATES BRANDS AT CITYWEST HQ

A headquarters in Dublin's Citywest has been unveiled by Gowan Auto, following the consolidation of nine major motor brands and the completion of a phased relocation of 129 staff. Gowan Auto has united its suite of car brands, teams and expertise and presented its expansive office space, to include a 110,000sq ft parts warehouse, a contemporary training academy, and an extensive marketing showroom. Equipped with 26 electric vehicle chargers, 123 car parking spaces, seven meeting rooms, and two training classrooms, the extensive new facilities have also seen the parts warehousing capacity significantly increase for the brands. The warehouse holds increased volumes of stock to ensure rapid parts availability for dealers, with up to three times daily deliveries direct to dealers.

Michael Dwan, Gowan Group Managing Director, said: "Backed by 53 years of steadfast motor industry expertise, the Gowan Auto rebrand and relocation are cornerstones to our clear vision for achieving success, together with our collective car brands, nationwide dealer networks, fleet, lease and car rental partners, and our suppliers. This transformation is part of our commitment to support our expanded brand portfolio, and to continuously enhance our services to our dealer networks, our end-customers, and the wider auto industry in Ireland."

A major expansion to the distribution business, the



Gowan Auto, a member of the family-owned holding company, the Gowan Group, has made a significant commercial investment in new premises in Citywest. Pictured with Gowan Auto staff at the front of the new HQ, are family members, L-R: Cristiana Hurley, Fiona Thomas, Maria Bourke, Michael Maughan and Gemma Smith Maughan.

consolidation and relocation have led to the sale of both the Honda building on the N7, and Gowan House in Dublin 12. Gowan holds more than 12.2% combined passenger car and light commercial market in Ireland in 2022, and is hoping for sustainable growth in the coming years.



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NEW EV BATTERY TEST PARTNERSHIP



Simon Acton of Next Eco Car and Andy Brooke of Maverick Diagnostics.

Maverick Diagnostics has announced a partnership with Irish EV sales and sourcing specialist Next Eco Car that sees the Irish company become a distributor of Aviloo, a ground-breaking independent battery test for EVs and plug-in hybrids.

A provider of original diagnostic tools and technical support, Maverick Diagnostics supplies Aviloo tests in the UK and has agreed to assist Next Eco Car with diagnostic assistance. Next Eco Car Managing Director, Simon Acton, said: "We had actually been trialling Aviloo Premium for 18 months, and we generated some awareness of its capabilities within the Irish EV community, but after connecting with Maverick Diagnostics' Andy Brooke, it was clear there were synergies and mutual benefits to a collaboration.

"We have a grasp of the Irish market and knowledge of the Aviloo product, not to mention the proximity to Irish customers, while Maverick has outstanding experience and knowledge of motor trade diagnostics tools."

The next step for Next Eco car is to grow its portfolio. It reports that Linders in Dublin and Crossey's Garage and Drysdale Motors, based in Lisburn and Dundonald respectively, have already signed-up.

SERFAC EXPANDS SONAX RANGE FOR CAR CARE SEASON

Serfac Limited has expanded its range from leading German car care brand Sonax just in time for the start of the lucrative car care season. New products include a recently-launched addition to the DIY Xtreme Ceramic detailing category as well as a comprehensive line-up of innovative bike care items. Based on a recently-developed sealing technology, the Xtreme series - Xtreme Ceramic Active Shampoo, Xtreme Ceramic Spray & Seal and Xtreme Ceramic Quick Detailer – has been expanded with the addition of Xtreme Ceramic Polish All-in-One. According to Serfac, all are revolutionary in terms of paintwork sealing technology and the Si-Carbon technology used in the formulas provides the highest level of hydrophobic effect (water beading), as well as making the car much easier to clean.

Gillian Fanning of Sonax distributors Serfac Limited comments: "With Sonax Xtreme Ceramic Polish All-in-One, Sonax have raised the bar for effective and quick paintwork care. This innovation combines the properties of highly effective polishes with the gloss and protection of the latest ceramic sealing agents. When used with the recommended 'P-Ball' polishing pad, the formulation achieves top performance and enhances paintwork that is weathered and superficially scratched or dulled."

This new product has been optimised for washing by hand, but Sonax experts have found that experienced users can also apply it effectively with a polishing machine. It's available in a 500ml bottle with a practical 'push-pull' dosing cap.

Gillian adds: "We're delighted to be able to offer the fantastic new Sonax Xtreme Ceramic Polish All-in-One formula to our customers. The Xtreme Ceramic products are innovative in that, unlike classic formulations, they do not contain any wax – they're based on a framework of compounds containing silicon."

Other recent innovations from Sonax include a bike cleaning and maintenance range which has been developed in response to the spike in bike ownership over the past couple of years.

"We're stocking a full range of Sonax Bike due to very significant growth in this category since the pandemic and this looks set to continue," said Gillian.

GS YUASA LAUNCHES PRO-SPEC RANGE OF MULTIPLE PURPOSE DEEP CYCLE BATTERIES

GS Yuasa, the leading battery manufacturer, recently launched its latest Pro-Spec range of multiple purpose deep cycle batteries. Distributed by Serfac Limited, the GS Yuasa Pro-Spec range has been specifically designed for durability and long lift in deep discharge use. Unique, state-of-the-art plate barrier prevention and separator systems minimise self-discharge and maximise both the out-of-use storage period and the number of recharge cycles,



providing more power and reliability, and prolonging the service life of the battery. Key features of the new Pro-Spec range include:

- vibration resistant;
- maintenance free;
- deep cycle; and,
- extended service life.

Applications include electric vehicles such as golf carts and mobility vehicles and warehouse equipment including fork lifts, access platforms and floor cleaners.

SIMI Training Courses

SIMI SKILLNET PROGRAMME



Details of some upcoming SIMI Skillnet subsidised courses planned for the coming months are listed below. Further information on all new courses is available on www.simi.ie.

Customer Service Excellence

Monday June 19 and Tuesday June 20



A practical and interactive online workshop, the course is designed for people who communicate directly with internal and external customers by telephone, video conference or face to face – and includes all levels of staff, showroom, frontline, retail, customer service, technical support, administration, reception etc.

TRAINER: Jill Tuite, Optimum Ltd

LOCATION: Online

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.30am-12.30pm each day

DURATION: Six hours

COST: Members: €123.00 incl. VAT; Non-Members: €147.60 incl. VAT

Effective Telephone Sales Techniques

Wednesday June 21

The aim of this online workshop is to help staff achieve a greater understanding of what motivates people to buy and become more effective in their ability to influence and communicate with customers using the telephone to grow sales. This workshop is designed for staff of all levels who

interact with customers in a sales, parts, aftersales or service advisor role.

TRAINER: Karen Sommerville, Call Focus.

LOCATION: Online

DAY SCHEDULE: Session 1: 09.30am-12.30pm, Session 2: 1.30pm-4.30pm

DURATION: Six hours

COST: Members: €86.10 incl. VAT; Non-Members: €110.70 incl. VAT

Aftersales Profitability Workshop

Tuesday June 27 and Wednesday June 28

Customers cannot avoid the necessity of servicing their car, but they can choose where to take it for work. Service/ Aftersales teams should be targeted to make a booking with every enquiry made and to maximise the sales opportunities presented while customers are in the dealership. This course is intended for Franchise and Independent Businesses - Dealer Principals, Owner Managers, Financial Controllers, Aftersales Managers, Service/Aftersales Teams.

TRAINER: Yellow Box Enterprises

LOCATION: Online

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.30am-12.30pm

DURATION: Two three-hour sessions

COST: €110.70 incl. VAT

Oscilloscope Operation & Signal Test Methods

Monday July 17 and Tuesday July 18

The oscilloscope is now a standard piece of diagnostics equipment for the modern automotive technician in the workshop. This course will enable the technician to competently operate an oscilloscope and use all its functions to aid in the diagnosis of vehicle systems. This course is essential for all technicians other than those who already use an oscilloscope regularly during vehicle system diagnosis work.

TRAINER: MKW Motors

LOCATION: MKW Motors, A6 Kingswood Business Park, Baldonnell Rd., Dublin 22

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.00am to 5.30pm each day

DURATION: 17 hours

COST: Members: €320; Non-Members: €370 (VAT not applicable)



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Teresa O'Neill, Network Manager on email: toneill@simi.ie or call + 353 1 6761690

Improving Customer Retention

Tuesday July 18 and Wednesday July 19



This training programme is designed to facilitate participants in implementing effective strategies, across all dealership activities, for increasing customer retention and capturing repeat business opportunities. This course is intended for Franchise & Independent Businesses - Dealer Principals, Owner Managers, Sales, Aftersales and Marketing Managers.

TRAINER: Yellow Box Enterprises

LOCATION: Online

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.30am-12.30pm each day

DURATION: Six hours

COST: Members: €110.70 incl. VAT; Non-Members: €147.60 incl. VAT

Managing the Aftersales Department

Thursday July 20 and Friday July 21

This new course has been designed to develop the skills and competencies of participants to confidently lead an Aftersales team in the Motor Industry, whilst ensuring an efficient and profitable Aftersales Department. It is intended for Franchise and independent Businesses - Dealer Principals, Owner Managers, Aftersales Managers.

TRAINER: Navigate Solutions Ireland Ltd

LOCATION: Online

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.30am-12.30pm each day

DURATION: Six hours

COST: Members: €172.20 incl. VAT; Non-Members: €209.10 incl. VAT

Workshop Supervisor/Management

Thursday August 24 and Friday August 25



The aim of this programme is to provide participants with the skills and knowledge to perform effectively and efficiently as a Workshop Supervisor/Manager in the Motor Industry.

TRAINER: Navigate Solutions Ireland Ltd

LOCATION: Online

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.30am-12.30pm each day

DURATION: Six hours

COST: Members: €172.20 incl. VAT; Non-Members: €209.10 incl. VAT

Adapting Vehicle Sales to the Online Environment

Tuesday September 5 and Wednesday September 6



Recent societal changes have accelerated the growth of the online marketplace where customers considering making a purchase can, at their leisure, readily gather product information, absorb detailed vehicle model specifications and easily conduct vehicle price comparisons. This training programme is designed to aid vehicle sales executives in upskilling and taking advantage of the opportunities to promote and transact vehicle sales online.

TRAINER: Yellow Box Enterprises

LOCATION: Online

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.30am-12.30pm each day

DURATION: Six hours

COST: Members: €110.70 incl. VAT; Non-Members: €147.60 incl. VAT

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Teresa O'Neill, Network Manager on email: toneill@simi.ie
or call + 353 1 6761690

VSH28 - Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Systems - Level 4

Tuesday September 19, Wednesday September 20 and Thursday September 21



This is the IMI Level 4 Award in the Diagnosis, Testing and Repair of Electric/Hybrid Vehicles and Components (IMI 601/2938/4)

The qualification is designed for motor vehicle professionals, who maintain and repair Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEV) technologies, including HEV drive and batteries. The course will give technicians the knowledge and skills to be able to work on or near LIVE high voltage HEV. This course contains information for carrying out diagnosis, repairs, and replacement of high voltage components whilst working safely.

TRAINER: MKW Motors

LOCATION: MKW Motors, A6 Kingswood Business Park, Baldonnell Rd., Dublin 22

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.am to 5.30pm each day

DURATION: 25.5 hours (three working days)

COST: Members: €720; Non-Members: €800 (VAT not applicable)

Understanding VAT and VRT

Thursday September 28



Significant changes to the treatment of VAT in the Motor Industry have happened in recent years and to avoid costly mistakes, it is essential that you and your staff are aware of the correct procedures and are up to date with VAT & VRT. This event is suitable for accounts and sales staff in the Retail Motor Industry.

TRAINER: Jimmy Rynhart, RCR Business Services

LOCATION: Online

DAY SCHEDULE: 10.00am to 12.30pm

DURATION: Half day

COST: €221.40 incl. VAT

SIMI Skillnet is co-funded by Skillnet Ireland and network companies. Skillnet Ireland is funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Teresa O'Neill, Network Manager on email: toneill@simi.ie
or call + 353 1 6761690

Motor Industry encourages women to make a difference



WOMEN @ 

Bank of Ireland 

Over 170 women attended the annual Women@SIMI event in the Conrad Hotel, Dublin.

The Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI) hosted its 8th annual Women@SIMI event in conjunction with its sponsor Bank of Ireland, recently in the Conrad Hotel, Dublin. The event was attended by over 170 professional women from a variety of different sectors within the Motor Industry in Ireland. Delivering an impressive panel of guest speakers, Mary Kennedy, Master of Ceremonies, welcomed Louise Grubb CEO of Trivium Vet, a serial life science entrepreneur, with a track record in founding successful businesses, along with Norah Casey, award-winning TV and broadcast journalist, entrepreneur, and human rights campaigner.

Antonia Hendron, President of SIMI, addressing attendees, said: "It's wonderful to see so many successful women here from different sectors of our Industry. Our Industry is an area where female employees have been historically under-represented, and I am pleased to say this is changing. The SIMI's Management board has changed in composition with a representation of six female leaders now sitting at the boardroom table and I am honoured to stand before you today as your President."

Ms. Hendron remarked that events like Women@SIMI are important to create a space where professional women



**Antonia Hendron,
SIMI President.**

can have the opportunity to network and learn from each other as well as hearing from other successful people of different backgrounds and industries.

Reflecting on her own experience Antonia commented: "By being forced out of my comfort zone, it has led me to meet and make some incredible connections and friends from across the Motor Industry." She also encouraged attendees to make a difference and help shape the industry's direction by getting involved with the Society.

Guest Speaker Louise Grubb remarked on the importance of innovation, thinking outside of the box to create new opportunities, encouraging your team to express themselves, while been prepared to pivot when the road ahead changes, but above all don't be afraid to take that opportunity to start in the first place.

Derek McDermott Managing Director of Bank of Ireland Finance commented: "We are making good strides for women in both the Motor and Banking industries. Bank of Ireland was the first Irish bank to publish a Gender Pay Gap Report in 2020 which highlights the percentage difference between what men and women are paid on average. This year, the Bank introduced a menopause support policy that includes paid leave. This will help us continue to build a work environment in which everyone is treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. These are really important initiatives, but I would argue that there is still a long way to go in the whole area of gender diversity and in ensuring that there are strong opportunities for women across both industries. 'Women@SIMI' represents an important event for women in the Motor Industry and one we are very proud to sponsor."

The final speaker, Norah Casey added: "It's not what I did in my life that changed me, it's what life did to me. Negativity can propel you, but look inside yourself and you will find the resilience to move forward. Don't be afraid to create something new and different. There is a women's agenda around cars that needs to be articulated, there needs to be a strategy about it, because it is incredibly important to us. There is no public transport that replaces the safety that cars give to women."



Pictured (L-R): Louise Grubb CEO Trivium VET, Mary Kennedy Master of Ceremonies, Norah Casey Broadcaster, Entrepreneur & Human Rights Campaigner.



Eimear Walshe, Sophie Eustane, Lynn McHugh, Alicia O'Connor, Carla Wentzel (Group Managing Director), Laura Daly, Grace Teeling and Caroline Heathcote of Volkswagen Group Ireland.



Michelle Hayden and Julie Garvey of Willis Towers Watson.



Sylvia Hart, Emma Toner of Gowan Auto, Cathy Comerford and Ailish Connolly of Carzone.



Michelle Heneghan and Celine May of FirstStop.



Meghashree Rao, Tenzin Palbar and Preeti Bhardwaj of Carzone.



Jennifer Keegan, Patricia Garbacka, Sabrina Murphy and Vicky Reilly of LKQ Euro Car Parts.



Stefania Celesia, Maria Spillane, Yvonne Browne, Niamh Ferguson and Jennifer Kilduff of AA Ireland.



Sarah Brooks and Catherine McCarron, Bank of Ireland.



Tara Byrne, Shauna Vize and Aisling McCabe of Enterprise Rent A Car.



Karla Clifford, Liz O'Gorman and Lynn Boucher of Renault Ireland.



Xiao Ting Virrmauv, Maria O'Mahony, Sonia McCormack and Jill Woods, of Kia Ireland.



Roisin Welsh, Sandra O'Reilly, Bernie Clare, Dearbhla Havelin and Caroline Whelan of E.P. Mooney's.

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Teamwork is the key to MSL Cork's sales team's success



MSL Cork is the winner of Franchise Sales Operation of the Year at the 2023 SIMI Awards. General Manager Liam Mullane says that collaboration and communication are key to a sales team's success.

Liam Mullane says that while the MSL Cork staff have exceptional sales skills, teamwork is also a key factor in their recent win.

"Teamwork and collaboration with other departments within the business are essential for an effective sales department. Our sales team works closely with the service, parts, valeting and administration teams to ensure seamless customer experiences. To have a high performance sales team you need to have all other departments operating at a similar level. The support of other departments is integral to the success of the sales department and the overall functioning of the business. Collaboration, communication, and a shared commitment to customer satisfaction are essential elements that drive the effectiveness of the sales department in conjunction with other departments."

Liam also maintains that having a customer-centric approach is part of the dealership's philosophy: "We prioritise delivering exceptional customer service and strive to exceed customer expectations," he says. "Our sales team actively listens to customers, understands their needs, and provides personalised solutions. Building strong relationships and fostering trust with customers is a key focus."

"We have a well-defined and consistently implemented sales process at MSL Cork. This ensures that all customer interactions follow a structured approach, providing a seamless experience from initial contact to finalising the sale." Other factors that Liam believes have contributed to the sales

team's success include continuous training and development, a culture of teamwork and collaboration and realistic, but challenging, performance targets.

Outside of meeting rooms and showrooms, the MSL Cork brand helps its staff and sales teams meet their targets. "MSL Cork has an esteemed reputation for meeting and exceeding the highest level of standards within the Mercedes-Benz brand," says Liam. "Our strong brand image and reputation attract customers and instill confidence in their decision to choose us as their preferred dealership."

Benefits of being a Mercedes-Benz Franchise

Like many dealerships across the country, MSL Cork is part of a franchise, indeed they have won the Mercedes-Benz Dealership of the Year Award for three consecutive years. Clearly, the dealership is no stranger to awards. Liam maintains that the brand recognition is a huge advantage: "Mercedes-Benz is a globally recognised and respected automotive brand with a rich history and a reputation for luxury, performance, and innovation. As a franchise, the dealership benefits from the brand's strong reputation and brand equity, which can attract customers and instill confidence in their purchase decisions.

"A brand's strength is bolstered by additional investment, such as staff training," he adds: "Mercedes-Benz provides comprehensive training programmes for our dealership staff, including sales, service, and technical training. This ensures

that our teams are knowledgeable about the brand, its products, and the latest technologies. Additionally, Mercedes-Benz offers technical support and access to diagnostic tools and software, helping the dealership provide excellent service and customer satisfaction."

Dynamic Customer Behaviour

Any retailer, including a car dealership, is subject to the whims of the market, whether it's political changes, inflation issues, a cost-of-living crisis, or all of the above. Additionally, online research has changed the nature of car buying in recent years.

"Consumer behaviour is a dynamic and ever-evolving aspect, especially in a volatile and rapidly changing market," admits Liam. "Therefore, it has become increasingly crucial for businesses to provide a tailored and personalised car buying experience to meet the evolving needs and preferences of consumers. While online research has become more prevalent, it is important to note that a significant majority of customers still adopt a blended approach, combining both online research and in-person interactions throughout the purchasing journey.

"In today's digital age, consumers have access to a wealth of information at their fingertips, allowing them to gather extensive knowledge about various car models, features, pricing, and reviews. This increased online research empowers consumers to make more informed decisions and arrive at dealerships with a clear understanding of their preferences and expectations." While there are countless online tools at a customer's disposal, Liam maintains that the act of buying a car still demands a hands-on experience. "It is essential to recognise that the car buying process is still predominantly an offline experience," he says, "where customers value the tangible aspects such as test drives, personal interactions with sales professionals, and the ability to physically assess the vehicle's condition. These offline elements play a crucial role in building trust, addressing any concerns or queries, and ultimately influencing the final purchase decision."

The B Word

As the UK's closest neighbours, ramifications from Brexit were inevitable. We're now years after the referendum, and the impact is still felt. MSL Cork is 50% used and 50% new cars, with the used car market especially impacted by Brexit. "The impact of Brexit on the used vehicle market continues to be evident," Liam acknowledges, "posing challenges related to the importation of specific vehicles based on their age and country of origin. The post-Brexit regulations and trade agreements have introduced complexities and restrictions that affect the sourcing and availability of certain vehicles. "The United Kingdom, in particular, has encountered its own set of challenges in terms of stock availability as a direct consequence of the pandemic. Disruptions in the global supply chain, temporary closures of manufacturing plants, and fluctuations in demand have created a varying and unpredictable market environment which are still having an impact. "In recent times, our business, like many others, has faced



The SIMI award-winning MSL Cork team.

notable cost escalations across various operational aspects. One area that has particularly contributed to these increases is related to energy expenses. In response to this upward trend, we have proactively undertaken measures to effectively manage and mitigate these escalating costs."

Current Affairs: MSL Cork and EVs

Dealerships across the country are experiencing demand for electric vehicles and hybrids, and MSL Cork is no different. "Approximately 40% of our sales comprise electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs)," says Liam. "However, it is worth noting that interest in our traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles continues to remain robust. As a customer-centric organisation, we prioritise actively listening to our customers' needs and requirements, ensuring that we assist them in selecting the most suitable vehicle for their specific demands. "The sustained popularity of both EVs/PHEVs and ICE vehicles demonstrates the diverse preferences and considerations of our customer base. We recognise the importance of acknowledging individual requirements, whether it be factors such as driving range, charging infrastructure, environmental impact, or personal driving preferences. Our sales team engages in in-depth conversations with customers, actively seeking to understand their unique needs and guiding them through the selection process."

He adds: "By taking a personalised approach and providing comprehensive information about the features, benefits, and trade-offs of different vehicle types, we aim to empower our customers to make well-informed decisions. Our commitment to assisting customers in selecting the correct vehicle for their needs extends to ensuring transparency, offering test drives, and providing ongoing support even after the purchase is made.

"Ultimately, our goal is to offer a wide range of options and deliver exceptional customer service to cater to the diverse interests and requirements of our clientele."

A positive outlook for Rathcoole Commercial



The Rathcoole Commercial team: Joseph Robinson, Michael Gibbs, Karen Byrne, Sarah Cooke and business owner Paul Cooke.

Rathcoole Commercial is the winner of the SIMI Commercial Vehicle Operation of the Year award for 2023. Director Paul Cooke spoke to Irish Motor Management and discussed how the CV operation has grown in the last 12 months and how he sees it developing over the next few years.

2023 has been a busy year for Rathcoole Commercial. As the garage has been growing, the company has found so are its customers' businesses. According to Paul Cooke, Director, Rathcoole Commercial: "This means we are now managing larger fleets of vehicles and really building a long-term relationship with our customers."

"With COVID now in the distance, all of our customers' businesses have returned to normal operations, often with a lot of pent-up demand for services which then filters down to our garage."

Rentals in demand

But uncertainty remains in the market in terms of economic outlook and rising interest rates, he notes. "Many customers are now opting to rent vehicles which fits in very well with our business model – we rent a wide range of commercial vehicles from small vans, crew cabs, and large refrigerated vehicles."

There have been many highlights for the business over the past 12 months but in particular Paul has welcomed the return of normality: "The return to normal operating conditions has been great to see both from a business perspective and also from point of view of the health and wellbeing of staff and customers."

"Our business outlook has been very positive, in particular

our van rental business has seen double digit growth in the last 12 months. Our business model of providing service for all customers commercial vehicle needs works well where we can service vehicles, complete CVRT and rent vehicles."

Back to normal

The main focus over the last couple of years has been getting back to normal in a post-COVID environment while managing all the new dynamics – staff shortages, rising energy costs and supply shortages. "We are now at a point where we have a full team recruited and we are seeing much better supply levels over the last six months."

"In relation to supply chain issues, this was a big problem in terms of delivery of new vehicles to our rentals business in 2022. But this has improved greatly over the course of 2023, and every month our rentals business is onboarding brand new vehicles."

Paul adds: "In terms of parts, generally we are not as impacted by this – we have a large selection of suppliers we can use as we are not tied to a particular dealer or parts supplier. We also have a large selection of stock on site that means we can access parts quickly. While small pockets of delays still exist for very specific parts, we see this as an area that is now under control."

Rising energy costs remain a concern and Paul welcomes



Van rental business has seen double digit growth at Rathcoole Commercial in the last year.

government supports in this regard. "We are also planning on installing solar panels this year to help manage energy costs into the future."

More growth ahead

Looking ahead, he is optimistic: "We expect our business to continue to grow at pace. Our location in a busy industrial park close to the M7 and M50 means we are continually gaining new customers. There are a lot of new

commercial buildings in the area around Greenogue and this is all positive news for Rathcoole Commercial.

"At an industry level, the next 10-year RSA reauthorisation process is underway. At Rathcoole Commercial our continuous improvement and growth programme means we are already fully compliant with the new regulations. We intend to install a new LGV test lane in line with the new authorisation programme."

Growing the business

Rathcoole Commercial was incorporated in May 2014. Owner Paul Cooke spotted a gap in the market to provide an end-to-end service for commercial vehicles, catering for customer needs ranging from service, hire and CVRT to sales. Paul started his career as a construction plant fitter and spent more than 15 years running a range of transport and construction businesses both within Ireland and internationally.

Paul sums up Rathcoole's business mission: "As one of Ireland's largest CVR testing centres and commercial vehicle garages, we provide a range of servicing and testing solutions for commercial vehicles – from small vans to HGVs – ensuring roadworthy compliance and minimising costly vehicle downtime. Also featuring a large range of our own commercial vehicles, we provide short

and long-term rentals."

Rathcoole Commercial operates a large ISO 9001 certified workshop and can service all types of commercial vehicles including DAF, Ford, Renault, Mercedes, MAN, Volkswagen etc. Paul says: "Our technicians are experts in their field with access to the best tools and diagnostic equipment. We also offer a fleet maintenance service providing end-to-end service for the customer's entire vehicle fleet." A commitment to high quality service is a key feature of the Rathcoole business, according to Paul: "While there are many specialist commercial workshops few offer our level of end-to-end service at the convenient hours we offer – 7am to 11pm. We are a customer-focused business and the customer has been at the heart of every decision we have made; we believe this is the key to our success."

TOP 10 SELLING CARS 2023

Hyundai Tucson **3,116** 4.2%Kia Sportage **2,389** 3.2%Toyota Corolla **2,329** 3.1%Toyota Yaris Cross **2,059** 2.8%Volkswagen ID.4 **1,955** 2.6%Toyota C-HR **1,923** 2.6%Toyota Yaris **1,832** 2.5%Nissan Qashqai **1,590** 2.1%Škoda Octavia **1,524** 2.0%Toyota RAV **1,401** 1.9%

NEW PASSENGER CAR REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/05/23 - 31/05/23	01/01/23- 31/05/23	Market share 2023 %
Alfa Romeo	6	46	0.06%
Audi	309	3263	4.38%
BMW	423	3021	4.05%
BYD	74	95	0.13%
Citroën	124	807	1.08%
Cupra	99	830	1.11%
Dacia	313	3370	4.52%
DS	8	146	0.20%
Fiat	41	268	0.36%
Ford	300	3979	5.34%
Honda	20	157	0.21%
Hyundai	461	6937	9.31%
Jaguar	5	58	0.08%
Jeep	9	50	0.07%
Kia	651	5667	7.60%
Land Rover	43	382	0.51%
Lexus	27	349	0.47%
Mazda	32	803	1.08%
Mercedes-Benz	181	1962	2.63%
MG	128	474	0.64%
Mini	63	443	0.59%
Nissan	172	2692	3.61%
Opel	202	2049	2.75%
Ora	2	23	0.03%
Peugeot	235	2811	3.77%
Polestar	20	200	0.27%
Porsche	29	308	0.41%
Private Import	10	33	0.04%
Renault	283	2284	3.06%
Seat	174	1826	2.45%
Škoda	493	6460	8.67%
Ssangyong	3	53	0.07%
Subaru	6	29	0.04%
Suzuki	165	1250	1.68%
Tesla	232	1134	1.52%
Toyota	1155	10605	14.23%
Volkswagen	800	8232	11.04%
Volvo	259	1440	1.93%
Daf	0	6	0.01%
Total May 2023	7557	74542	
Total May 2022	5295	63057	
Change 2023 - 2022	2262	11485	
% Change 2023 - 2022	42.72%	18.21%	

TOP SELLING CARS MAY 2023

Position	Model	Units sold	Market share %
1	Toyota Corolla	348	4.6
2	Hyundai Tucson	311	4.1
3	Kia Sportage	263	3.5
4	Volkswagen ID.4	243	3.2
5	Toyota Rav	201	2.7

Position	Model	Units sold	Market share %
6	Toyota Yaris	189	2.5
7	Tesla Model Y	165	2.2
8	Škoda Octavia	155	2.1
9	Toyota Yaris Cross	151	2.0
10	Dacia Sandero	148	2.0



NEW LIGHT COMMERCIAL REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/05 - 31/05	01/01 - 31/05	% Share
Audi	0	1	0.01%
Citroën	220	946	5.82%
Dacia	26	80	0.49%
Fiat	99	760	4.68%
Ford	531	4121	25.35%
Fuso	19	80	0.49%
Hyundai	0	50	0.31%
Isuzu	10	55	0.34%
Iveco	6	154	0.95%
Kia	0	7	0.04%
Land Rover	45	236	1.45%
LDV	5	20	0.12%
Man	9	69	0.42%
Maxus	23	55	0.34%
Mercedes-Benz	127	621	3.82%
Mitsubishi	0	0	0.00%
Nissan	33	353	2.17%
Opel	140	1050	6.46%
Peugeot	189	906	5.57%
Renault	342	2726	16.77%
Ssangyong	8	77	0.47%
Subaru	0	0	0.00%
Toyota	439	1922	11.82%
Volkswagen	221	1822	11.21%
Private Import	2	33	0.20%
Alfa Romeo	34	111	0.68%
Total May 2023	2528	16255	
Total May 2022	1435	12395	
Change 2023 - 2022	1093	3860	
% Change 2023 - 2022	76.17%	31.14%	

BUSES/COACHES REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/05 - 31/05	01/01 - 31/05	% Share
DAF	5	23	11.79%
Higer	1	8	4.10%
Isuzu	0	5	2.56%
Iveco	0	9	4.62%
MAN	0	0	0.00%
Mercedes-Benz	0	1	0.51%
Scania	0	6	3.08%
Sunsundegui	0	1	0.51%
Tekaydinlar	3	3	1.54%
VDL DAF	0	16	8.21%
Volvo	10	58	29.74%
Wrightbus	0	0	0.00%
Yutong	0	5	2.56%
Private Import	19	60	30.77%
Total May 2023	38	195	
Total May 2022	24	193	
Change 2023 - 2022	14	2	
% Change 2023 - 2022	58.33%	1.04%	

NEW HEAVY COMMERCIAL REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/05 - 31/05	01/01 - 31/05	% Share
DAF	44	215	15.10%
Dennis Eagle	1	4	0.28%
Fuso	1	17	1.19%
Isuzu	14	52	3.65%
Iveco	2	38	2.67%
MAN	10	81	5.69%
Mercedes-Benz	17	125	8.78%
Renault	28	188	13.20%
Scania	56	391	27.46%
Volvo	39	291	20.44%
Private Import	5	22	1.54%
Total May 2023	217	1424	
Total May 2022	194	1050	
Change 2023 - 2022	23	374	
% Change 2023 - 2022	11.86%	35.62%	

The latest statistics are available online at:
<https://stats.beepbeep.ie>

First Citizen aim to Deliver 'Best in Class' Financial Advice



The 'one stop shop' phrase is sometimes overused, but when it comes to purchasing a vehicle here in Ireland, the motor dealership is really well equipped to provide just that.

Besides the obvious expertise expected in product knowledge, the majority of dealerships in this jurisdiction are registered as Credit Intermediaries with the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC). This means they are authorised to introduce a financial solution to car buyers for their purchase.

It's vital that qualified personnel in the showrooms keep up to date with the knowledge needed to offer proper advice on financial products. They are obliged to maintain appropriate status with relevant bodies such as the Institute of Banking, to ensure they meet the Central Bank of Ireland's Minimum Competency Code for selling or advising on consumer credit agreements.

For the past number of years, First Citizen Finance have developed and delivered a bespoke and accredited training programme to Irish motor dealers to assist them in achieving the necessary minimum requirements in this area.

The training series takes place nationwide from October to December each year and the high uptake by Dealers demonstrates a very strong commitment from the Irish Motor Industry to ensure consumers here are receiving the best financial advice when it comes to the provision of asset/motor finance. With these free-to-attend events proving very popular, particularly in recent years in a rapidly

changing environment, motor dealers are advised to reach out early to their local First Citizen Finance representatives to secure their place on the course for 2023.

First Citizen: origins and development

First Citizen Finance DAC was established in Dublin in October 2012 by the former senior management team of Permanent tsb Finance, led by Chris Hanlon. Prior to its sale in 2012, this management team ran the largest consumer finance company in Ireland, with a market share in excess of 35 per cent. At its peak, the IT platform was processing circa 100,000 applications per annum for credit in Ireland across a range of diverse products including car finance, agricultural machinery, office equipment, computers and film finance investment. This team implemented and managed 14 different motor private label/co-operation agreements over a 20-year period.

In 2023, the company continues to grow and expand its offering to the Irish market with finance solutions for consumers and non-consumers in motor, agri, SME equipment and CRE finance. Since recommencing lending in 2014, the First Citizen says its team has advanced in excess of €1.5bn with assets under management now approaching €700m.

Finance for just about every type of asset

We are a dedicated asset finance provider in the Motor, Agri, SME and Commercial Real Estate sectors operating in the Republic of Ireland. We can cater for consumers and non-consumers across our hire purchase and leasing product options. We have a nationwide team ready to assist you.

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WARNING: You may have to pay charges if you pay off a hire-purchase agreement early.

WARNING: If you do not meet the repayments on your hire-purchase agreement, your account will go into arrears. This may affect your credit rating, which may limit your ability to access credit, a hire-purchase agreement, a consumer-hire agreement or a BNPL (Buy Now Pay Later) agreement in the future.

Lending terms & conditions apply. A Joint Hirer may be required. Applicants must be 18 years of age or over. Calls may be recorded. First Citizen Finance DAC is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

First 
Citizen
FINANCE

Finance Ireland aims to minimise red tape



Finance Ireland Motor & Leasing says it has helped over 150,000 Irish consumers and thousands of Irish SMEs fund the purchase of their new and used cars and LCVs, providing more than €2bn of finance and, in the process, becoming Ireland's largest non-bank motor finance provider. According to a company spokesperson: "We are an established business and our national network includes over 800 of Ireland's most trusted franchise and independent car dealers. Our application turnaround times are market leading. Our underwriters can assess an application in as little as 15 minutes, meaning the car buyer could be driving away in a new car by the next working day. We understand dealerships and all our credit decisions are made locally by ourselves."

Finance Ireland Motor & Leasing was established as a dealer-focused motor finance provider in 2010 and

commenced writing new business in February 2011. The spokesperson commented: "We rapidly became a credible alternative to the established finance providers, building a growing market share and developing a flexible and innovative service offering."

"Our network throughout Ireland includes over 800 franchise and independent dealers and we have firmly established ourselves as Ireland's largest independent finance company. The management team at Finance Ireland Motor & Leasing has many years' experience and extensive knowledge of the motor finance industry."

Finance Ireland Motor & Leasing is part of Finance Ireland Ltd, a privately-owned financial services group, with businesses that specialise in asset finance and leasing, commercial mortgages, agri finance and residential mortgages, as well as motor finance.



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Stay agile with wholesale stock funding

Demand for quality used stock is as fierce as ever and dealers have their work cut out to ensure their forecourts stay stocked. NextGear Capital believes that wholesale stock funding can help.

Vicky Gardner, Director of Sales Development at NextGear Capital, explains how wholesale stock funding can play a role in helping dealers buy the stock they need and realise their ambitions: "From speaking to dealers it's clear their number one issue is stock scarcity. There is a need to be agile in today's market, not least having the basics in place, such as access to funding, that gives them the freedom and confidence to buy when the right vehicle comes along. I believe NextGear Capital offers something different. We've built a funding product that meets the specific needs of dealers, allowing them to be where the stock is.

"With NextGear Capital you get more freedom. It's not like a traditional loan that comes with fixed payment terms, or other wholesale funders that restrict where you buy or have the expectation of reciprocal consumer finance.

"Our proposition is very simple: fund 100% of the vehicle and associated fees, from the places you choose to buy, whenever you want to. We are extremely aware that there are inevitable ebbs and flows in the automotive market, so you only pay for what you're using, full stop. The secondary benefit is that it frees up your cash by not having it tied up in the metal on your forecourt. This can be used for the purpose of providing



Vicky Gardner of NextGear Capital.

stability, but more commonly we see dealers using it to stock more vehicles or invest in other ways to grow their business – be it facilities, people or marketing. It can have a transformational effect."



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Be ready to buy, wherever the right stock is.

Competition for quality used stock remains as fierce as ever, so it's important to be agile and ready to buy when the right vehicle comes along. That's why we've supported more than **1,700 dealers** with the freedom of **100% funding**, regardless of the source. That means if you want instant funds to buy from an auction, trade or wholesale source, we've got you covered.



Stay agile with NextGear Capital.

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Tackling economic challenges effectively

Michael Neary, Corporate Finance Partner, Grant Thornton, looks at inflation, supply chain issues, and other challenges from a financial management perspective.



Persistent disruptions in the vehicle manufacturing supply chain have resulted in a lack of supply of new and used vehicles in the market, leading to higher price tags and postponements for buyers. Despite rising borrowing costs, delivery delays and inflation, new passenger car registrations are up 16.45% in Q1 2023 compared to Q1 2022. Given the factors listed above, as well as market volatility and weak consumer confidence, it comes as no surprise that Q1 car sales figures are still c. 9.42% behind that of pre-COVID-19 levels (58,084 passenger car registrations in Q1 2022 vs. 64,126 registrations in Q1 2019).

Supply chain challenges are also expected to remain throughout 2023. Therefore, dealerships must place significant importance on effective financial management in both the short term and long term.

For the remainder of 2023, the automotive industry is anticipated to experience limited growth in terms of vehicle registration and sales. However, production is likely to improve as manufacturers gain access to a greater supply of raw materials and semiconductors, leading to a gradual rise in vehicle production. As a result, the primary objective this year will be cost control amid increasing inflation. Maintaining a strong cash flow is essential for sustaining a solid position within the automotive market.

Cost control

With inflation causing an increase in operating costs, it is essential to manage expenses carefully. In the current economic climate, prioritising effective cost management is essential for sustaining profitability. The increasing competition in the market intensifies the pressure on management's profit margins. To counter this, companies must concentrate on reducing expenses as much as possible. Assessing both fixed and variable costs will allow businesses to trim expenses in the short term while simultaneously developing a more efficient operational model for the long term.

Although the immediate concern is reducing overheads, management should avoid making decisions that compromise their long-term prospects. It is vital to meticulously evaluate cost-cutting measures in terms of their value to the organisation. It might be beneficial to examine overheads, such as insurance and utilities, to identify additional value opportunities.

Key Performance Indicators

Companies in the automotive sector must evaluate their performance using a range of key performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs reveal the business's performance compared to previous years and budget expectations. Essential



KPIs may encompass revenue, gross profit, EBITDA margin, and interest expenses. Tracking these KPIs can identify potential issues early and in a cost-efficient manner. For example, a review of EBITDA margin may highlight that certain operating costs are increasing disproportionately in comparison to the overall business or a review of your debt obligations may highlight that you do not have the appropriate debt mix (i.e. too much short-term debt, permanently in overdraft).

Cash flow control

Evaluating cash flow needs in advance and devising cost-effective strategies to address them is essential. To enhance your cash planning, consider the following:

- Establish weekly cash flow reporting;
- Maintain a short-term cash flow forecast, such as a rolling 13-week forecast;
- Develop a long-term cash flow projection model to assess seasonal effects and potential cash deficiencies.

Tighten the working capital cycle

Managing working capital effectively is a crucial aspect for many businesses to enhance cash flow. A substantial portion of a company's cash flows originates from monthly fluctuations in working capital components, including inventory, accounts receivable, accounts payable, and tax liabilities. By preserving profit margins and efficiently managing working capital, businesses can foster stronger cash flows.

Especially during periods of economic difficulty, effectively managing daily cash flow is critical for a business's survival. It is essential to anticipate cash flow needs and devise plans to address them in the most cost-efficient way. For instance, promptly collecting accounts receivable should always be prioritised, but it becomes particularly important when the economy is slow, and people are holding onto their money for longer, leading to a gradual decline of cash coming into your business and potentially hindering your ability to cover short-term expenses.

To ensure that a company maintains adequate cash flow to meet short-term operational costs and debt obligations, businesses must adopt a sound working capital management policy. By maintaining profit margins and managing working capital effectively, businesses can improve cash flow, which in turn enables reinvestment and business expansion.

Maintaining a good relationship with your bank

Maintaining strong relationships with banking and leasing partners is crucial, especially during challenging times, as it can create opportunities to positively impact cash flow. Such opportunities may include:

- Pursuing repayment moratoriums or interest-only periods;
- Requesting higher facility limits;
- Investigating sale and leaseback options; and
- Leveraging unencumbered assets to secure new facilities.

Plan for contingencies

Revise your Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) approach and cash flow estimates by prioritising adaptability. In uncertain times, rely on your financial forecasts to perform 'what-if' analyses, exploring the potential impacts of inflation under different scenarios (e.g., 15% wage increase, 30% revenue delays and inventory build-up due to supply chain disruptions). Utilising "what-if" analyses allows dealers to assess the effects on cash flow across multiple scenarios and develop risk mitigation strategies through preventive measures.

Stay informed

It is crucial to stay informed, keeping up to date with economic trends and indicators allows businesses to anticipate potential challenges and adapt accordingly. A notable economic indicator to pay attention to is the ECB interest rate and subsequent future potential interest rate hikes. As interest rates rise, borrowing costs for both consumers tend to increase, which could lead to a decrease in consumer spending. By staying up to date with macroeconomic developments and understanding the implications of interest rate fluctuations, dealers can make informed decisions and implement appropriate strategies to navigate through any adverse effects on consumer spending. The ECB is expected to hike rates by a further 0.25% next month to assist their efforts in combatting inflation. While inflation is expected to loosen its grip on the economy over the rest of 2023, there is still considerable uncertainty in the outlook and consumers remain cautious. Consumer-facing sectors, still working through input cost increases, must seek to strike a balance between how much of supply chain and input cost pressures can be passed onto consumers when wage growth is failing to keep pace with inflation. This will be a finely balanced judgement call that will require robust financial scenario planning and market insights.

AFTERMARKET



DIAGNOSTICS

Delphi Technologies introduces next generation of diagnostics

Diagnostics continue to evolve at a rapid pace. Here, we look at some of the most innovative technologies available to Irish garages and workshops.



The BlueTech VCI unit.

The BlueTech VCI unit brings to life new integrations such as CAN FD for improved, modern diagnostics with 3 CAN channels, and DoIP for the latest vehicle functions, such as telematics and ADAS, according to Delphi Technologies. The BlueTech VCI offers a full security gateway for diagnostics and repair on a wide range of vehicles. Manufacturers such as VAG, Mercedes, Fiat and Renault all now lock their diagnostic ports, meaning a garage has to register and set-up individual accounts for access and pay ongoing fees. With the BlueTech

VCI system, Delphi Technologies says, you only need to complete one registration process for full diagnostic access to cars from these manufacturers and the ongoing cost is included in your annual subscription.

The new BlueTech VCI puts the power of next generation technology in the technician's hands, Delphi Technologies states. The new VCI combines a variety of workshop essentials in one tool, with flexible functionality and wide application coverage which is always growing.

Intuitive software

It has a clear icon display on top of the unit, but also a colour coded function lighting which is viewable from any angle as the technician moves around the vehicle. The intuitive software and licensing allows the workshop to service their precise customer base in one VCI, covering passenger, light, and heavy duty. Delphi Technologies says that, whether it is a simple service reset or a complex diagnostic interrogation, BlueTech VCI is a dedicated resource for the workshop to unlock increased workshop productivity and revenue opportunities.

**Delphi
Technologies**

by **BorgWarner**

BlueTech VCI DS180

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Diagnostic solution from Bosch

ESI[tronic] 2.0 Online is the latest diagnostic software for workshops from Bosch. Diagnosis in workshops is becoming increasingly important for professional service and efficient repair.



Access for active diagnostic work on new vehicle models can be a challenge for workshops.

According to Bosch, its efficient ECU diagnostics will guide you step by step to the cause of the fault and provide you with all the information you need to service and repair the vehicle. In addition, hotline and training experts are available to assist with complex diagnostic and repair cases.

In addition, ESI [tronic] 2.0 Online provides a solution for the restricted access to diagnostic functions on new vehicle models, according to Bosch.

To protect the vehicle electronics of new vehicles, the electronics are equipped with a secure diagnostic access. Active diagnostic work, such as calibrating driver assistance systems, is usually then no longer possible. This presents workshops with technical and administrative challenges, because vehicle manufacturers sometimes rely on individual security solutions with different access requirements and payment concepts, for example.

Uncomplicated access

To deal with these challenges, as part of its ESI[tronic] 2.0 Online diagnostic software, Bosch offers Secure Diagnostic Access (SDA). Bosch says this central, integrated, and standardised function provides fast, uncomplicated access to secure vehicle data from participating vehicle manufacturers.

Centralised access with the Bosch ID is possible after one-time registration and partial online user identification at Bosch. The personal Bosch ID can also be used for a variety of other Bosch applications in private and professional environments. To use Secure Diagnostic Access, it is also necessary to have a KTS 560, KTS 590, KTS 350, or KTS 250 and a stable Internet connection.

 Vehicle information
 Diagnosis of control units
 Vehicle equipment catalogue
 Experience-based repair (EBR) / Known faults
 Handbooks and manuals
 Connected Repair
 Circuit diagrams for comfort systems
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Aviloo diagnostic tests debut in Ireland

Next Eco Car, the Irish EV sales and sourcing specialist, recently announced a partnership with Maverick Diagnostics whereby the Irish company will become distributor of Aviloo Flash and Premium diagnostic tests in Ireland.

The Flash test will be geared towards independent workshops and dealers. In just three minutes, a Flash test generates an analysis of a traction battery while a vehicle is stationary. The diagnostic tool measures several parameters – vehicle communication, battery controller, HV battery state, LV system and battery history – before offering a manufacturer-independent test score between one and 100. Technicians can then illustrate that score and the test's overall findings to customers with a report.

The test begins by plugging an Aviloo box into the OBD port of a vehicle. Next, wait for a flashing yellow LED light to appear, which indicates the start of the test, then start the vehicle. Finally, the LED light will turn green to signal that the test is complete. A report will then be immediately generated and sent to the e-mail address synced to the device. This is available on either app or desktop.

Meanwhile, the Premium test is, primarily, aimed directly at motorists, but will also be utilised by workshops and dealers where a need is identified.



Simon Acton (left), Next Eco Car Managing Director, and Andy Brooke, Managing Director at Maverick Diagnostics.

But what's the difference between the Flash and Premium? The latter will compare the health of a plug-in hybrid and EV against when it was new. The results will include a percentage score of the battery's exact state of health.

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Promises to be fully up-to-date while refining those exterior elements that underpin its appeal as a luxury transport

Engine: Four petrol, two diesel, three equipped with PHEV

Pricing: To be announced



VOLKSWAGEN ID.7

First all-electric Volkswagen for the upper mid-size class, available in Q4 2023

Battery: charging capacities of up to about 200kW

Pricing: To be announced



KIA EV9

Kia's first three-row seat electric flagship SUV, available in the second half of 2023

Battery: 76.1-kWh to 99.8-kWh

Pricing: To be announced



FORD RANGER WILDTRAK X

Features a reworked chassis with unique suspension upgrades, with deliveries set from August 2023

Engine: 2.0-litre

Pricing: To be announced



POLESTAR 4

SUV coupé combines aerodynamics of a coupé and the space of an SUV, coming in early 2024

Battery: 102kWh

Pricing: From €60,000

IMCTGA visits the K Club

The K Club, Co. Kildare, was the venue for the first outing of the year for the Irish Motor & Cycle Trades Golfing Association. The event was, again, generously sponsored by DS Automobiles, the French luxury vehicle marque.

On a bright sunny day on Tuesday 25th April, over 85 members competed in the major competition, the C.E. Jacob Cup. Paddy Magee, outgoing IMCTGA President, said he was delighted to see such a great turnout. Paul Carroll, Touchbase Technology was then invited to take up his role as President for the coming year. Paul outlined that while IMCTGA is

primarily a golfing association, it also provides a social element for the wide scope of its membership. Newcomers will be most welcome provided they are recognised with a GUI Handicap and are working in the Motor or Cycle Industry or are affiliated to the Motor Industry. Paul thanked DS Automobiles for their generous support.



Representing the IMCTGA K Club event sponsors DS Automobiles are left to right: Luke Messitt, Des Cannon, Alan Kilroy and Glin Donnelly.



IMCTGA Secretary Con Dalton taking time out to chat with George Harbourne.



Left to right: Lynne Boucher, Brendan Keary, Paddy Magee and Cian Allman enjoying the good weather while waiting on the first tee box to get started.



Paul Carroll, President, IMCTGA, presenting the C.E. Jacob Cup to the overall winner, Joe O'Grady.



Left to right: Margaret O'Loughlin, Alan Lyons and James O'Loughlin making their way around the K Club course.



Paul Carroll, President, IMCTGA, presents the trophy to Paul Mooney, winner of the Back Nine Competition.

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