

CUSTOMER CARE

78 MAXIMTRAK TECHNOLOGIES 81 ADSYS CONTROLS, INC. 82 OPEN TECHNOLOGIES 84 LAURUS TECHNOLOGIES
85 SELECT BENEFITS COMMUNICATION GROUP 88 TOTAL INSURANCE SERVICES, INC.

MaximTrak Technologies

Innovative software tools for the automotive industry

STRATEGY TO SHARE

WALK A MILE

Understand your customer's point of view. MTT placed itself in the car buyer's position to get a complete understanding of the buyer's wants, needs, and feelings. Thus, the company was able to target exactly how it could help such customers.

LOOKING AHEAD...

Maxim's immediate future plan for MTT is to expand its market presence in dealerships through strategic partnerships with captive finance companies, vehicle manufacturers, insurance companies, and agents nationally.

by Christopher Cussat

Jim Maxim, Jr. always puts customers first. As president of MaximTrak Technologies (MTT), he has established a company that optimizes innovative software technology and always emphasizes giving the best service to clients, partners, and people.

Maxim Automotive—MTT's founding company—was originally formed in 1986 by Maxim's father to serve automotive retailers in the training and development of car dealerships' finance and insurance (F&I) departments. MaximTrak (MTT's flagship software product) was born out of the company's consulting operations in 2003, in an effort to inject technology and process standardizations into its automotive-dealership clientele—specifically in regards to vehicle-delivery procedures.

The MaximTrak software enhances and simplifies the presentation of finance- and insurance-based, after-sale products to consumers in an ethical and relevant way. In addition, it provides F&I managers at car dealerships with a credible tool, so they can have good conversations with consumers without making them feel like they're being taken advantage of. "MaximTrak helps auto dealers maintain profitability, enhance their professionalism and level of courtesy to the consumer, and make sure that they're compliant with all federal and state regulations," Maxim says.

The ultimate key to MTT's success has to do with how differently Maxim approached his company's founding. "We started from the customers' perspective and worked our way backwards," he says. By placing himself in the car buyers' position, Maxim was able to fully understand the uncertainties and frustrations they may experience. This then allowed him to determine how he and MTT could address and solve such problems. "We imagined what it was like to be a retail customer buying a car in the automotive dealerships today," he



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Jim Maxim, Jr., President

Microsoft

MAXIMTRAK
Maximizing F&I Potential

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MAXIMTRAK
Maximizing F&I Potential

STREAMLINE SERVICE: MTT attends various tradeshows to promote its MaximTrak software for automotive dealerships.

says, "and resoundingly, we got feedback that it wasn't as pleasant of an experience as it could be."

Maxim also knew that sometimes there is gamesmanship at play when people buy a car, and that the worst-placed dealers often are rated poorly in their customer-satisfaction surveys (or CSI scores) when the customer goes to take delivery of the vehicle. "After you make a decision to buy a car, you go to the F&I department," Maxim says. "That's where you're going to sign your papers and potentially purchase valuable insurance options—and that's where the heightened level of anxiety takes place. This is when people are most skeptical because they're signing the bottom line."

This is precisely the part of the car-buying experience that MTT has helped to greatly improve. "We wanted to just clean that up a little bit and help present numbers and product options in a low-key, yet very relevant way," Maxim explains. "So we started with the customer first, and we worked our way backwards from there in our approach." As a result, MTT determined where its dealers needed to be more efficient, more effective, and more professional. "We also help them make more money," Maxim continues, "but in a way that is also beneficial for their consumers—that's what our software really helps them do."

Maxim's immediate future plan for MTT is to expand its market presence in dealerships through strategic partnerships with captive finance companies, vehicle manufacturers, insurance companies, and agents nationally. This includes partnering in 2010 with RouteOne, a Web-based credit-application-management system for the automotive industry. Originally founded by Ford Motor Company, Toyota, General Motors, and Chrysler, RouteOne today supports Mercedes-Benz Financial and more than 350 lending institutions. "This partnership will help automate the desking and financing process at the dealer level," Maxim says, "and better position automotive retailers to compete in the future by meeting consumer demands as they push to have more control and transparency throughout the buying process."

He concludes, "One of the things we want to provide to auto dealers nationally is a system that is relevant for them. A lot of the systems out there are built by IT people—our systems are built by folks who understand the automotive industry, and we are continuously developing technologies to meet those specialized needs." [P]

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