

'E-volve' says AutoTrader

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A new industry envisaged at AutoTrader Dealer Master Class



Gareth Cliff

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George Mienie

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The annual [AutoTrader](#) Dealer Master Class, was held at Radisson Blu Hotel Gautrain on 19 June 2018. Hosted by Cliff Central's founder Gareth Cliff, and featuring four panellists, including AutoTrader CEO [George Mienie](#), the event gathered over 100 dealerships from across the country together, to be inspired by the latest thought trends in online motor marketing.

George Mienie, who has successfully led the AutoTrader brand from a predominantly print business to a fully digital offering, spoke on "understanding the car shopping journey," a key theme repeated throughout the shared discussion.

Based on research by AutoTrader, Mienie said that "today's tech savvy consumer comparison shops online, and knows more about the car on your floor than you do," said Mienie, addressing the dealers present. "Today's consumer is ready to buy when he or she enters the dealership. This means the role of today's dealer has changed."



John Sanei

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Lee Manning

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“In an environment where all information is easily available, how do you ensure that the consumer chooses your dealership?” asked Mienie. “We have found that understanding the consumers car shopping journey is key. By understanding what our consumers want, we are able to empower our consumers more, giving them the most of what today’s digital landscape offers; personal choice.”

AutoTrader’s consumer behavior research has shown that the car buying process has moved online – ushering in a whole new era of vehicle buying and selling. In this new world, Mienie detailed that a vehicle dealer’s ability to satisfy the consumer with finance and insurance, and correct trade-in and retail price values is crucial.

Further, taking advantage of the speed that information is available online, dealerships with the edge will be pricing right, based on real-time knowledge of factors such as overall stock availability in market, overall demand, and how quickly particular brands are turning over.

“Everyone thought the internet was a lead generator – I’ll slap on content and I’ll get leads. It’s not like that,” said Mienie. “Your potential customer already knows which car they want to buy; they are more informed than you! What defines a successful dealership today, is the one that best understands, and satisfies, the needs of a fully informed consumer.”

“We are called to be architects of the future, not its victims,” said fellow panellist and trend specialist John Sanei. “Tomorrow will either be one day, or day one.”

“Our marketplace has evolved,” concluded Mienie. “Are we ready for our new, evolved customer?”

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