

AutoTrader declares new auto industry

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Shifted global auto trends revealed at NAAMSA



George Mienie

The *'Paths to the Future'* NAAMSA conference debuted at the SA's legendary Festival of Motoring hosted in the [AutoTrader TechZone](#), bringing attendees a brand new opportunity to pick the minds of top auto industry players both locally and globally.

Couched within the wider festival sponsored by the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa and WesBank, specialist speakers such as Andrew Kirby - President and CEO of Toyota South Africa Motors and NAAMSA President, Johan de Nysschen – ex President, Cadillac and General Motors Executive Vice President and [AutoTrader CEO George Mienie](#) who offered the below insights into a rapidly changing auto market:

"South Africa has one of the most complex automotive landscapes. Today there are lower levels of government spending, a decline in new and used car sales, and consumers are holding on to their cars for longer.

"In order to succeed, dealerships need to know their customer's journey. Today transparency is reality. Consumers are armed with readily available information; we need to understand their needs correctly as the first step to securing the lead, and the sale."

Mienie's message hinged on the nature of the new auto customer; a tech savvy individual who is well informed on price, value, product and service. Today's consumer is "ready to buy" said Mienie, a crucial new reality.

"We realised we had to do a big job of cleaning up industry data, speaking from an embedded perspective within South Africa's largest online auto trading portal. Our job is no longer to present the consumer with data - they are doing that themselves – but rather, we have to ensure the data available is correct, practical, and relevant."

Today's restriction to government level VIN data has made the codification of makes and models, a mess – information that is vital to correct pricing.

“Dealers have to shift from transactional valuation, to live market valuation,” explained Mienie. “For instance in 2012 the new Polo Vivo was listed at R129k, today the same new vehicle debuts at R109k. Wider factors are at play – current stock holdings, fluctuating global exchange, etc. We need real-time access to these factors in order to meet the educated consumer at a place of practical truth.”

AutoTrader have taken action, using their resources to build their own verified database, which gives dealers accurate live market data.

‘The new auto consumer’s need is empowerment,’ concluded Mienie. “You must arm your customers with the right tools to conduct their own research, and then offer the product that they know to be the best.”

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