



SIMI

2021 ISSUE 2

IRISH MOTOR MANAGEMENT

THE SOCIETY OF THE IRISH MOTOR INDUSTRY



A ZERO EMISSIONS FUTURE

SIMI PRESIDENT LOOKS AHEAD

POST-PANDEMIC
- HOW THE INDUSTRY
WILL EVOLVE

SIMI SKILLNET TRAINING
- UPCOMING COURSES

BUSINESS SYSTEMS
- DRIVING PROFITABILITY



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212 NEW OPPORTUNITY

The 212 registration plate has commenced with retailers thankfully reporting strong demand from customers, both private and corporate, for both new and used cars and commercial vehicles. It is particularly encouraging to see the sale of new electric vehicles continuing to increase, and further growth will be expected next year. While the new registration plate provides the Industry with a much-needed opportunity to recover lost sales and new car sales are well ahead of last year, the business levels must be viewed in the pre-COVID context, down 16% on 2019, and also prior to the full impact of Brexit, with new car sales down a third when compared to 2016.

The outlook over the short and medium term is very uncertain for members. The impact of Brexit, on the new and used car markets and on parts supply chains, has still not fully materialised, while the low level of new car sales since the start of 2017 is now causing, in conjunction with the reduced supply of UK used imports, a shortage of used car stock.

Looking further ahead, the de-carbonisation of the car fleet, if not handled in a just and fair way, has the potential to damage not only our sector but also the environment. SIMI has already issued its TSG Submission, in which we highlighted the Industry's own commitment to dramatically reducing transport emissions. The way forward must be to accelerate the penetration of EVs and hybrid vehicles into the Irish car fleet, while at the same time allowing those not in a position to purchase a new ZEV to be able to trade up to a newer car than the one they currently own. This will require Government intervention, both in incentivising the purchase of EVs and also in investing in charging infrastructure. It also means that taxation policy must encourage the sale of more new, lower emitting cars, including traditional fuel types. By doing this, we can raise the new car market to a level that will reduce the age of the fleet, and will lead to the oldest most environmentally damaging cars being removed from circulation.

In addition to our annual Budget Submission and lobby, through the Society's Climate Action Group, SIMI is developing a longer-term Industry Climate Action plan. As the suppliers and sellers of these vehicles we must engage with Government, the various departments and stakeholders to advise them of what the Industry needs to achieve this transition. This is an immense challenge. There will be difficult decisions to be made, but Government policy must be strategic and not merely headline-grabbing, policy that effectively supports motorists in their individual transport decisions. Our members are willing to play our part. It is vital that the Government supports us.

Brian Cooke
Director General, SIMI



OPTIMISM REIGNS AS 212 KICKS OFF

For the month of June, 2,767 new cars were registered compared to 1,006 in June 2020 and 1,408 in June 2019, according to recent statistics announced by the SIMI. In all, 63,867 new cars have been registered year to date, compared to 52,885 for the same period in 2020 (+20.8%) and 80,758 in 2019 (-20.9%).

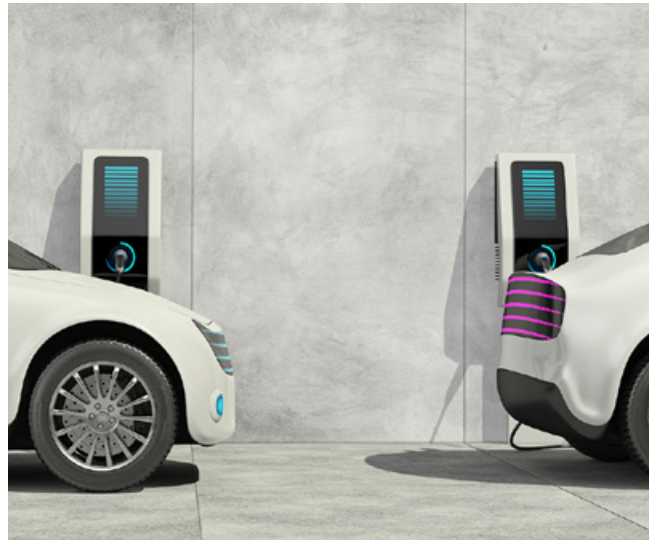
To present a more accurate picture of the new vehicle registrations, it is important to compare registrations totals with the same period in 2019 (pre-COVID) when businesses were fully operational. Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) have seen an increase of 992 registrations compared to 569 in June last year and 747 for the same month in 2019. Year to date 17,027 new LCVs were registered, an increase on last year's 10,569 (61.1%) and on 15,317 in 2019 (+11.2%).

Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) saw 102 registrations in June when compared to 100 in June 2020 and 316 June 2019. Year to date HGV registrations total 1,527 compared with 1,199 in 2020 (+27.4) and 1,803 in 2019 (-15.3%).

In June, 5,631 used cars were imported, compared with 4,263 imports in June 2020, and a decrease on the 8,060 imports in June 2019. Year to date used imports (35,754) are up 56.9% on 2020 (22,787) and down 32.8% on 2019 (53,126).

For the month of June, 390 new electric vehicles were registered compared to 42 in June 2020. Electric Vehicle and Plug-in Hybrids and Hybrids continue to increase their market share, with their combined share now over 29.66%. Diesel now accounts for 36.08%, petrol 31.79%, hybrid 16.51%, electric 6.78% and plug-in electric hybrid 6.37%.

Brian Cooke, SIMI Director General commented: "The last fifteen months has been a hugely difficult time for the Motor Industry with new car sales down over a fifth when compared to pre-COVID 2019.



So far this year, 4,333 new electric cars have been registered in comparison to 1,889 in the same period in 2020.

"With the new 212 registration plate, we are hopefully at a turning point for the Industry and with both the lead-in time provided by the re-opening of showrooms and a strong order bank, retailers are optimistic that they can recover some of the sales lost during the first half of the year. Notwithstanding this, the impact of COVID will continue for the sector. Due to concerns over the short-term outlook for international tourism, there continues to be a lack of demand in the car hire market. On a more positive note, the demand for both commercial vehicles and electric vehicles (EVs) is very encouraging. In this context, it is vital that the current EV incentives are extended beyond their expiry dates as the country begins its transition to zero emissions transport."

EUROPE RISKS UNEQUAL E-MOBILITY

A new data analysis by the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) shows a completely unbalanced picture when it comes to the spread of charging points for electric cars across the European Union. 70% of all EU charging stations are concentrated in just three countries in Western Europe: the Netherlands (66,665), France (45,751) and Germany (44,538). Together, these countries make up just 23% of the EU's total surface area. By contrast, the other 30% of infrastructure is scattered throughout the remaining 77% of the region.

The patchy EU roll-out of both charging and refuelling infrastructure for alternatively-powered cars has been evident since ACEA started its annual analysis in 2018. Without decisive action now, it is unlikely to improve in the years to come, the association warns. ACEA is calling for binding targets – not only for charging points for electric cars but also for hydrogen stations for fuel cell cars – for each EU member state.

"Anyone who wants to buy an electric or fuel cell car depends on having a reliable charging or refuelling infrastructure," stated ACEA Director General, Eric-Mark Huitema.

Based on European Commission calculations, a further decrease of car CO₂ emissions by 50% in 2030 would require some six million publicly available charging points. With less than 225,000 available today, that translates into a staggering 27-fold increase to be achieved in less than a decade.

Top 5 countries with MOST chargers

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| Netherlands | (66,665) |
| France | (45,751) |
| Germany | (44,538) |
| Italy | (13,073) |
| Sweden | (10,370) |

OPEL IRELAND BEGINS 3-YEAR IRISH RUGBY SPONSORSHIP

Opel Ireland was recently announced as the new, exclusive car partner to the IRFU, in a three-year Irish rugby sponsorship agreement spanning both the men's and women's international teams. The partnership sees Opel providing a fleet of new Opel passenger cars and light commercial vehicles to IRFU personnel during the course of the agreement.

Effective since the beginning of July, Opel's partnership benefits will include numerous in-match and digital branding opportunities and player appearances.

The official launch was marked at the Aviva Stadium, attended by Irish rugby players Hugo Keenan and David Kilcoyne; James Brooks, Managing Director at Opel Ireland; and Michael Collopy, Chairman of Commercial and Marketing Committee, IRFU.

James Brooks said: "We are delighted to be the vehicle of choice at the IRFU. Our announcement has come at the crux of one of the most important years in our brand's 160-year history. Indeed, 2021 marks a new era for Opel, when we bring to market a whole host of new models, deliver a completely new Opel design direction, and continue the rapid roll-out of our electric car and van range. Our partnership with the IRFU is the perfect platform upon which we can build the Opel brand in Ireland."

Michael Collopy said: "Opel is a renowned and trusted brand in Ireland with a rich and deep heritage and I know the Irish rugby supporter will join me in welcoming them to the rugby family. We look forward to our journey together."



Pictured (l-r) : Hugo Keenan; Michael Collopy, IRFU; James Brooks, Opel Ireland; and David Kilcoyne, with the all-new Opel Mokka, available in petrol, diesel and all-electric powertrains. Photo: Jason Clarke.

MAZDA ADVANCES IN CARBON NEUTRALITY



Mazda is developing a dedicated platform for electric vehicles, Skyactiv EV Scalable Architecture.

Heading towards a carbon-neutral future by 2050, the Mazda Motor Corporation recently announced it will accelerate its global electrification plans. By 2030, Mazda predicts that a quarter of its products will be fully electric and all other models will be electrified in some form.

Between 2022 and 2025, Mazda will introduce a range of new products using the Skyactiv Multi-Solution Scalable Architecture. It will include five hybrid models, five plug-in hybrid models and three EV models.

Mazda is also developing a dedicated platform for electric vehicles – Skyactiv EV Scalable Architecture – that will be used for electric vehicles with various sizes and body types on products that will be launched between 2025 and 2030. According to Mazda, through the Skyactiv Multi-Solution Scalable Architecture, continued electrification will go hand in hand with the development of advanced internal combustion engine technology such as the award-winning e-Skyactiv X as well as new straight-six engines.

In many regions, Mazda is investing in different projects and partnerships to promote the development and use of renewable fuels in cars. In Europe, Mazda joined the eFuel Alliance in February 2021 as the first OEM. In Japan, Mazda is involved in several joint research projects and studies as part of an ongoing industry-academia-government collaboration to promote the wide-spread adoption of biofuels from microalgae growth.

PRESTIGIOUS AWARD FOR KELLY'S, LETTERKENNY



The winning team at Kelly's Toyota in Letterkenny. Brendan Kelly, Dealer Principal at Kelly's Toyota, is holding the Ichiban award from Toyota Motor Europe.

Kelly's Toyota, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal was recognised amongst 43 other retailers from 32 European countries who secured the Ichiban (Japanese for number one) award from Toyota Motor Europe recently.

Over 2,500 European Toyota Retailers compete for this award annually and the winners are those who Toyota consider have excelled in delivering the highest level of the carmaker's "customer first" mindset.

Steve Tormey, Chief Executive of Toyota Ireland commented: "The Toyota Ireland team is delighted that Kelly's Toyota, Letterkenny has been recognised for its incredible work. The

prestigious Ichiban award is highly coveted by retailers across Europe and it is a great achievement for the Toyota dealership to be acknowledged for their outstanding customer service." Brendan Kelly, Dealer Principal at Kelly's Toyota, said: "We are honoured to be awarded the Ichiban award amongst our fellow 43 European retailers. In these challenging times, it is a fantastic achievement to be recognised for the most memorable customer service. Our customers are at the heart of everything we do at Kelly's Toyota in Donegal and the entire team should be incredibly proud of this amazing achievement."

RENAULT GROUP ACCELERATES EV STRATEGY

Renault Group recently announced the latest development in its ambition to deliver a broader range of pure-electric vehicles to more potential customers. The Group has committed to launch 10 new battery-electric vehicles by 2025, seven of them for the Renault brand. The Group aims at providing the greenest mix in the European market in 2025, with more than 65% of vehicles in the sales mix electric and electrified, and up to 90% battery electric vehicles in the Renault brand mix by 2030.

Luca de Meo, CEO, Renault Group said: "This is a historic acceleration of our EV strategy. Ten new electric models will be conceived and up to one million electric vehicles will be manufactured by 2030."



Renault eWays Electropop is the title under which the carmaker has launched an acceleration of its EV strategy.

CITROËN STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT TEAM



Eimear Dillon.



Darren Quille.

Eimear Dillon has been appointed Product Manager and Darren Quille has been confirmed as the Training and Technical Manager following an extensive recruitment programme to enhance the team at Citroën Ireland. Eimear Dillon joins the brand following roles as product manager for Mitsubishi and MG Ireland at Frank Keane Group. Previously, Eimear also worked for Volvo Ireland and Motor Distributors Ltd (MDL).

Darren Quille brings a wealth of technical experience to the Citroën brand following roles as a Master Technician within the Peugeot Ireland Dealer network. In addition to his fifteen years of dealership experience, Darren is a keen motorsport enthusiast and will now head up the Training and Technical support portfolio for the Citroën Ireland Dealer network.

FORD PUMA FEATURES CROWD-SOURCED NAME AND DESIGN



The new Puma ST Gold Edition.

Following an innovative experiment in human-centred design, Ford recently announced the winning name and specification of the new Puma ST Gold Edition, available to order in limited numbers later this year.

Ford fans cast almost 275,000 votes in a series of polls on the automaker’s Twitter and Instagram channels over the course of 10 days, choosing the colour combinations of elements

including the model’s paint, decals and brake callipers – as well as deciding its name.

As a result, the first-ever Ford Performance model to feature crowd-sourced design will have features chosen by Ford enthusiasts (see Table). The results of each poll were collected from individual markets across Europe in addition to Ford of Europe’s central channels before being collated to reach an overall winner.

| Poll | Winning option |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Exterior Paint | Black |
| Brake Callipers | Red |
| Seatbelt Stitching | Grey |
| Exterior Decals | Lines |
| Exterior Badging | ST Badges |
| Scuff Plates | Puma |
| Pride Plate | ST |
| Name | Puma ST Gold Edition |

The features selected in Ford’s crowd-sourced design initiative.

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WHERE TO FOCUS DIGITALISATION – KEYLOOP SURVEY

The advancement of digital tools within the vehicle retail and aftermarket space has sped up dramatically since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the key to this has been the adoption of digitalised aftersales tools, according to a recent survey, *Digitalisation: An Unstoppable Force in Automotive Retailing and Aftersales*, published recently by Keyloop.

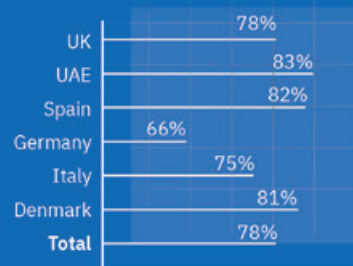
The results of the international survey indicate that customers are strongly in favour of digitalising aftersales processes. Digitalising the processes while driving dealership KPIs requires sophisticated digital solutions that integrate all back

end and customer-facing processes seamlessly. Selecting the right digital capabilities that will work best for a particular Dealer group requires a better understanding of their customers. This includes the local market preferences and which solutions will have the biggest impact on customer needs. Below is a summary of the major survey findings at a country level in the survey. As illustrated below, the research indicates that any Dealer looking to digitalise their sales processes should offer: extended test drives, online signing, and with further investments, personalised digital sales solutions.

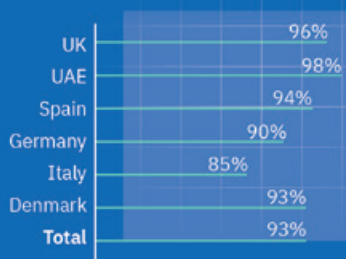
Summary of the major survey findings at a country level

Graphic representation only

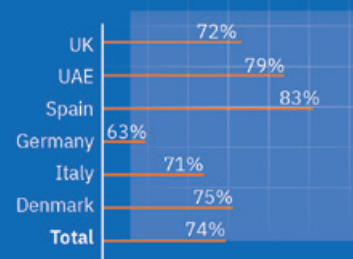
Percentage of buyers likely to sign digitally



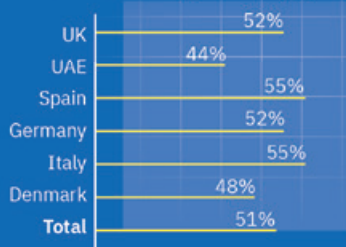
Percentage of buyers likely to opt for extended test drive



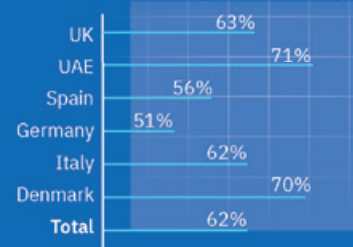
Percentage of buyers likely to use personalised digital sales solutions



Percentage of buyers not comfortable negotiating price



Percentage of buyers that need to visit a dealer when purchasing a vehicle

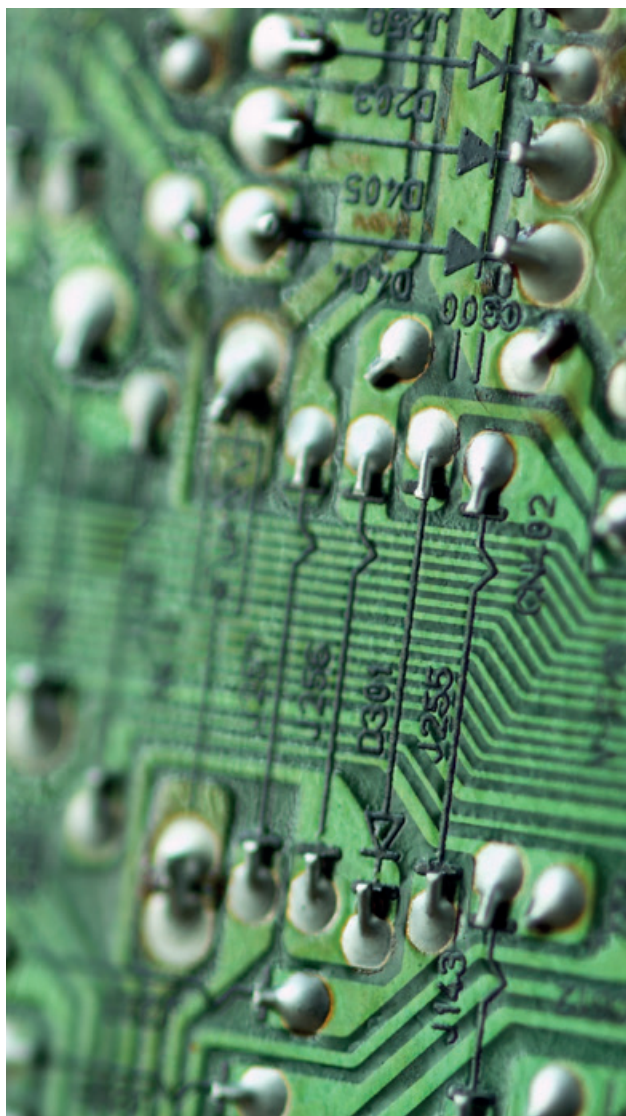


INTEREST STRONG BUT STOCK ISSUES SLOW SALES

IMM contacted some Dealers around the country for their reaction to 212 sales and their assessment of the broader outlook for the months ahead. While customer interest has been strong and Dealers remain positive in their outlook for new and used car sales in the medium term, the impact of the semi-conductor shortage is a cause for concern. James Foley, Sales Director at Cavanagh's of Charleville reports: "Interest is massive, the problem is getting hold of stock. I believe all Dealerships are having difficulty in securing stock because of the shortage of semiconductors. "Most new car sales generate a secondhand car to sell. The import of UK cars has also been slowing due to Brexit. The result is that, although our secondhand values are holding up well, we're not getting the same volume of secondhand stock."

Kevin Egan, Managing Director, Kevin Egan Cars, in Sligo has a broadly similar view: "The showroom traffic has been there over the last couple of months to deliver a successful 212 plate season, but the lack of certainty leading up to it regarding stock availability has dampened enthusiasm. "I think some potential buyers have looked on the shortage as a reason to wait for a 221 plate. The positive thing is people are serious about buying and once we get back to proper levels of stock, the situation should improve significantly." Gregg Moore, Director of Green Auto Service in Dublin which specialises in the sales of one-year-old to three-year-old cars, has found buyer interest to be strong but also notes a lack of supply: "The global microchip shortage has meant that supply is a big issue. Ultimately, it's been caused by a combination of the impact of Brexit and COVID.

"As long as stock and supply remains an issue, it will drive up the prices of secondhand cars."



A global semi-conductor shortage is impacting on the supply of new cars.

IRELAND MEETS RECYCLING TARGETS FOR END-OF-LIFE VEHICLES

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has published the National results for end-of-life vehicle (ELV) recycling for 2019, which showed that once again Ireland has both met and exceeded the 85% reuse and recycling targets and the 95% reuse and recovery targets for the treatment of ELVs. The results for 2019 were 87.43% reuse and recycling and 95.21% reuse and recovery.

"Meeting both targets for the second year in a row and improving year on year, really demonstrates the impact of ELVES on improving the processing of ELVs in Ireland. Long may it continue," said Fiacra Quinn, CEO of ELVES.

The ELVES compliance scheme has been operating under Ministerial approval since 2017, promoting its Network of Authorised Treatment Facilities (ATFs) that take back ELVs from the public free of charge for recycling.



Ireland has met the 85% and 95% reuse, recycling and recovery targets for 2019!

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www.elves.ie

ŠKODA IRELAND'S FIRST FULLY ELECTRIC VEHICLE

Škoda Ireland's first fully electric vehicle, the Škoda EnyaQ iV, has arrived in Irish showrooms. Priced from €37,465 inclusive of grants and rebates, the entry EnyaQ 60 has a WLTP range of up to 412km. The EnyaQ 80 has enhanced equipment levels with a WLTP range of up to 535km and is priced from €44,712. Škoda has placed particular focus on the charging experience. 80% of EnyaQ iV charging is expected to occur at home. Customers can complement their EnyaQ iV with a Škoda iV Charger wall box unit installed by Škoda's registered electrical contractors. The Škoda iV Charger can charge an EnyaQ 60 from 0% to 100% in just six hours and 15 minutes. Inevitably, the Škoda EnyaQ iV will need to be charged when away from home. For this, Škoda has launched PowerPass. PowerPass is a mobile app and card that enables customers to locate and access more than 1,667 charging points across Ireland, including the ESB network. It also provides some of the most competitive rates for Ionity DC fast charging.



The Škoda EnyaQ iV.

BAZ RETAINS MERCEDES SUPPORT



Mercedes-Benz will supply vans to the production team on *DIY SOS: The Big Build*, which is presented by Baz Ashmawy.

Baz Ashmawy will shortly be returning to Irish television screens for a second season of *DIY SOS: The Big Build*. Once again, the popular TV presenter will retain the backing of Mercedes-Benz after its commercial vehicle division confirmed their continued support for the forthcoming series, produced by Dublin-based Motive Television and screened on RTÉ ONE. As with the first season, which aired last Autumn, Mercedes-Benz will continue to supply the production team with two vans for the duration of filming – a Vito 109L and a Sprinter 311.39. Throughout the show, both units will be put through their paces transporting building materials, site volunteers, trades people, filming equipment and production team personnel.

GOOGLE STREET VIEW'S FIRST ALL-ELECTRIC VEHICLE

The I-Pace is the first all-electric Google Street View vehicle and will be used to measure street-by-street air quality in Dublin including nitrogen dioxide, carbon dioxide emissions and fine particles, Jaguar Land Rover reports. It will also help update Google Maps.

The Jaguar I-Pace, which offers zero tailpipe-emissions driving, has been equipped with specialised mobile air sensors developed by Aclima and has launched in Dublin to capture data over the next year. Google's scientific research partners will analyse the data and develop maps of street-level air pollution.

Jaguar Land Rover engineers have worked to integrate Google Street View technology into the vehicle, including new roof mountings for the Street View camera, new rear-window glass which allows for wiring and redesigned interior switchgear to incorporate Google Street View controls. Elena Allen, Project Manager for Business Development at Jaguar Land Rover said: "The integration of Google Street View technology with the all-electric Jaguar I-Pace is the perfect solution for measuring air quality. We are delighted

to support this project as it aligns with our own journey to becoming an electric-first business and achieving net zero carbon by 2039. Partnerships like this are one of the ways we can achieve our sustainability goals and make a positive impact on society."



Jaguar Land Rover has partnered with Google to equip the all-electric Jaguar I-Pace with air quality measuring sensors and Street View mapping technology.



Resilient Industry looks to zero emissions future

SIMI President Gillian Fanning, Director of Automotive Distributor Serfac Limited, discusses the business outlook for the Motor Industry for the rest of 2021, the transition to zero emissions motoring and the importance of fair competition in the aftermarket sector.

The past 18 months has been a difficult and unprecedented experience for everyone, Gillian acknowledges: "I want to offer my condolences on behalf of the Society to anyone who's lost a family member, a friend or a colleague. There have been huge challenges, to our mental and physical wellbeing and to our businesses but we can be proud of how members have responded.

"Members have again shown innovation, resourcefulness and resilience in the face of crisis. The macro-economic outlook remains uncertain and I know that many are still affected by the repercussions of Brexit, but there is a confidence and positivity across the Industry as we look to the months ahead." SIMI members across sales, aftersales and all sectors of the Industry, have proven to be adaptable and responsive, Gillian says. "Members have focused on enhancing the online experience for customers. There has been a significant amount of investment in IT as well as a commitment to deepen engagement through social media, all of which will complement the face-to-face aspects of the business in the future. The new car registration figures have been positive over the last couple of months and while no one underestimates the challenges ahead, there is optimism among Dealers about the opportunities that the re-opening offers."

Consumer confidence

Consumer confidence figures have been looking strong, Gillian notes, with, for example, the KBC Bank consumer sentiment index in Ireland rising to 87.2 in June of 2021 (from 85.8 in the previous month), the highest reading since June of 2019. "Obviously, this confidence is based on many factors including the success of the vaccine roll-out to date and the gathering momentum of the gradual re-opening."

For those who have been fortunate enough to remain employed throughout the pandemic, there is evidence that suggests there could be a strong level of pent-up consumer demand in the months ahead. Household savings are estimated to have grown by around €18bn between 2020 Q1 and 2021 Q1. Ultimately, Gillian says, "COVID, rather than economics, will determine the pace of recovery, particularly for the most affected sectors. However, the progress that's been made to date with the vaccine programme augurs well for the months ahead."

The positive outlook among members is tempered by concerns in relation to new car sales. "While an overall economic recovery should help, there are significant factors that could slow a return to something approaching normal levels of business. Firstly, there is still some uncertainty among car buyers in relation to selecting the most suitable fuel type and technology. With the array of technologies on offer in new cars, motorists are putting off making a decision and postponing buying a car. This is an ongoing concern. "The lack of international travel into Ireland has adversely affected the hire drive sector and it's unlikely to recover for some time, certainly not this year. Finally, the global shortage of semiconductors is affecting the new car supply chain. Dealers are worried that if the shortage continues it will have

serious repercussions and demand for new cars will outstrip supply."

The key to strong growth will be the strength of the economy, Gillian says. "Government policy must support consumer spending and businesses in the aftermath of the pandemic. That's certainly what we will be asking for in our Budget submission, and indeed all our submissions, to Government."

The transition to zero emissions

As we await updates to the Government's climate action plan in the months ahead, Gillian says that the Industry continues to be fully committed to the transition to zero emissions motoring. "Maximising the number of zero emissions and low emissions vehicles on the road should be an urgent priority. While we can supply the cars, the Government has a significant part to play in providing the wider, practical supports that are needed to help the Irish motorist drive greener."

Gillian identifies steps that the Government must take to encourage the uptake of lower emissions vehicles, as follows:

- Extension of the VRT reliefs for EVs to 2025 – these are currently set to expire in 2021 and it is vital they are extended;
- Retention of SEAI grants for EVs and plug-in hybrid EVs;
- Extension of the zero % rate of benefit in kind for EV usage to 2025 – currently, there is a proposal to change the rate to 22.5% from January 2023, which is exorbitant and will almost inevitably discourage EV uptake.

Gillian adds: "We are exploring creative ways of supporting the PHEV market. PHEVs are not only low emitting but they will for many provide an important step to ultimately buying an EV. One possibility might be the introduction of an energy credit for PHEVs, where there could be a tax incentive for the PHEV motorist to reach a certain percentage level of electric usage. Beyond these measures, we want to see more state support for, and investment in, the roll-out of an EV charging infrastructure that is adequate to meet the needs of the national fleet as it moves to zero emissions.

"It's important that the Government show leadership by committing to consistent and continuing supports for the transition to zero emissions motoring. The Government's climate action plan is laudable as a roadmap but it has to be backed up by practical measures. Inaction will be a barrier to change and will slow down the shift to zero emissions motoring."

The urgent need for these supports will be highlighted in the Society's Budget submission. "The importance of these supports will be underlined in the submission along with our headline message to Government in relation to the Budget – no changes to VRT and road tax. Avoiding changes to VRT and road tax will provide some sense of stability for motorists and the Industry, and will encourage car owners to trade up. Allied to supports for lower emissions motoring, this would give real impetus to sales of new cars with low and zero emissions technologies."

SIMI has established the Climate Action Group sub-committee of the SIMI Management Board with a view to

Dedicated support

Gillian highlights the dedication and hard work of the team at SIMI throughout the past 18 months. "The commitment of the whole team at SIMI since the beginning of the pandemic has been commendable.

Working from home, they've continued to provide ongoing support and expert advice to members. They have liaised with Government departments on an ongoing basis, offered detailed advice on the re-openings to members, and rolled out back to business safety information and advice.

"Moreover, they have implemented successful communications campaigns including the 'Drive Greener' campaign. They've also utilised online platforms to ensure they could continue to provide services, including training courses, that had previously been delivered in person. All the while maintaining day to day services for members. The work they've done over the last 18 months has been remarkable."

developing a fit for purpose plan that would allow the Industry and its customers plan for the changes arising from the move to zero-emissions. "The Group's job is to develop a strategy to manage the move to alternatively powered vehicles while protecting employment and the economic wellbeing of the sector. The Group has already accessed a range of consultant expertise in economics and transport planning. It is also listening to the car buying public to understand their concerns which will be informed by independent research.

"A detailed communications strategy is also being developed alongside this initiative to ensure that the Industry is communicating its zero emissions objectives effectively to Government, the public and all Industry stakeholders."

Level playing field

As the pace of innovation in automotive technology continues to intensify, access to vehicle repair and maintenance information is vital to parts wholesalers. Gillian has continued to promote free and fair competition in this sector through her role as the SIMI representative with FIGIEFA, the representative association for the European automotive aftermarket. In March, in conjunction with seven other associations representing the aftermarket and consumers, FIGIEFA published its proposals for a secure on-board telematics platform that is intended to create a level playing field for vehicle data access for consumers and the aftermarket sector.

The ability to safely and securely access in-vehicle data, functions and resources determines the quality of the service, Gillian explains: "The intention of the secure on-board telematics platform is to ensure that consumers can still choose and rely on service providers to benefit from innovative, competitive and affordable services and products. The proposal has been presented to the European Commission and we are anticipating a response by the end of the year." The rise of connected and automated driving has also heightened the need for legislation to address issues around cybersecurity: "FIGEFA supports the development of cybersecurity legislation both to protect motorists and to enhance confidence in new mobility technologies. However, it is important that the implementation of this legislation ensures all stakeholders continue to have the ability to

operate in a non-discriminatory manner with free and fair competition." FIGIEFA has come together with other aftermarket and consumer organisations to form the Alliance for the Freedom of Car Repair in Europe (AFCAR) with the aim of ensuring that EU officials and representatives are fully-informed and aware of these issues.

"FIGIEFA is calling upon law makers to ensure that there is cybersecurity compatibility and interoperability for replacement parts and diagnostic tools and it is also seeking the setting up an EU-wide certification scheme to encompass cybersecurity. The objective is to keep the issue high on the agenda with the EU so that any proposed legislation will prioritise fair competition within the aftermarket sector to the benefit of the customer."

Ongoing Brexit challenge

Brexit continues to be an ongoing challenge for the industry, says Gillian, with changes to the process of importing both vehicles and parts into Ireland since the start of the year bringing higher import costs, logistical difficulties and additional red tape.

Due to the continued operation of the margin scheme by the UK Government for GB used vehicle imports, there is a danger that NI could become a back door to margin imports, leaving NI retailers with a significant unfair advantage compared to their ROI counterparts. "Whatever the outcome of the ongoing EU/UK discussions, it is vital that there is a level playing field for ROI retailers", says Gillian. Despite the increased cost in importing used cars to Ireland, they will still continue, although numbers should reduce when compared to the last four years. While this should help strengthen the new car market, there is a concern that there will be a shortage of used cars in Ireland, due to low levels of new car sales over recent years.

Vehicle parts have also been subject to significant customs issues arising from Brexit and stock availability and supply is continuing to prove challenging for all sectors in the industry, from Wholesalers and Vehicle Repairers to VBRS. This has led to delays in servicing and repairing vehicles, says Gillian. "Tariffs on parts manufactured in the EU but distributed via UK supply chains have also added additional costs for our members," Gillian notes.



SIMI Skillnet 2021 Training Courses

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

Note: all courses are provided online unless otherwise stated.

Parts Management

Monday, August 9; Tuesday, August 10; and Thursday, August 12



Workshop sessions on the effective management of the Parts Department. Aimed at developing the skills of Parts Managers, Aftersales Managers, and senior parts staff.

TRAINER: ASE Global

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.30am-12.30pm each day

DURATION: Three days

COST: €246 incl. VAT

Customer Service & Complaint Handling

Tuesday, August 17

Workshop to help staff develop a greater understanding of communicating effectively with customers both on the telephone and face-to-face.

TRAINER: Karen Sommerville, Call Focus.

DAY SCHEDULE: Session 1: 10am-1pm; Session 2: 2pm-5pm

DURATION: One day

COST: €86.10 incl. VAT

Telephone Sales Techniques

Wednesday, August 18

Workshop to help staff become more effective in their ability to communicate with and influence customers using the telephone in order to grow sales.

TRAINER: Call Focus

DAY SCHEDULE: Session 1: 10am-1pm; Session 2: 2pm-5pm

DURATION: One day

COST: €92.25 incl. VAT

Service Advisor

Tuesday, August 24; Wednesday, August 25, Thursday, August 26



Aims to provide trainees with the skills and knowledge to effectively and efficiently operate with confidence as a Service Advisor/Receptionist in the Retail Motor Industry.

TRAINER: ASE Global

DAY SCHEDULE: 10am-12.30pm each day

DURATION: Three days

COST: €123 incl. VAT

Aftersales Profitability

Tuesday, August 24

How to identify sales opportunities and maximise commercial performance in aftersales.

TRAINER: Navigate

DAY SCHEDULE: Session 1: 1.30pm-3.30pm; Session 2: 3.45pm-5.45pm

DURATION: One day

COST: €123 incl. VAT

Customer Retention

Wednesday, August 25

Using effective customer retention strategies to improve Dealer profitability while building and protecting the customer database.

TRAINER: Navigate

DAY SCHEDULE: Session 1: 2pm-3.30pm; Session 2: 3.45pm-5.15pm

DURATION: One day

COST: €73.80 incl. VAT



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Margaret O'Shea, Network Manager on email: training@simi.ie or call + 353 1 6761690

Selling in a Digital Environment

Monday, September 6

Focusing on how to enhance a dealer's sales team's skills and confidence to create sales leads and increase conversions by using digital technology within the sales process.

TRAINER: **Navigate**

DAY SCHEDULE: Session 1: 2pm-3.30pm; Session 2: 3.45pm-5.15pm

DURATION: One day

COST: €73.80 incl. VAT

Used Vehicle Sales Management

Tuesday, September 7



How to identify and review the key processes and practices that will ensure effective used vehicle management and avoid common pitfalls.

TRAINER: **Navigate**

DAY SCHEDULE: Session 1: 2pm-3.30pm; Session 2: 3.45pm-5.15pm

DURATION: One day

COST: €73.80 incl. VAT

Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)

Wednesday, September 8; Thursday, September 9; and Friday, September 10

IMI Level 2 Award in Advanced Driver Assistance Systems – Calibration. For vehicle technicians and body repair workshops working on ADAS-equipped vehicles.

TRAINER: **MKW Motors**

LOCATION: MKW Motors, Baldonnell, Dublin 22

DAY SCHEDULE: Full day training followed by half-day assessment on either September 9 or 10

DURATION: One full day and half-day

COST: €320 (VAT not applicable)

VAT & VRT

Thursday, September 9

Suitable for accounts and sales staff in retail garages.

TRAINER: **Jimmy Rynhart**

DAY SCHEDULE: 10.00 am to 12.30 am approximately

DURATION: One day

COST: €184.50 incl. VAT

Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Awareness

Monday, September 13

For individuals operating in a non-technical role, who need to know how to work safely within the automotive retail industry as it increasingly deals in electric/hybrid vehicles.

TRAINER: **MKW Motors**

LOCATION: MKW Motors, Baldonnell, Dublin 22

DAY SCHEDULE: 9am-5pm

DURATION: One day

COST: €100 (VAT not applicable)

Parts Management

Monday, September 20; Tuesday, September 21; and Thursday, September 23

Workshop sessions on the effective management of the Parts Department. Aimed at developing the skills of Parts Managers, Aftersales Managers, and senior parts staff.

TRAINER: **ASE Global**

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.30am-12.30pm each day

DURATION: Three days

COST: €246 incl. VAT

Hybrid & Electric Vehicle Systems

Wednesday, September 29; Thursday, September 30; and Friday, October 1

Combined Level 2 and 3 Award in electric/hybrid vehicles repair and replacement. For Technicians requiring skills to remove and replace components for hybrid and electric vehicles safely.

TRAINER: **MKW Motors**

LOCATION: MKW Motors, Baldonnell, Dublin 22

DAY SCHEDULE: 9am-5.30pm each day

DURATION: Three days

COST: €560 (VAT not applicable)

VAT & VRT

Thursday, October 21

Suitable for accounts and sales staff in retail garages.

TRAINER: **Jimmy Rynhart**

DAY SCHEDULE: 10.00 am to 12.30 am approximately

DURATION: One day

COST: €184.50 incl. VAT

SIMI CPD TRAINING 2021

The second phase of our annual SIMI CPD Training with our expert trainer Keith Browne is delivered via Zoom and will commence in September with two interactive online learning events taking place.

Keith will present Modules 3 and 4 as 2 x two-hour

webinars on the first day and Modules 5 and 6 over three hours on the second day. Dates for this training will be confirmed shortly. All modules will be accredited by the Institute of Bankers as formal CPD hours. Subject to demand, we may also repeat Modules 1 and 2. For more information contact: training@simi.ie



Has the pandemic changed us? – implications for Motor Industry

Since the pandemic, more individuals are finding comfort in car ownership as people are more resistant to using public transport.

Patrick Gallen, Partner, People and Change Consulting at Grant Thornton Ireland identifies some of the key changes that the pandemic has brought to our lives and explores their implications for the Motor Industry.



It has been over sixteen months since the arrival of the COVID-19 global pandemic into Ireland, which completely disrupted life as we knew it. We were forced to adapt and alter our normal lifestyles. Restrictions kept many people confined within the walls of their homes and within their local area. With this, the need for a car decreased and, due to restrictions, car showrooms were deemed non-essential retail and had to close.

Working From Home

COVID-19 also prompted the national response of working from home (WFH). The traditional five days a week in the office has become obsolete, with most organisations realising that they can operate in a remote environment without major impact to productivity and KPIs. Many individuals are comfortable continuing to work in this manner. According to a report conducted by NUIG, 95% were in favour of working remotely on an ongoing basis to some extent.

We have seen various trends over the course of the last few

months, with one future model becoming the preference for a majority of organisations: the hybrid model. The hybrid model offers employees more freedom around where and when they work, it offers a mix of working in remote and office locations across a week. Within this model, we'll see the continued eradication of the traditional nine-to-five that COVID-19 drove, with organisations offering employees increased flexibility. We have also seen the pattern of two to three days per week in the office emerging as the 'sweet spot', although employees are seeking rationale for attendance. According to a report by Microsoft in 2021, 66% of businesses stated they were redesigning office spaces to accommodate for the hybrid model.

The shift to remote work has had many implications for individuals. One positive implication that many individuals have stated is the time and money saved from commuting in and out of work. According to a survey conducted in 2020 by Science Foundation Ireland, 6% of Irish people stated the old way of working was not worth the commute.

Challenges and opportunities

Due to the pandemic and the increase in remote working, mobility behaviour has changed dramatically as many commuters are spending more time at home. Typical motor trade customers are travelling into work less and this has had both positive and negative implications for the Motor Industry. A survey conducted by McKinsey in 2020, at an earlier stage of the pandemic, indicated that when it came to purchasing cars, purchase intent was 14% below pre-COVID-19 levels. As consumers were spending less time in their vehicles their mentality and purchase behaviour changed, leading them to spend their money within their home environment rather than on their transport.

Along with this, many individuals developed new travel habits such as walking and cycling, which also reduced their need to spend on changing their car.

However, it has become evident that the switch to remote work has also had positive implications. As individuals have saved money due to the lack of travel costs, they have more disposable income to spend on purchasing a car. The money saved due to the lack of commute to work has provided individuals with an opportunity to upgrade their car.

Individuals are more willing to treat themselves and upgrade their lifestyle by spending their savings on a luxury vehicle. Since the pandemic, more individuals are finding comfort in car ownership as people are resistant to the use of public transport. The reliance on a bus, train or taxi has dropped due to health and safety concerns. A recent survey by Google reported that 12% of people who did not own a car were considering purchasing one.

The traditional ways of purchasing cars have declined, and the increase in online shopping habits seen through COVID-19 has driven this, with consumers now preferring their Dealer experience from the comfort of their home. This transition offers both opportunities and challenges for Dealers.

Providing an online experience

A study conducted by Cox Automotive, the US automotive solutions company, reported that two out of three car shoppers are more likely to buy a vehicle 100% online. Therefore, providing consumers with an online experience is essential for Dealers today. The most important and influential moments of the buying journey for car buyers is the research that occurs before purchase and the majority of this research is carried out online.

According to Google, 95% of vehicle buyers use digital sources of information to conduct their research before purchase. Video research is the most popular, many consumers use YouTube to view test drives and features. Therefore, Dealers will need to invest in and adopt new digital processes in order to provide consumers with a valuable digital experience that will encourage sales.

Motor Dealers will have to create online platforms to showcase vehicles and engage with consumers effectively. Consumers no longer start at the car Dealership, researching information on Dealerships usually starts on a



The shift to remote work has had many implications for individuals.

third-party website.

A study conducted by DoneDeal found that 90% of car owners start their car buying journey online. Therefore, having a strong presence on popular third-party websites in order to reach a variety of consumers is key to connecting with potential buyers. As the buyer journey is no longer face-to-face, Dealers must ensure to make the online experience as personal as possible by offering features online that allow consumers to contact Dealerships with any queries. Providing consumers with a simple platform to research and purchase a car is important. A growing trend is offering an online option for car delivery as well as digital updates, therefore investing in technology will improve the buying experience. Motor Dealers should take advantage of the digital advertising opportunities available. The digital world has evolved radically in the last few years and this has impacted how consumers engage. Social media platforms are an excellent way to connect and engage. They allow for organisations to create innovative campaigns and are also cost-effective. As consumer buyer behaviour is changing it is important to manage this change effectively. This can be done by identifying the new expectations and needs that consumers now look for from your organisation. Working to accommodate car buyers concerns by conducting business beyond the physical location will create a more efficient experience for buyers.

Motor Dealers will need to lead and develop their teams effectively in order to adapt to this change. By embracing new digital trends, communication, collaboration and productivity levels will increase within teams. It will also provide a more valuable and personal experience for consumers.

Appoint a digital leader who will check in on team members on a regular basis and ensure consumer needs are being met. Build a positive culture that fosters digital innovation and collaboration, and invest in technology and digital tools that will help your organisation stay connected internally and with consumers.

Team development is necessary to manage this change. This development can occur by providing the skills, knowledge and training necessary. Finally, having a team that is agile will be highly beneficial. This will help in adapting to developments and changes that are occurring within the Motor Industry, especially in relation to consumer behaviour.

TOP 10 SELLING CARS 2021



Hyundai Tucson **3,200** 5.0%



Toyota Corolla **2,652** 4.2%



Toyota RAV **1,766** 2.8%



Volkswagen Tiguan **1,706** 2.7%



Škoda Octavia **1,677** 2.6%



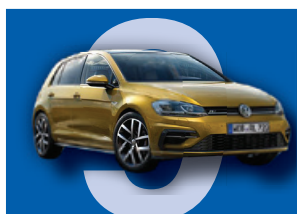
Ford Focus **1,675** 2.6%



Toyota Yaris **1,667** 2.6%



Toyota C-HR **1,588** 2.5%



Volkswagen Golf **1,401** 2.2%



Kia Sportage **1,336** 2.1%

NEW PASSENGER CAR REGISTRATIONS

| Marque | 01/06-30/06 | 01/01-30/06 | Market share 2021 % |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Alfa Romeo | 2 | 10 | 0.02 |
| Audi | 110 | 2610 | 4.09 |
| BMW | 197 | 2703 | 4.23 |
| Citroën | 1 | 493 | 0.77 |
| Cupra | 1 | 78 | 0.12 |
| Dacia | 20 | 1452 | 2.27 |
| DS | 4 | 8 | 0.01 |
| Fiat | 7 | 131 | 0.21 |
| Ford | 141 | 5079 | 7.95 |
| Honda | 26 | 442 | 0.69 |
| Hyundai | 186 | 6220 | 9.74 |
| Jaguar | 5 | 107 | 0.17 |
| Jeep | 2 | 5 | 0.01 |
| Kia | 197 | 3951 | 6.19 |
| Land Rover | 12 | 513 | 0.80 |
| Lexus | 11 | 242 | 0.38 |
| Mazda | 6 | 666 | 1.04 |
| Mercedes-Benz | 46 | 2092 | 3.28 |
| MG | 21 | 148 | 0.23 |
| Mini | 25 | 362 | 0.57 |
| Mitsubishi | 3 | 168 | 0.26 |
| Nissan | 74 | 2726 | 4.27 |
| Opel | 36 | 1358 | 2.13 |
| Peugeot | 110 | 3535 | 5.53 |
| Porsche | 2 | 106 | 0.17 |
| Renault | 30 | 2553 | 4.00 |
| Seat | 35 | 2324 | 3.64 |
| Škoda | 195 | 5700 | 8.92 |
| Ssangyong | 0 | 55 | 0.09 |
| Subaru | 0 | 5 | 0.01 |
| Suzuki | 21 | 705 | 1.10 |
| Tesla | 198 | 591 | 0.93 |
| Toyota | 294 | 8098 | 12.68 |
| Volkswagen | 658 | 7684 | 12.03 |
| Volvo | 89 | 921 | 1.44 |
| Private Import | 2 | 25 | 0.04 |
| Total June 2021 | 2,767 | 63,867 | |
| Total June 2020 | 1,006 | 52,885 | |
| 2021 Change 2020 | 1,761 | 10,982 | |
| % Change 2021 - 2020 | 175.05% | 20.77% | |

TOP SELLING CARS JUNE 2021

| Position | Model | Units sold | Market share % |
|----------|-------------------|------------|----------------|
| 1 | Volkswagen Polo | 207 | 7.5 |
| 2 | Tesla Model 3 | 198 | 7.2 |
| 3 | Volkswagen Tiguan | 101 | 3.7 |
| 4 | Toyota Corolla | 99 | 3.6 |
| 5 | Hyundai Tucson | 96 | 3.5 |

| Position | Model | Units sold | Market share % |
|----------|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| 6 | Kia Sportage | 84 | 3.0 |
| 7 | Toyota Rav | 80 | 2.9 |
| 8 | Volkswagen T-Cross | 78 | 2.8 |
| 9 | Volkswagen T-Roc | 75 | 2.7 |
| 10 | Toyota Yaris | 68 | 2.5 |

NEW LIGHT COMMERCIAL REGISTRATIONS

| Marque | 01/06- 30/06 | 01/01- 30/06 | % Share |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------|
| Audi | 0 | 2 | 0.01 |
| Citroën | 56 | 994 | 5.84 |
| Dacia | 4 | 12 | 0.07 |
| Fiat | 15 | 292 | 1.71 |
| Ford | 276 | 4240 | 24.90 |
| Fuso | 6 | 51 | 0.30 |
| Great Wall | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Hyundai | 31 | 169 | 0.99 |
| Isuzu | 9 | 71 | 0.42 |
| Iveco | 7 | 102 | 0.60 |
| Kia | 5 | 161 | 0.95 |
| Land Rover | 11 | 170 | 1.00 |
| LDV | 23 | 177 | 1.04 |
| MAN | 10 | 114 | 0.67 |
| Mercedes-Benz | 50 | 771 | 4.53 |
| Mitsubishi | 6 | 98 | 0.58 |
| Nissan | 42 | 952 | 5.59 |
| Opel | 65 | 1264 | 7.42 |
| Peugeot | 68 | 1767 | 10.38 |
| Renault | 139 | 1993 | 11.70 |
| Ssanyong | 1 | 25 | 0.15 |
| Subaru | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Toyota | 65 | 1341 | 7.88 |
| Volkswagon | 85 | 2161 | 12.69 |
| Private Import | 6 | 22 | 0.13 |
| Other | 12 | 78 | 0.46 |
| Total June 2021 | 992 | 17,027 | |
| Total June 2020 | 569 | 10,569 | |
| 2021 change 2020 | 423 | 6,458 | |
| % change 2021 - 2020 | 74.34% | 61.10% | |

BUSES/COACHES REGISTRATIONS

| Marque | 01/06- 30/06 | 01/01- 30/06 | % Share |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------|
| DAF | 0 | 2 | 0.92 |
| Higer | 1 | 5 | 2.29 |
| Isuzu | 0 | 8 | 3.67 |
| Iveco | 1 | 7 | 3.21 |
| MAN | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Mercedes-Benz | 0 | 1 | 0.46 |
| Scania | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Sunsundegui | 0 | 24 | 11.01 |
| VDL DAF | 13 | 55 | 25.23 |
| Volvo | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Wrightbus | 0 | 3 | 3.13 |
| Yutong | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Private Import | 1 | 113 | 92.62 |
| Total June 2021 | 16 | 218 | |
| Total June 2020 | 35 | 96 | |
| 2021 change 2020 | -19 | 122 | |
| % change 2021 - 2020 | -54.29% | 127.08% | |

NEW HEAVY COMMERCIAL REGISTRATIONS

| Marque | 01/06- 30/06 | 01/01- 30/06 | % Share |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------|
| DAF | 13 | 242 | 18.49 |
| Dennis Eagle | 0 | 1 | 0.08 |
| Fuso | 1 | 20 | 1.53 |
| Hino | 0 | 1 | 0.08 |
| Isuzu | 10 | 53 | 4.05 |
| Iveco | 6 | 40 | 3.06 |
| MAN | 4 | 58 | 4.43 |
| Mercedes-Benz | 4 | 107 | 8.17 |
| Renault | 8 | 124 | 9.47 |
| Romaquip | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Scania | 29 | 426 | 32.54 |
| Volvo | 9 | 205 | 18.59 |
| Private Import | 2 | 32 | 15.53 |
| Total June 2021 | 86 | 1,309 | |
| Total June 2020 | 65 | 1,103 | |
| 2021 change 2020 | 21 | 206 | |
| % change 2021 - 2020 | 32.31% | 18.68% | |

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

Funding the future

As the customer journey evolves and more of the car-buying process shifts online, the role of Dealer finance has evolved with it. In this feature, we profile four of the country's leading finance houses.

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. The challenge of transferring this once longstanding successful business across to First Citizen was enormous and required an institutional purchase of the various loan books. This was finally realised in late 2012, when Deutsche Bank purchased the remaining loan portfolios (mainly Auto) from Permanent tsb and awarded the servicing contract to First Citizen Finance. DLL (De Lage Landen) purchased the Agri & Equipment book from Permanent tsb Finance and also awarded the servicing contract to First Citizen.

By 2014, the team was lending again. Deutsche Bank and Magnetar Capital provided a new revolving credit facility specifically to finance passenger and commercial vehicles. Product innovation was prioritised as competition heated up in the marketplace. First Citizen have continued to develop their own proprietary online system, 'Autoline', which allows approved Motor Dealers to electronically process the applications from activation to payment stage.

The emergence of mobile technology,



Chris Hanlon, Managing Director, First Citizen Finance.

in particular, over the past decade has transformed how consumers interact with organisations and ultimately influences how they make purchasing decisions. A spokesperson for First Citizen Finance explains: "As early adopters in technology, we like to innovate. The introduction of mobile applications, namely 'EasyCalc' for Irish motor dealers and 'Abacus' for the general car buying public, has assisted First Citizen Finance to reach new customers and deliver more intuitive buying experiences. The latest innovation is called Autopoint.ie, which is currently being rolled out nationwide. It is an online marketplace for consumers wishing to locate quality used cars from approved local motor dealers and has a finance solution attached to each qualifying vehicle displayed on the platform."

The company now operates across four key product divisions in the Republic of Ireland – Motor Finance, Agri Finance, SME Equipment Finance and Commercial Real Estate (CRE) Finance. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an immediate and profound impact on all sections of Irish society and the economy. Origination levels were very

low between March and May 2020 but have rebounded strongly as companies and customers adapted to their new environments. "Our main concern was around a hard Brexit. Thankfully, this hasn't happened. Both businesses and consumers were prepared as much as possible for both scenarios so, although it is very early, it is expected now that consumer confidence in the domestic car buying market will improve with the return of certainty now back in place. Of course, the continued impact of COVID-19 throughout 2021 was not part of the plan and the speedy execution of the vaccination programme, now well underway, will determine when we can see normal levels of new car sales return to the market," explained Chris Hanlon, Managing Director at First Citizen Finance.

"Used Car sales have been strong and Motor Dealers have been doing well to trade under tight Government and public health guidance. It is anticipated that COVID-19 related trading restrictions will continue to subside over the coming months and this is positive news for the recovery," Chris concluded.

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T 01 884 6700 F 01 884 6703

E info@firstcitizen.ie



www.firstcitizen.ie

Lending terms & conditions apply. A Guarantor 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.



Finance through difficult times

A little over a year ago none of us had heard of Tony Holohan and 'flattening the curve' was a totally new concept to us all. The past 15 months has left an indelible scar, here in Ireland and throughout the entire world. Millions of lives have been lost to this shocking illness with communities and families ravaged by the pandemic, which has impacted us all. According to First Auto Finance, operating through the lockdowns proved challenging for the finance industry. A spokesperson states: "Click and deliver followed by click and collect changed how we all do business. Even the most reluctant of us were forced to embrace digital channels and doing business will never be the same again! Fortunately, First Auto Finance was once again, ahead of the game and had already embarked on a significant digital journey, focused on a full 'end to end' experience for Dealers and customers. In addition, we assisted and facilitated Dealers in building new COVID-19 friendly websites, providing APIs ensuring click and collect cars with finance already arranged, became the norm. Throughout, we provided our Dealer Partners with an unrivalled service proposition."

The company did this through a combination of new technologies and platforms, supported by its team of dedicated professionals. "During the various restrictions we operated with a skeleton staff located at our central

office, with the remainder of the Team working remotely. In addition our Sales Team was, as ever, always accessible and committed to ensuring proposals were managed effectively and importantly, that deals got paid! In the main, it worked extremely well, creaking occasionally but we delivered on the high expectations of those Dealer partners. Appreciating the difficult trading conditions they encountered, we would like to thank the Irish Motor Industry for their continued support of the country's largest Independent Motor Finance Company." First Auto Finance Ireland Ltd is the exclusive intermediary for Close Brothers Motor Finance in the Republic of Ireland. The company was established as a Dealer-focused motor finance provider in 2010 and commenced writing new business in February 2011. The spokesperson adds: "It rapidly became a credible alternative to the banks and captive automotive finance providers with a growing market share and compelling service offering. Its network throughout Ireland includes over 800 franchise and independent dealers. First Auto Finance was quickly established as Ireland's largest independent finance company and the Management team at First Auto Finance has many years' experience and extensive knowledge of the motor finance industry. First Auto Finance is a division of Finance Ireland Ltd, a privately owned Financial Services Company."

Ireland's largest independent motor finance company.

Supporting Irish Motor Dealers



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Customers are first priority

Meanwhile, Ulster Bank's Lombard is also supporting customers and dealers in these challenging times. Head of Motor Finance at Ulster Bank's Lombard, Donal Walsh advises: "As Ireland re-opens fully, the timing has never been better to shine a light on all of the fantastic work that's being done around the country by Car Dealers. Through our Lombard Consumer Motor Finance team we have formed close relationships with Motor Dealers around the country and we know that over the past year they have been working really hard to meet the ongoing challenges of COVID-19, adapting and innovating for customers every day. With this in mind, Ulster Bank's Lombard is delighted to sponsor the 2021 CarsIreland.ie Dealership Awards."

The awards, now in their seventh year strive to recognise the online marketing efforts of car dealerships across the country. This year will see the addition of an extra award for an 'Industry Superstar' – a staff member who has gone above and beyond for their company in light of the difficulties brought about by COVID-19 and ongoing public health restrictions.

Donal continues: "These awards build upon a successful partnership with CarsIreland.ie, which enables visitors to that website to receive an immediate finance quote from Ulster Bank's Lombard on any car being sold by appointed dealers."



Donal Walsh, Head of Motor Finance at Ulster Bank's Lombard.

FORWARD THINKING FINANCE

- Contact our Motor Finance Specialist team on 1850 215 000 or visit lombard.ie



Proud Sponsor of CarsIreland.ie
Dealer Awards

CarsIreland.ie

Lines are open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Calls may be recorded.
Over 18's only. Security and / or guarantees and indemnities may be required.
Product fees may apply. Lending criteria, terms and conditions apply. Business use only.

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Gearing up for growth

As the used car market heats up, many Dealers are, once again, looking towards growth. Liam Quegan, Managing Director of NextGear Capital, reflects on their optimistic mood and the role funding can play in helping Dealers achieve their ambitions. "We're finding an optimistic mood amongst Dealers we're meeting and speaking to; in fact, I'd go as far as saying many have emerged from the latest lockdown with fire in their bellies. But this positivity is hard-earned. Demand for quality, used stock is as fierce as ever and Dealers have their work cut out to ensure their forecourts stay stocked this summer. Dealers need to buy well and sell quickly. That includes having the basics in place, not least access to funding that gives them the freedom and confidence to bid or buy on the right vehicle. With NextGear Capital, I believe we offer something different. We've created funding that gives Dealers freedom and flexibility. They receive 100 per cent funding regardless of source, including auction, trade sources, part-ex and even vehicles bought directly from the public. In addition, NextGear Capital offers ROI Dealers the opportunity to fund UK stock using a dual currency facility. This has become increasingly important as the pandemic has forced many Dealers to search for stock outside of their usual channels."



Liam Quegan, Managing Director, NextGear Capital.



Funding the return to growth.

After a challenging 12 months, many dealers are emerging with fire in their bellies. That's why we're helping over 1,700 dealers with the freedom and flexibility of 100% funding regardless of source. That means auction, trade sources, part-exchange and even vehicles bought directly from the public. Whatever your journey, you can be sure we'll be there right beside you all the way.

Discover how NextGear Capital can help you on your return to growth. Call us on **1890 944 533** or visit nextgearcapital.ie/fundingyourreturn

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New vehicles

The latest models on the way to forecourts around the country.

OPEL GRANDLAND

Opel's SUV flagship features a digital cockpit and an enhanced range of assistance systems

Engines: petrol, diesel and plug-in hybrid variants

Pricing: to be announced



AUDI Q4 E-TRON

Suitable as household's main car, says Audi

Batteries: Lithium-ion 55kW (Q4 e-tron 35) and 82kW (Q4 e-tron 40)

Pricing: starts from €41,465



MERCEDES-BENZ EACTROS

The eActros recently received its world premiere

Batteries: option of three or four battery packs of 105kWh each

Pricing: to be announced



CUPRA BORN

Cupra's first all electric vehicle is due in 2022

Batteries: 45kWh, 58kWh and 77kWh options, also available with a higher power output version

Pricing: to be announced



NISSAN QASHQAI

Nissan electrifies its iconic crossover

Engines/Batteries: mild hybrid HR13 petrol and a Lithium-ion battery

Pricing: from €30,500



AFTERMARKET

- ▶ BUSINESS SYSTEMS
- ▶ DIAGNOSTICS

A systematic approach

Dealer management systems are critical in enabling dealerships to manage their operations efficiently and profitably.

The Dealer Management System Market Forecast to 2027 - COVID-19

Impact and Global Analysis by Deployment and Application report from

ResearchAndMarkets.com forecasts that growth in the automotive industry is expected to support Dealer management system market growth over the next six years to 2027. According to the report, the global Dealer management system market was valued at US\$6,981.67 million in 2019 and is projected to reach US\$10,028.30 million by 2027.

Dealer management systems enable auto Dealers to offer swift and reliable purchase processes and services to customers. Additionally, the system helps meet customer requirements by facilitating coordination between products and services, and ensuring Dealers are ready and equipped with the parts required for repairs; this simplifies the repair and maintenance services and inventory management process.

The dealership management systems also facilitate seamless financial reporting, payroll services, and cash flow management. The systems integrate technologies such as customer relationship management (CRM), business intelligence and reporting, and inventory management. They further assist auto dealers in enhanced customer conversions and customer retention, along with allowing them to maintain a remote help desk.



Time for a Change

DEALER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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- Franchise Interfaces
- SMS & Email Contacts
- VHC - Visual Health Check

- Composite & Management Accounts
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- Graphical Report Generation
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Cloud-hosted solutions can simplify your IT and achieve tangible cost savings.

Cloud-hosted solutions

Mick Forrest, Managing Director at RNH Solutions, outlines the benefits that modern, cloud-hosted software solutions can bring to automotive type businesses, especially with the ever-increasing competitiveness of the Industry. "Dealer management systems come in various forms, including web applications and cloud-hosted applications. Web applications are accessed via a browser on any internet-enabled device, in the same way you'd use a website. Cloud hosted applications are also accessed via the Internet, but via a dedicated remote connection. They are a 'hybrid' solution that provides a familiar, feature rich desktop experience, with the added benefit of being hosted in the cloud. You get the best of both worlds." Mick explains that cloud computing refers to accessing data or applications via an Internet connection, rather than installing applications and saving data to a single device. "Cloud-hosted solutions allow you to simplify your IT and achieve tangible cost savings. Rather than buying and installing software upfront, hosted solutions allow you to rent business management systems on a flexible per-user basis. Instead of purchasing and maintaining expensive servers on your own premises, your local system connects to a state-of-the-art data centre by means of a robust, enterprise-grade network. And because all the processing is done off-site using powerful virtual servers, you could even continue to use your existing workstation hardware."

Mick adds that it is beneficial to use cloud-hosted software systems because the Software as a Service (SaaS) approach gives you the same functionality as traditional software, without the cost and time investments of overseeing your own server infrastructure. "Your software is updated when necessary, your server hardware maintained and your data is securely stored and backed-up; leaving you free to focus on running your business. Many companies are already utilising the cloud and reaping the rewards each day, driving their business performance as a result."

RNH Solutions

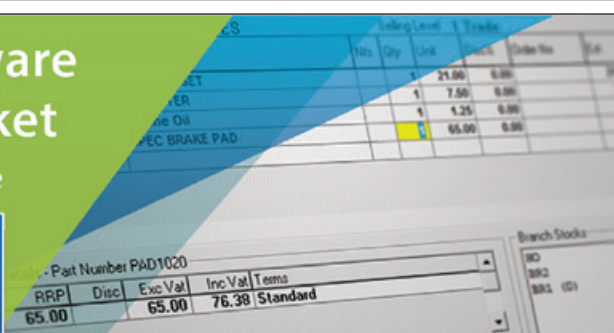
RNH Solutions provides a range of MAM Software solutions to multiple businesses that handle core business processes from sales processes to stock management and accounting. These integrated solutions give businesses one point of contact for all of their software and hardware requirements.

The company provides Autopart, MAM Software's versatile business-management software designed specifically for automotive parts distributors, motor factors and retailers. It is feature rich software that seamlessly integrates sales, stock management, accounting and reporting processes into one easy-to-use package. It's available as both an on-premises and cloud-hosted solution, Autopart Online.

Business Management Software for the automotive aftermarket

Autopart is affordable, flexible and simple to use

- ✔ Product & price management
- ✔ Flexible sales functionality
- ✔ Purchasing & stock control
- ✔ Real time price & availability from 40+ Autonet enabled suppliers
- ✔ Integrated ledger accounting
- ✔ Trade & consumer e-commerce
- ✔ Price & availability lookup



Introducing the X-431 EURO PRO 5

The X-431 EURO PRO 5 is a new, high-end vehicle fault diagnostic device, developed by Launch and based on an Android system.

Supplier Woodford Diagnostic and Training Services says the Euro Pro 5 Plus inherits the hallmark Launch benefits of wide vehicle coverage, powerful test functions, accurate test data and numerous special functions. The X-431 EURO PRO 5 uses 'smart diagnostics' and 'cloud diagnostic' technologies for the first time, thus allowing better and more efficient maintenance. It comes in a robust carry case with all necessary leads and a wide selection of legacy OBD 1 adapters.

Fully integrated

The PRO 5 Plus supports the optional HD truck module and Launch ADAS system. A key feature of the new PRO5 Plus is a fully integrated version of the Haynes pro electronic module. The PRO 5 Plus comes with a two-year warranty, two-year software package and a one-year subscription to the Electronics module. 'Euro' denotes the European Pro 5, beware of unofficial Asian spec imports. 'Plus' denotes Launch Europe exclusive specification with 64 GB of storage and HaynesPro.



The X-431 EURO PRO 5 is a new, high-end vehicle fault diagnostic device, developed by Launch.



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Diagnostics for the Present & Future

X-431 EURO PRO 5
SERIES INTELLIGENT DIAGNOSIS

The X-431 EURO PRO 5 is a new, high-end vehicle fault diagnostic device, developed by LAUNCH and based on an Android system. It continues to use the advantages of LAUNCH's analytical technology, such as wide vehicle model coverage, powerful test functions, an abundance of special functions and accurate test results. The X-431 EURO PRO 5 uses "smart diagnostics" and "cloud diagnostic" technologies for the first time, thus allowing better and more efficient maintenance.



LAUNCH CREATE CHANGE

2 years downloads

2 years warranty

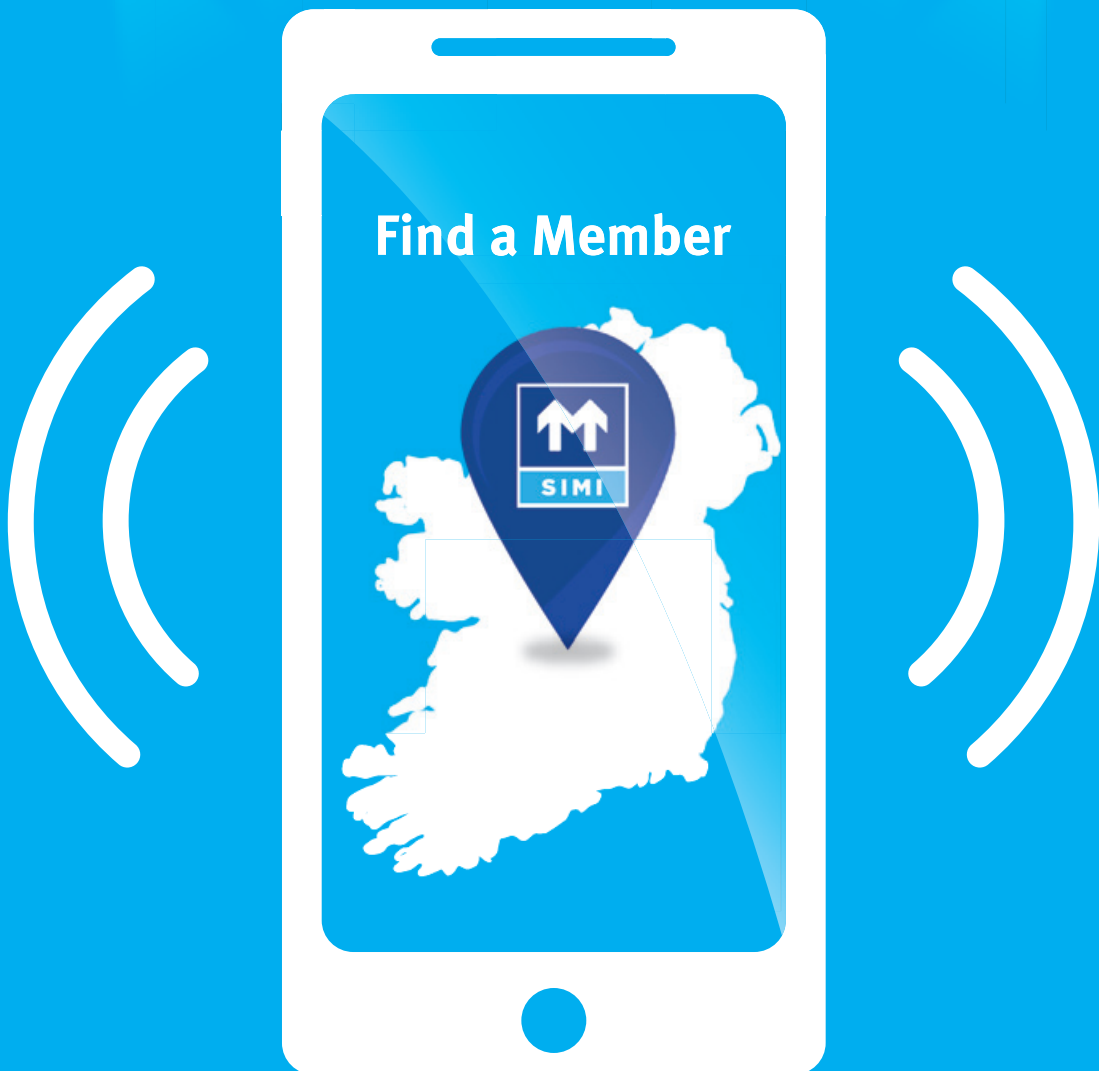
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