

Changing the Face of Independent Dealers



In a move that will see the rejuvenation of the independent motor dealer market within South Africa, Lightstone Auto and the Blue Chip Dealer Group have joined forces to build a new age dealer network.

Lightstone Auto, part of the Lightstone Group, is regarded as the electronic delivery and industry insights expert in the motor industry. The company has a good track record of providing data-driven insights, online market intelligence, new vehicle sales data and compliance expertise to the local motor industry.

The partnership the Blue Chip Dealer Group's prospective members with access to a transaction platform, industry insights and various compliance solutions. The Blue Chip Group is also the first independently owned group that conducts a specialised customer satisfaction index with all customers. Furthermore, all members have access to a full complaint resolution process. Buyers of vehicles from a Blue Chip Dealer have access to stock outside of their geographical area, as well as

the assurance that they are purchasing a vehicle from a reputable organisation that has subscribed to a strict code of conduct.

Pieter Wessels, who heads up Lightstone Auto, is excited about the value the partnership will bring to the industry. "The purpose of the Blue Chip Dealer Group is to create a unique and exclusive grouping of independent motor dealers bound by strong principles, shared values and a fully integrated national trading platform," he said.

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Six years ago various independent dealership owners in the Western Cape, under the leadership of Eddie Nortier from Nortier Motors, came together to align their common interests. They established the Blue Chip Dealer Group, which allowed for integrated trading whereby members

would be able to share stock and cost effectively advertise their retail stock. A win-win motto of "I have a buyer, you have the vehicle, let's do business" was adopted. The members soon recognised that the platform's potential and membership yielded a much broader opportunity for the upliftment of independent dealers.

The Western Cape cell quickly grew to include 25 members and the need to expand was evident. An independent partner was required to assist in nationalising the concept. The Lightstone Group was the obvious choice and a joint National Executive Council with a 50/50 representation was established to drive the nationalisation of the Blue Chip Dealer Group.

The West Rand cell was the first addition to the roll-out in establishing a national footprint. Other cells are set to follow and identified future members will be invited to join this unique and exclusive group where they will have access to the value provided by the Blue Chip Dealer Group and Lightstone Auto. ■