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Is the connected car a new profit center for you?

Shop telematics solutions come to the mobile dealer channel.

Sometimes selling is very tangible. Sometimes it's not.

To sell something tangible, for example a wrench, you hand your customer a new shiny chrome tool, point out the features and benefits and close the sale. Selling something intangible is different. There is nothing to hold or touch.

Such is the case when selling telematics technology for independent repair shops. It's more about the result than the product. This is a bit harder to sell.

At AAPEX in Las Vegas last month, I met with Harlan Siegel, vice president of Launch Tech USA. He demonstrated the new Golo remote OBD-II diagnostic system and explained the advantages of a mobile dealer selling it to a shop owner.

The Golo is currently one of the few remote diagnostics available to mobile dealers. And it's the only one that doesn't require paying for an ongoing data plan, says Siegel.

Q. How does the remote diagnostic technology work?

A. Basically, the shop owner plugs a Golo "dongle" into his customer's OBD-II port and installs a free Android or iOS app on the customer's smartphone. The dongle fits any OBD-II equipped vehicle (generally any vehicle built since 1996).

Everything runs as usual until the customer sees a MIL (malfunction indicator lamp) on the dashboard. The customer then pulls his or her car over to the shoulder of the road, opens the Golo app on a smartphone and uses it to call his local shop.

When the shop gets this call, they'll see the customer's connection on their Android-based Launch Pro-Line scan tool. They push the touchscreen to request access. In turn, a large "accept" button shows up on the customer's smartphone app. The consumer clicks "accept" to allow the shop access to the diagnostic data on the vehicle via a Bluetooth bridge between the phone and the Golo dongle.

The device can read live data and clear codes including enhanced SRS, ABS, engine, transmission and body control DTCs.

"It works on all makes, all models and all system," says Siegel. But Golo is exclusively tied to a Launch Golo-equipped scan tool. It doesn't work with other diagnostic tools.

Q. Why would I want to sell this?

A. One reason is this is not a technician purchase but a shop purchase. This means the dollars for this come out of a different, often deeper pocket.

Also the shop needs one of these devices for every vehicle

they want to sell the service to. Once the dongle is married to the vehicle it cannot be transferred to another vehicle. And, for a different shop to access it, they would need a Golo-equipped scan tool and the original shop would need to release the customer.

At a dealer street price of about \$75 each, a shop that buys into this will become a steady revenue stream for you. Every new car in the program is a sale for you.

Q. Who should I approach?

A. You'll want to approach the shop owner or manager.

The ideal shop to buy into Golo is run by a business-minded person who sees the device as a marketing tool more than a remote diagnostic tool. You can spot them right away, they usually have nice waiting rooms and slick advertising, says Siegel.

Golo has some unique marketing features like a web connection that lets them send information to customers one-on-one or as a group. The shop can send service reminders or special offers through push notifications. Unlike an email that a customer can skip over or a text that may cost them money, a smartphone app notification commands attention and costs them nothing.

Go online to read the full article

Contributing editor Phil Sasso additional questions online:

- Why would a consumer pay for remote diagnostics? What are the benefits?

VehicleServicePros.com/12137917



Why would a shop buy this? How will they use it?



Different shops would have different approaches.

But the key is "it's not about a broken car, it's about customer retention," says Siegel.

Some shops sell the Golo as part of a warranty program. Others package it with a group of maintenance services like oil changes and tire rotations. Still others sell it with a credit toward future services. Some may be able to sell it for the \$149.95 list price.

Siegel says one shop owner told him he'd give a Golo device to each customer free. Considering his customer acquisition costs, the cost seemed a fair price to retain them.

I understand the shop owner's reasoning, especially since the Golo links the customer exclusively to his shop. But my guess is this is a higher-end shop serving customers with higher-end vehicles. Most shops would want to get the \$75 back upfront.



What about privacy or security concerns?



The Golo isn't sharing your blood type or bank information, jokes Siegel. It's sharing vehicle diagnostic data. So there aren't a lot of privacy issues involved.

Most importantly, the customer is the gatekeeper of the information. He or she decides whether to press the "accept" button to allow access the vehicle's data.

Finally, the device does not allow bi-directional communication. That means the technician cannot turn on the wipers or apply the brakes. This is by design to keep the customer's vehicle secure and avoid the fear of being hacked.



How do I sell this? It's a bit complicated to explain.



You probably don't want to take time to demo the product for



This Launch Tech USA Golo OBD dongle is plugged into the customer's vehicle OBD-II port. The device can then communicate with the shop.

the shop owner. It can be very time-consuming to sell the concept. Instead, hand out product brochures and/or point the customer to the Golo business website (<http://business.golocarcare.com/>).

Training representatives at Launch are also available to run Golo product demos or training seminars for your shop owners. You might want to ask your District Manager to arrange training for a group of dealers in your territory—or, better yet, add it to the beginning of an upcoming diagnostic seminar.



Isn't this a bit ahead of its time?



For some shops and some consumers, yes.

But it will happen. It's all part of the growing "Internet of Things" – devices that are connected and communicate via the cloud, from refrigerators to garage door openers.

The opportunity is wide open. If you get in now, you will be the go-to-guy (or go-to-gal) as telematics takes root in the independent shop.

This isn't bleeding edge technology, either. Automakers have had this stuff in their vehicles for years. As more and more cars equipped with factory-installed telematics come off warranty, more savvy shop owners will seize the opportunity to serve an already initiated market.

And remember it works on every OEM car built since 1996. So the potential market for a shop owner is "HUGE" as Donald Trump would say. 🗣️



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