

# CAR DEALER INSIDER

Profit Making Secrets for the Competitive Dealer

Home

Search Articles

Topical Index

Past Issues

Print Current Issue

PDF Issue Archive

Conferences

Activate E-access

Subscribe Now

Privacy Policy

About Us

Contact Us

**Issue Date: January 17, 2005**

## DMS integration, better tools with new software upgrades

Menu software providers have steadily been working to eliminate double-entry of customer data between their systems and those offered by DMS vendors, such as ADP and Reynolds & Reynolds. Two leading providers, F&I MenuWizard from Dealerware and SmartMenu from Innovative Aftermarket Systems, offer integration packages that eliminate the double-entry problem and, in turn, help eliminate information errors on deals.

At NADA's upcoming convention in New Orleans, you'll see more F&I menu vendors touting their products and services. Some considerations as you shop for what's best for your store:

**Archival availability.** IAS is rolling out a Web-based version of its SmartMenu product that allows you to store all iterations of the menus you create as part of a deal, says company president Bob Corbin. Its a compliance feature that allows you to look back through a deal if a question about compliance or whether you offered a product comes up.

**Lockdown functionality.** F&I consultant **Gil Van Over** of gvo3 Consulting, Schereville, Ind., says automated menus are more likely to thwart abuses than paper-based menus. Both the F&I MenuWizard and SmartMenu offer lockdowns you can set to prevent F&I managers from altering product prices, interest rates, date of a first installment payment and other deal variables to effectively pack payments.

Tom McCollum, CEO and president of the David McDavid Automotive, an Irving, Texas-based platform for Asbury Automotive, says his stores build hard caps on product pricing, interest rates and profit margins to prevent any potential abuses. "We think we've eliminated all potential manipulations of the menu," he says.

**Menu flexibility.** McCollum says the Asbury chain selected the F&I MenuWizard product from Dealerware, a company headed by former dealer Mike Absher, because of the program's flexibility and the company's support in creating customized menus to fit a variety of franchises and geographic needs. Some providers use more static templates which can be fine, depending on how much customization you prefer.

**Reporting/audit tools.** The ability of your management team to generate reports on F&I production, penetrations and compliance varies between menu software vendors. Some dealers regard the tools as redundant, given manual checks they already perform. Others like to see regular, ongoing readouts (some available through Web-based access) on how individual F&I managers and departments are performing.

**Categories:** [Technology](#)



© 2005 [UCG](#). All rights reserved.

Do not duplicate or redistribute in any form.

*Car Dealer Insider* is available for internal use only by authorized users.

*Car Dealer Insider*

11300 Rockville Pike, Suite 1100, Rockville, MD 20852.

Phone: 888/287/2223 Fax: 301/816-8945 Email: [cdicustomer@ucg.com](mailto:cdicustomer@ucg.com)