

# MIO UPDATE

Newsletter for the Motor Industry Ombudsman of South Africa Issue 2 Volume 5 August 2009

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## New Focus on Customers welcomed



*Ombudsman Johan van Vreden*

A pleasing focus on customer relations and customer care is the one beneficial outcome from the tough time that the motor industry is experiencing, says the Motor Industry Ombudsman, Johan van Vreden.

"With the massive slowdown in sales dealers have been forced to re-look the ways in which they conduct their business and, fortunately, a large percentage of them

have turned to the strengthening of customer relations to help them survive. Even more pleasing is the fact that it is proving to be a successful way of retaining customers and also of generating new business.

"It is certainly to be hoped that this approach will remain in place and even grow when economic conditions return to a growth phase. It is the belief of this Office that we will experience considerable and even dramatic new approaches to the motor retail industry's way of doing business in future.

"What we would strongly recommend to dealers at this stage is to ensure that their customer relations approach

is formalised and structured to meet their objectives in a professional manner. At the heart of this should be training of all the departments in their business in customer relations – from the tea lady to the dealer principal. There are many instances that can provide the required training and it would be wise to utilise their expertise.

"Importantly too, good customer relations should not only be practised with the purchasers of your products and services. Good relation between employees and the various departments in your business can play a key role in the smooth, effective and successful running of your business, says Van Vreden.



*You getting colder than usual lately? So is your vehicle. Using antifreeze will not only make for smoother running in winter weather but will also give added protection to a number of working parts.*

## Call on Motor Trade to Assist Road Safety

The Motor Industry Ombudsman has expressed concern at the apparent increase in the high rate of fatal accidents being reported and has appealed to the members of the industry to play an active role in promoting safer road usage.

"After significant progress reported over the peak holiday periods at the beginning of the year to bring down the road death toll, it would seem that the situation is again regressing to the past unacceptable levels," says Ombudsman Johan van Vreden.

"This Office believes that especially the sales and also the service people in the retail trade can play an important role in educating motorists in the use and maintenance of safety systems. When selling a vehicle the salesperson should make a point of ensuring that the new owner is fully aware of the safety features in the vehicle and also how to use them effectively.

"In addition, service personnel should inspect safety items such as seatbelts, lights, tyres and brakes every time they work on a vehicle and report any indication of

impending failure to the motorist. When it comes to safety preventative maintenance is of vital importance and can save many lives.

"Not only will the industry be providing a valuable service to the motorist and the country as a whole, but they will also be laying a solid foundation for truly concerned and effective customer relations. Showing care for your customer's life must be the ultimate customer relations gesture. And also, it really it must be one of the least costly methods that a motor dealer can use to cement relationships," says Van Vreden.

# TPP Great for **Customer Retention**



*Fanie Lombaard*

“Business is changing fast and the retention of customers in the long term is becoming a prime requirement for success” says Fanie Lombaard, dealer principal of Global Nissan in Gezina, Pretoria.

And Fanie, a true winner with a number of Olympic medals in his cupboard, says that the TPP programme, for which the BB group has enrolled, is a key element in a winning customer relations programme.

“We have written the TPP programme into our Offer to Purchase document and our salesmen take every new customer through it in detail. By supporting this programme we visibly illustrate to customers our sincerity in caring for them and it gives them peace of mind and the

confidence to come back to us to do further business.

In his personal capacity Fanie has been one of South Africa’s great achievers at the past 4 Paralympics. In the Beijing Paralympics last year he really showed his metal by winning the discus event against the best from the rest of the world – even though he had a broken wrist!

The other events he also competed over the past four Paralympics were the shot-put and the javelin. His medal count from these tournaments consists of 9 gold, 1 silver and 2 bronze.

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## Contacting **Consultants**

Regional TPP consultants for pre-owned vehicle dealers, workshops, panelbeaters and fitment centres.

Johannesburg/ West Rand	Tjaart van der Walt (jnr)	084 845 9057
Pretoria/Midrand/East Rand/ Free State/Limpopo/Mpumalanga/ North West/ Northern Cape	Mercia van Niekerk	082 442 9250
KwaZulu-Natal	Cyril Neilson	071 608 9995
Eastern Cape	Stephanie Newsome	082 544 2124
Western Cape	Rozanne Volschenk	082 575 2681

## Welcome Newcomer

Mercia van Niekerk has joined the Office of the Ombudsman as a project consultant.

Her duties will be to service existing and canvass new subscribers for the Transaction Protected Programme (TPP) in Pretoria, Midrand, East Rand, Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North-west Province and the Northern Cape.

Mercia gained wide experience in marketing in her previous job in the marketing department of Telkom and as an estate agent.



## InspectaCar adopts TPP



*Gary Farrell*

Leading used vehicle franchise, InspectaCar, has joined the ranks of retailers binding themselves to the requirements of the Motor Industry Ombudsman's Transaction Protected Programme (TPP).

InspectaCar, a Pty company with WesBank as major shareholder, has 32 outlets throughout the country and,

says Chief Executive Officer Gary Farrell, is growing at a significant pace.

Gary, who has been involved in the motor franchise retail business since the late 1970's, says that especially when the industry is in a down cycle, customers look to doing business with franchises and companies that give them confidence and peace of mind. The TPP plays a major role in providing this security; especially as the customer sees them as the most independent and neutral body should the requirement for dispute resolution occur.