



The third year of a rebirth - and it's a winner

Ben Burd

Three years ago *Wheels* met with Bud Lauria to talk about the monumental shift in the local auto industry. At that time the news that General Motors had put Lauria Pontiac-Buick out of business was the topic of the day. As one of the many Canadian GM dealerships that received the same news, Bud and his Dad Frank, had to do some quick thinking to save the business and the employees' jobs.

Frank, who had come back from his holiday the same day as he heard the news immediately contacted Hyundai Canada and was heartened to hear that this time around, (he had previously, five years earlier, asked to be considered for a Hyundai dealership but they were too busy working with the new franchise in Clarington to award any more), Hyundai wanted to talk to them. Rebadging and adopting the Hyundai flag was easy, making it the number one Hyundai dealership it is today, was much harder.

Hyundai Canada judges its dealership using three criterion. One is the volume of unit sales compared to agreed upon targets, two is customer satisfaction as measured by customer feedback and the third is the market share percentage of the area's jurisdiction - Northumberland County. Talking about the way Lauria Hyundai approached the first criterion - unit sales, Bud says, "We sat down with Hyundai and agreed upon what would be a realistic target. The first year we destroyed it! The second year they (Hyundai) upped it to an achievable one - we beat it and now this year we are working hard to exceed that too." Customer service, the second criterion, was measured by surveying every single customer after a sale and after each warranty service. Just to show that Lauria is not juicing the survey, although Bud says that he and his team have worked hard on customer service these years, figures reveal that the return percentage for the new sales survey is 50% and the warranty service survey is less well responded to at 35%. "I don't know what to attribute it to but we continue to achieve. Customer service is not problematic it's just how we choose to deal with it - we deal with it head-on." It should be noted that the third criterion is not an auto industry measure, "The market share for Northumberland is taken directly from the Ministry of Transport motor vehicle registration applications" Bud explained. "We have spent a lot of last year as #1 for customer service and as for the market share in Northumberland - we blew them (his competitors) out of the water. I think it is all due to our people and processes - we have a great product."

In fact Bud and the team at Lauria Hyundai have done so well this year they have become the best Hyundai dealership in Canada. Beating out two hundred and four other dealerships for the number one spot; they reign supreme. Number 1 was their aim and they have done it in only three years - amazing! When *Wheels* went to see Bud and talk about his news release wherein he told the media that they had won the award the first question was, "Where is the trophy?" Bud smiled and told *Wheels*, "We don't get it until April when we go to Vegas to get it." We know that whenever Bud gets his hands on the Hyundai's President's Award of Merit he will not be giving it up for a long time.

Standing beside one of the demos in his showroom Bud talked about the lineup in Hyundai's stable. "The Elantra is the number car in North America and compares well against its competition - Honda Civic, Nissan Sentra, Toyota Corolla and Mazda 3, in fact the Elantra boasts a fantastic fifty-eight miles per gallon rating. Price, quality, finish and economy make this the number one choice for many people." Bud's car lot contains all of the fourteen models in the catalogue as well as a large inventory of quality used cars. But he is also looking forward to the new models that Hyundai is introducing in the coming years. "We had a new Elantra and Sonata in 2011. Next year, for the 2013 model year we are expecting to see a new Santa Fe crossover and a new Elantra wagon. Lots of good stuff will be arriving and I'm looking forward to seeing buyers eat them up."



Getting back to the new award that the team has been given for its work in 2011/12 Bud likes to credit his team and the community. "We're proud of something that we can share with the community. We have thirty people working here and we all share in it. I love the fact that for a community of sixteen thousand we are number one in the County."

Congratulations to bud and the crew from *Wheels*.