

Diagnostics 'hard sell' doesn't help garages

GSF Car Parts say increasingly aggressive sales tactics from many suppliers of diagnostic equipment is acting against the best interests of the independent aftermarket.

Due to inherent complexity, diagnostic equipment is very easy to miss-sell according to the national motor factor. In GSF's experience this can occur both accidentally, through lack of knowledge, or through sellers being 'economical with the truth' regarding the real-world functionality garages can expect.

GSF have identified three primary problem areas. The first issue is exaggeration of vehicle or system coverage. Secondly, there's simplification of the process of setting up or learning to use these tools to their full potential. Finally, come claims over future support or software and data updates.

"These problems have been getting worse lately," said John Wright, Head of Garage Equipment and Customer Development at GSF. "Diagnostics are now more main-stream, with lots of suppliers tending to compete on price."

GSF Car Parts caution garages over too-good-to-be-true deals with John adding: "These offers happen because the motor factor, or the manufacturer has a lot of stock of a particular product to shift.

"This is when we most often find garages get sold something that isn't right for their needs; so even if the initial price looked appealing, it's poor value when the kit they buy doesn't do what they need it to, or what they expected."

The danger according to GSF Car Parts is that garages are then put off making essential investment in the diagnostics products they increasingly need to work profitably on modern vehicle systems.

GSF Car Parts offer a comprehensive range of diagnostics solutions from a range of leading brands. But because the products are not directly stocked, GSF say they are able to offer an impartial 'consultative' sales process. Branch staff, supported by the head office Garage Essentials team, are trained simply to advise customers on the pros and cons of different options, so garages can reach an informed buying decision.

"Workshops can sometimes fall into the trap too of buying a tool to 'save technician time' but it never replaces a good technician," adds John. "Even the right diagnostic tool can only identify components performing outside parameters and suggest possible causes, so it's essential the technicians have the skills sets in place too."

Details of GSF's programme can be found in their quarterly Garage Essentials publication. Garages are advised to contact their nearest branch for their copy.

Further Information

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