



## **iControl by Autobyte Launches, Dealers Gain Unprecedented Control over Online Leads**

Autobyte (Nasdaq:ABTL), the company that helped usher in the automotive Internet revolution 15 years ago with its revolutionary process for connecting dealers and car-buyers, today announced the launch of a brand new product, *iControl by Autobyte<sup>SM</sup>*, that provides dealerships with unprecedented control over their online consumer leads.

*iControl by Autobyte* is the first – and only – product in the industry to enable dealers to custom-configure their mix of online consumer leads in crucial ways, including make and model (to filter 'out' high demand vehicles and 'filter in' hard to move vehicles); web source, and distance from the dealership (as the distance online consumers are willing to travel to buy varies from state to state\*\*).

“We developed *iControl by Autobyte* to address what dealerships told us they wanted: an entirely new industry standard for third-party lead delivery that puts them firmly in control, enabling them to match their lead mix to the actual conditions on their dealership lots,” said Autobyte Inc. CEO Jeff Coats. “With the economy still presenting significant challenges, there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to online marketing. Dealers demand, *and need*, the ability to customize their online leads - so they are not paying for leads they do not want, cannot close or do not need. We listened, and *iControl by Autobyte* delivers.”

According to a recent survey by Autobyte\*, dealers report that third-party leads continue to be a critical component of their marketing mix; but dealers also report they would welcome improvements that would offer them more control. The top four improvements over 90% of dealers would like to see are, in order of importance: 1. Control over leads based on where consumers are in the purchase process. 2. Ability to adjust territory for desired models/lead sources. 3. More control over where leads are sourced, and 4. Better de-duplication. Each of these elements is incorporated into the *iControl by Autobyte* product.

*iControl by Autobyte* - in combination with the company's new *Quality Advantage Program* and *Email Manger Deluxe* programs - is part of Autobyte's mission to create a new standard for third-party leads that 1. Provides dealers with greater control and 2. Enables the best of its value-added programs and lead treatments to apply to all online leads, at no extra cost, regardless of source.

### **How *iControl by Autobyte* Works**

*iControl by Autobyte* can be controlled at the dealership or at the dealer group level from a web-based, easy-to-use console that makes it quick and simple for dealerships to change their lead patterns to reflect their marketing strategy; the conditions on the ground at their stores, and broader industry patterns (such as hikes in gas prices or changes in consumer demand).

From the console, dealerships can easily contract or expand territories, and increase, restrict or block specific model and lead web sources, making it much easier to target inventory problems and focus resources.

To ensure maximum flexibility and the most robust reporting, *iControl by Autobyte* was designed to work in tandem with any dealership CRM/lead management tool. It can be implemented on a stand alone basis for Autobyte, or integrated with the dealership's full mix of leads, including OEM, dealer's website, and other third-party leads.

Autobyte selected DMEautomotive to power the *iControl by Autobyte* console, which also features comprehensive real-time reporting from DMEa's Red Rocket Technologies Platform, a best in class technology solution that provides dealer and group level marketing, reporting and analytics.

- **Control : by Lead Web Source**

*iControl by Autobyte* segments Autobyte network lead sources into 5 categories ('research,' 'quote,' 'buying,' 'enthusiast,' and 'portal') based on the type of automotive publisher from where the lead is coming. Each segment has a unique price point reflecting its average closing ratio. This enables dealers to configure their mix according to their dealership resources and goals -- and to modulate their lead stream in conjunction with zip code and model demand.

- **Control : by Zip Code**

*iControl by Autobyte* enables dealers to apply different territories/zip codes to each of their models and lead sources.

According to a recent Autobytel study, not only do online lead closing ratios vary by distance traveled – they also vary from state to state, and region to region.\*\* With *iControl by Autobytel*, dealers can make territory changes dynamically, while adjusting for ROI based on market analysis. For example, a dealership may choose to increase the territory range for sources with higher closing ratios and have a smaller territory for sources that close at a lower rate.

- **Control : by Make/Model**

Recent Autobytel/Survey.com research shows that a majority of dealers report that more than 20% or more of their current leads are for hot-selling, fast-moving inventory they really didn't need to spend money on to market online\*. *iControl by Autobytel* helps dealers spend their budget where it counts most by allowing them to increase the number of leads for hard to move models or, conversely, block or restrict leads by model for those high demand "hot" models.

For example, if a dealership is having trouble moving trucks in the face of a sudden gas price hike, it can instantly expand territory (by specific zip codes), as well as increase the range of lead web sources to broaden customer coverage for those trucks. At the same time, the dealership can limit leads for high demand, low inventory models, such as hybrids, by restricting sources, and the territory to a more restricted range of potential service-customer zip codes, closer to the dealership.

### **User-friendly, Comprehensive Reporting**

One of the most critical components of any successful marketing program is objective reporting. With DMEa's industry-leading Red Rocket Technologies Platform powering *iControl by Autobytel's* reporting module, dealerships will have in-depth reporting on available leads by make, model and zip code, as well as closing ratio results by model, source, and distance. This feedback loop gives dealers the real time information they need to adjust their *iControl by Autobytel* configuration and implement the best strategy for their dealership. In subsequent phases, the interface will include a control module to focus lead purchasing on specific sources, territories, or models.

### **High Quality Leads and State-of-the-Art De-Duplication**

*iControl by Autobytel's* effectiveness is based on the foundation of lead quality that Autobytel can achieve by not only sourcing leads from the industry's highest quality lead providers, but by putting dealer customers first in line to receive these leads. In addition, Autobytel's Quality Verification System filters all leads through a 6 step validation process that includes a real time lead duplicate return feature, designed to ensure that dealerships will never again pay for a duplicate lead.

### **Giving Dealers What They Want**

Autobytel's product development teams spent over 6 months soliciting input from dealers in order to develop the *iControl by Autobytel* product. Over 60 dealers participated in a product beta test, to ensure it addressed specific dealership issues before coming to market. i.g. Burton Co. was one of the first dealerships to sign up for *iControl by Autobytel* and is very pleased with the results of the program:

"*iControl by Autobytel* represents a sea change in online lead delivery, providing us with many more opportunities than we've ever had before to make our lead strategy synch up with on-the-ground dealership realities," said Kevin Fuelling, Director of Internet Operations at i.g. Burton Co. "This is exactly the kind of program we have been waiting for. We talked. Autobytel listened and, with *iControl by Autobytel*, we're taking the results to the bank!"

\* Phone survey of dealerships nationwide performed by Survey.com in January, 2010

\*\* White Paper: Third-party Lead Performance Analysis, Autobytel Inc. - August 2009.

### **About Autobytel**

Autobytel Inc. (NASDAQ:ABTL), a leading automotive marketing services company, pioneered the automotive Internet when it launched Autobytel.com in 1995. Since then, the company has helped tens of millions of automotive consumers research vehicles; connected thousands of dealers nationwide with motivated car buyers, and helped every major automaker market its brand online. Today, through its flagship website Autobytel.com®, its network of automotive sites including Autoweb.com®, AutoSite.com®, Car.com<sup>sm</sup>, CarSmart.com®, CarTV.com®, and MyRide.com®, and its respected online partners, Autobytel continues its dedication to innovating the industry's highest quality Internet programs to provide consumers with a comprehensive and positive automotive research and purchasing experience, and auto dealers, dealer groups and auto manufacturers with one of the industry's most productive and cost-effective customer referral and marketing programs.

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