

BARU TV - ASK US FOR A DEMONSTRATION



Tele Sales

How Subaru salesmen are using iPhones keep customers in the moment.

In Action

Applications for iPhones are all the rage. A few years back people used to compare the hardware in a traditional 'mine's better than yours' bar room spats. Now it's all about 'apps'. There are thousands of 'em out there and it's easy to forget that what with all the games and gimmicks the iPhone can be used as a serious money-making tool.

London-based Digitalinc with offices in Sydney and Melbourne is one of those companies with a suite of applications it developed called ARIS. Designed to run on the Apple iOS4 platform, ARIS stands for Automotive Retail Interactive Showroom and it's a digital signage system aimed at new car dealerships. The four components of ARIS are (ARIS) Media, Incentive, Communicate and Toolkit. Media is where ARIS tackles the problem of automotive sales showrooms never having exactly the car the customer wants on the floor - the right combination of colour, model and accessories, for example. The next best thing to a real car is to create a virtual representation of the vehicle with ARIS Media using applications called Colour My Car and Accessorise My Car (or in the case of above: Bomb my Car with an Albatross - Ed), and displaying the results on selected screens throughout the showroom, interrupting any global broadcast. ARIS Media also provides for a wide selection of Content On Demand material such as promotional or informative videos all dialed up with the iPhone from the floor. It's about maintaining customer interaction with demonstration models and allowing potential buyers to continue a hands-on experience of the vehicle - that means

letting them kick the tyres, which is apparently always better than dragging punters into a sales office. ARIS Media allows sales staff to stay on the showroom floor where they can ply their trade best.

The installation count is well past the 250 mark. The displays are Samsung 460DXn-2, which is a 46-inch LCD network-ready monitor. ARIS can be operated from just on the iPhone or with the Samsung display active. Regular ARIS updates that are downloaded into the phone and server software ensure the salesperson isn't making any promises they can't keep (feel free to choke on your coffee here). However, pricing and special deals aren't included in ARIS, mainly because it is a national network and too many regional factors and local conditions affect the costs for each dealership.

A unique part of the ARIS application is its ability to access a large database of vehicle types and their available options then accurately present the final combination for the customer to see. Also, it's worth noting that no limits are placed on the size of the large screens. Digital signage technology would allow for a life-sized display or even video wall to show the imagined car.

At present the ARIS solution offered by Digitalinc includes the application, appropriate screens and the iPhones themselves. A version for Apple's iPad is in the pipeline. — GH.