



Shauna Rae THE BROAD PERSPECTIVE

A look at the work environment ... with a female lens

DRIVING CHANGE

It used to be insinuated that women knew less about automobiles, and were less knowledgeable when looking to purchase their own vehicle, much less working in the industry. Have times changed? These three women, all working in automotive, tell it like it is.

Automotive sales has traditionally been a male-dominated industry.

How have you navigated that?

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From car rental companies to banking and now as a business manager, I have always worked in male-dominated industries. I believe you have to be a strong-minded, well-rounded person to deal with all different types of personalities, whether it is male or female individuals. Yes, the automotive industry is typically male-dominated; however, being a female working in the industry, I believe with any role you have to prove yourself to gain the respect and trust of your co-workers and customers.”

~ Jennifer Roberts, Finance Services Manager, Dale Downie Nissan and Commercial Vehicles

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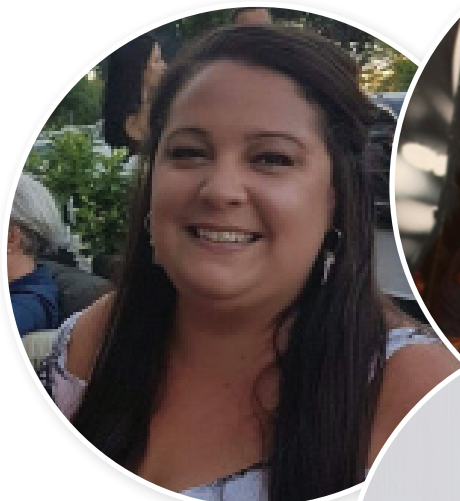
I have had to be confident and stay on my toes. Learning not to be afraid to speak up and voice my opinion within a room filled with men was very important. I've had to learn to be aggressive with my thoughts and reach outside of my comfort zone to prove that I can do the job as well as anyone, male or female.”

~ Meghan Ruffilli, Lincoln General Manager, Courtesy Lincoln

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I was hired by a female sales manager that I worked very closely with so I learned a lot about the industry from a female's perspective. I think that really helped. It never really felt male-dominated as we had at one point a female sales manager, service manager, parts

Meghan Ruffilli



Jennifer Roberts



Sarah Kukovis



manager, business manager and controller.”

~ Sarah Kukovis - Marketing Manager, North London Toyota

How did you get into the industry?

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Right out of school, I was an intern at a major car rental company. I worked my way up to a branch manager, managing a fleet of 120 cars. In that role, I was in and out of insurance companies, body shops, car dealerships and different businesses trying to gain new business. From there, I entered the banking world, doing loans, lines of credits and mortgages. I always knew I wanted to get back to the car world as it has always been an interest of mine.”

~ Jennifer Roberts

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Courtesy Ford Lincoln is a family business which is owned and operated by my father, Bill Eansor. I started in the business at the age of 12 as a cashier in our service department.

~ Meghan Ruffilli

Are there stereotypes or myths you'd like to dispel?

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A common myth in the automotive industry is that dealers are out to make a quick sale. The truth is that this is a relationship business, and customer experience is the priority. Loyalty and referrals are necessary for success in the car business.”

~ Meghan Ruffilli

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I think some people still think the automotive industry should be run by males, but dealerships have changed so much over the years. Some of our key staff members are females and have been with our dealership the longest.”

~ Sarah Kukovis

What would you like to see more of in the industry?

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It would be nice to have different networking events, whether it be male/female or all female. It is nice to connect with like-minded individuals.”

~ Jennifer Roberts

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I would love to see more females applying for sales. I think some clients visit a dealership and are intimidated by some of the male staff because they don't know about vehicles or understand the process of buying a car. Having a female representative they can relate to and that can help build trust can sometimes make them more comfortable with the process.”

~ Sarah Kukovis

What advice do you have for women considering entering automotive sales?

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Do not give people a reason to stereotype you. Know the basic mechanics of the vehicle. Once you show everyone you know what you are talking about, you will earn the respect of your co-workers and trust of the customer.”

~ Jennifer Roberts

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Focus on product knowledge, networking within your local community and customer satisfaction. Be patient. By setting realistic goals and objectives, one can be extremely successful.”

~ Meghan Ruffilli

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If you enjoy a fast-paced environment that always keeps you on your toes, do it! It's a great place to work and there is excellent opportunity for advancement.”

~ Sarah Kukovis

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