



New digital tool eliminates ‘wildly inconsistent’ service booking experience for customers

SMR iQ boosts customer confidence and increases completed bookings by 19.7%

JUNE 18 2026 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INCONSISTENT price quotations and expecting customers to have expert knowledge of their car maintenance needs may cause up to 1 in 5 motorists to give up on completing a service booking.

That's the finding from Auto Data Solutions (ADS), who identified common failures in the typical service booking journey offered by many franchise dealers.

Wildly inconsistent quotations are common, with ADS highlighting 5 different prices quoted for an intermediate service, ranging between £165 and £413.94, for the same car.

The study by ADS found several common friction points that may cause customers to abandon a booking, with inconsistent service quotes for the same work, no price provided at all, and too often no guidance on the work they need.

Proof of negative impact came from trials for a new tool designed to boost service customer confidence with consistent pricing up front and clear guidance on the work needed.

ADS extensively monitored the impact of SMR iQ across the Budgen Motor Group network, which saw a 19.7% increase in net bookings during a pre-launch trial.

The underlying problem, according to ADS, is that many dealers have evolved a fragmented booking journey for service customers, using multiple systems which often contain contradictory data.

For example, the company found 5 different intermediate service price quotations for a MINI Electric at every franchise dealer group with whom they enquired. These ranged from £165 to £413.94 and were quoted by different dealer groups or single-site websites and call centres.

ADS says that website booking forms, AI assistants, external contact centres and even service personnel frequently work with different information and often have no knowledge of the customer's precise needs.

Consequently, customers frequently drop out of the booking process altogether, when faced with price confusion and an expectation that they must be their own maintenance expert, ADS reported.

To address the problem, ADS partnered with developers Intuitive Dealer Tools to launch SMR iQ, which is powered by multiple sources of OEM SMR data and updated in real time. SMR iQ provides full details of service schedules and tariffs, creating a 'single source of truth' for anyone fielding service booking enquiries.

SMR iQ removes friction from existing customer booking journeys by providing clarity and transparency to drive customer confidence in completing their booking. It is also designed to integrate seamlessly with websites, booking tools, contact centres, service advisors, chatbots and AI-powered customer journeys.

The system has been extensively tested by Budgen Motor Group, who saw service booking conversion rates of 45% and overall bookings increase by 19.7% during the trial.

That uplift in bookings suggests that common frictions may currently lead to around 1 in 5 customers looking elsewhere for a smoother experience.

James Martin, Managing Director of Budgen Motor Group, said: "Replacing our traditional enquiry-led process with the more intuitive and consistent SMR iQ helped our customers to better understand exactly what their car needs and how much it will cost. This has clearly increased their confidence, which is reflected in stronger booking conversion rates and increased bookings overall."

As well as improving customer experience, SMR iQ offers enhanced efficiency for dealers by reducing reliance on manual pricing checks and shortening time spent on customer enquiries. It also boosts customer confidence by making the transaction easier and more transparent, while reducing the chances of discrepancies between original quotation and final invoice.

ADS Operations Director Jon Sheard said: "It is no surprise that so many customers drop off during a traditional booking process which fails to tell them what they need to know up front and even sometimes offers misleading information.

"For example, we see a high proportion of service quotations for electric vehicles which include an oil change.

"SMR iQ is designed to resolve the problems of fragmented information systems, inconsistent pricing and the expectation that every customer knows exactly what their car needs by giving them everything they need to complete their booking with confidence.

"Our colleagues at Budgen have demonstrated the commercial value of SMR iQ in the real world and we are delighted to see the uplift in service business they have enjoyed during the initial trials."

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Notes for editors: Existing dealer service booking journeys are often designed as booking tools rather than service guidance tools.

Typically, customers are expected to select the correct service themselves, despite having little knowledge of manufacturer service schedules, vehicle-specific requirements or maintenance needs. In some cases, no pricing is shown, or inconsistent pricing is provided, depending on whether they use a website or contact a service department.

The challenge is becoming more significant as vehicle technology evolves. For example, electric vehicle owners can still be presented with service operations that are not relevant to their vehicle.

SMR iQ has been developed by Intuitive Dealer Tools in partnership with Auto Data Solutions (ADS). The platform combines vehicle-specific service schedules, pricing logic, labour and parts data, EV guidance and contract recognition to deliver accurate pricing and more consistent service guidance across websites, booking tools, contact centres and service departments.

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ABOUT ADS

ADS - Auto Data Solutions - connects motor retail businesses with market and customer data that increases efficiency and boosts revenue. Founded by a team of former senior CAP-HPI managers, ADS partners with all of the leading data and system providers to provide a unique set of services designed to drive growth and profitability for dealers.