

# You're Not *Just* BUYING SOFTWARE

## Secrets to Digital Gateway's growth

Dealers have been faced with tough choices about what management software will best suit their needs now and in the future. In light of the recent acquisitions of two pre-dominant dealer management software solutions, Digital Gateway has been forced to look inside itself and decide how to best serve its people and the over 800 dealers now using e-automate management software.

In a recent conversation with **Jim Phillips, the founder and CEO of Digital Gateway**, he revealed the secrets behind e-automate's growth and how he plans to meet the challenges dealers are facing in the industry.

### ▶ SECRET #1 | Dealers are buying a company, not just software

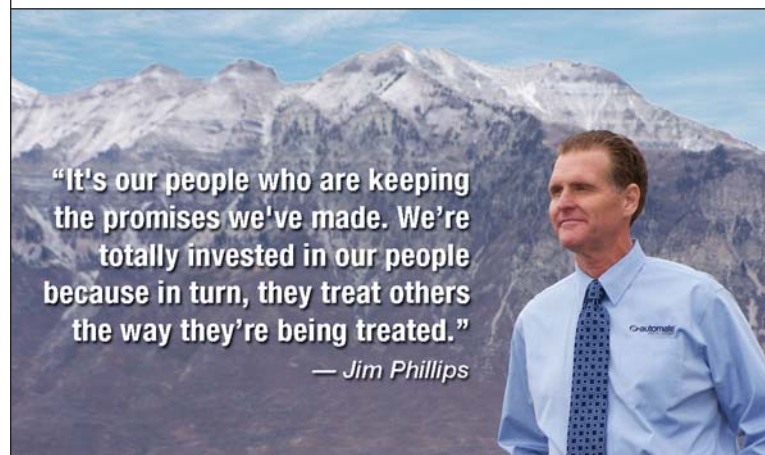
**Phillips:** When people ask me why we didn't sell the company in the recent flurry of acquisition activity, I tell them it's because it wasn't what was best for my people or the dealers that have made us who we are today. Dealers need the company providing something as mission critical as management software to be a promise-keeping organization. Implementing the right dealer management software can be the best single decision a dealer can make for the health of their business, but it is like undergoing heart surgery. There has to be a high level of trust in the team who are essentially providing the engine for their business for years to come. We couldn't continue to fulfill the promises we have made to our dealers if we sold the company now.

Our greatest asset is our people, and we count on them day in and day out to be the difference in our company. Dealers aren't buying software, they're buying a living, breathing company. It's our people who are keeping the promises we've made. We're totally invested in our people because in turn, they treat others the way they're being treated. We deeply share the belief that it's not what you know it's what you do with what you know! Our people know what they're doing, but they back it up with superior performance every day. Yes,

dealers are buying software code, but essentially, it's what lies behind the code that really matters.

### ▶ SECRET #2 | The dealer decides

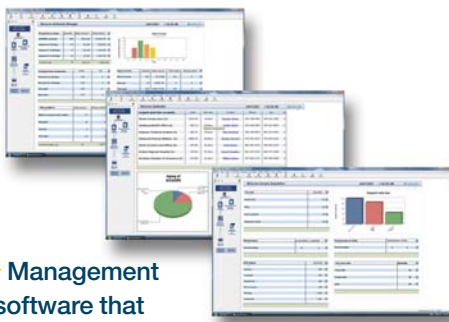
**Phillips:** The day we take our dealers for granted is the day they leave us. They are more sophisticated and educated than ever. Our understanding of this principle has helped us maintain a stellar record in retaining our customers. It has also fueled our growth because when dealers find something that works, they tell their friends. We have an active, independently-run user's group and we listen very intently to what they have to say. In fact, 60% of our development time is dictated by the direction provided to us by the e-automate User's Group. The balance of our development capability is driven by intense research and constant discussion with industry experts about the future direction of our industry. We have user group meetings twice a year where we hold ourselves accountable for the promises and progress we've made. This tight knit integration is the only way to provide what dealers truly need and we're



always looking for better ways to deliver it. If we don't have it, we partner with the best in the industry to provide it so we can stay focused on what we do best. In the end, we owe much of our success to the fact that we know who we work for.

### ▶ SECRET #3 | Master the fundamentals

**Phillips:** Too many companies today look for shortcuts and focus on what's in their best short term interest. Great companies accept no substitutes and know how to stay focused on the daily fundamentals that drive success. The commitment to excel and the unwavering focus on improving the process are at the root of superior performance for our dealers and DGI. Because of our extraordinary growth, things keep becoming more complex, yet we're able to deliver at a level and pace that others won't even attempt. We've ▶



► Management software that keeps up with the industry

recently moved our headquarters to ensure we have a facility that will accommodate our growth and allow us to continue serving our dealers with

care and attention. Dealers will appreciate our never-ending commitment to refining our conversion tools and improving our data conversion team's capability to ensure successful "Go Live" dates. None of it is easy and it can't be bought through acquisition. It requires constant vigilance and refinement. Without it nothing else matters.

► **SECRET #4** | It's in our nature to innovate

**Phillips:** One of our maxims is "Innovate or Die." As evidence of our belief in that statement, here's what we have lined up for 2008:

- ▼ A new, fully integrated Remote Tech solution
- ▼ A new Sales Configurator & Proposal Generator integrated with leading CRMs & SFAs
- ▼ Automated Best Tech reporting solution that will drive service margins into the "Promised Land"
- ▼ Move to .NET platform to further extend our open system architecture and allow never before realized automations and partner integrations
- ▼ New Alerting Engine with enhanced applications
- ▼ New Dashboard that makes mission-critical BEI information accessible & useable at a glance to achieve optimization of key dealer performance metrics
- ▼ Broker-enabling Purchase Order automation

Our approach to innovation hasn't changed since the day we started this company over a decade ago: Simpler is better; faster is good; easier to use takes brilliance. Think something no one else has thought. Make it better and more valuable. Envision possibilities.

We believe the best innovation comes from listening to dealers, "e-automating" complex data and delivering it back in a form that is easy to understand and use. One of the keys to the future success of dealers is their management software company's commitment and ability to innovate. Said another way, dealers need management software that keeps up with industry and technological trends or they will eventually fail.

► **SECRET #5** | Simplify & go

**Phillips:** With so many challenges and changes in our industry, dealers need a constant that will keep them focused on the things that will truly lead to their profitability and longevity. To compete successfully and seize opportunities quickly, they need their management software engine to "make the complex simple" and help them drive their dealership to success. This requires us to do two things: focus and change—focus on the thinking and practices that pushed us to where we are, and change to meet and exceed the demands of dealers and our industry at large. [h](#)

With well over 150 dealers converting to e-automate each year and a recent move to a new 40,000 square foot headquarters and training facility, Digital Gateway's secrets seem to be working. For more information about Digital Gateway or e-automate dealer management software, visit [www.digitalgateway.com](http://www.digitalgateway.com) or call 1.866.DGATEWAY (342-8392).



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