

## Fairness and Accountability Help Move the Business Forward for Everyone

A Conversation with Jane Copeland, Dealer Technology Advocate

*In the second installment of the new BMW People series, Dealer Direct is pleased to offer a profile of another noteworthy person within the BMW community. While many dealers and NA personnel know her well, we would like to introduce the entire dealer network to Jane Copeland.*



Jane Copeland, owner, founder and CEO of API International, Inc., has been instrumental in supporting dealers as a technology and business consultant. Jane bills herself as a 'Dealer Technology Advocate,' serving as a conduit between dealers, BMW NA and vendors.

Depending on whom you speak with and when, mentioning Jane's name can elicit a broad range of reactions; some swear by her and others likely swear about her. What seems to make her unique is the fact that everyone, no matter what their opinion, respects her and her sense of fairness.

She remains committed to taking a global perspective, translating complex technological language to help dealers and BMW NA attain their business goals without investing unnecessary time and budget. That is where Jane best helps her clients, she says; implementing "wins" for all.

While proprietary technologies are roadblocks between manufacturers and dealers, without much competition, dealers can be left with ineffective options at higher costs. Jane is a problem solver, a former professor of Computer Science trained in strategic planning and negotiations. The difference between her and other Dealer Management System (DMS) consultants is that she determines what is needed to achieve dealers' long and short-term business goals and is not solely focused on price.

Jane has helped save dealers more than \$200 million over the past 20+ years by:

- Assisting dealers with appropriate technology acquisition
- Normalizing pricing and contract terms with technology vendors and eliminating the never-ending cycle of rolling technology leases
- Assisting dealer to navigate the certification process for digital warranty archiving
- Negotiating away from proprietary personal computers (PC) so dealer staff can perform all job tasks (i.e. DMS and DCSNet) from a single device Ensuring IT infrastructure will support dealer and OEM operations
- Securing special terms and conditions so dealers can own and use their own data
- Resolving dealer data breach situations
- Assisting dealers with technology operational and contract issues.

"The elephant in the room is that no one has time to think about the big picture because they all have a business to run," noted Copeland. "Dealers and BMW need to look at technology as a critical part of their business. They have access to so much information but everything changes so frequently, it's hard for everyone to keep up with".

Digital transformation is a major challenge, Jane suggests; and while dealers and BMW NA may be aligned, their specific goals and approaches may occasionally vary. Jane's team helps to bridge the divide. For example, creating and implementing the anonymous Voice of the Dealer survey to secure valuable feedback from dealer staff for BMW NA. The survey delivered, securing 10,000 detailed responses from 5,000 dealer partners and was leveraged to drive dialogue and action focused on Dealers and BMW being successful together.

Jane's extensive history working with BMW NA includes diagnostic and programming equipment, help desk support for BMW work shop and networks; negotiations on behalf of BMW licensing and dealers that saved millions of dollars; and most recently, collaborating with BMW NA and the CPV Committee to develop and launch a new Digital Signage solution that better meets the needs of both parties.

"BMW and dealers cannot achieve digital transformation without working together and we help to facilitate that communication. Because we're independent and unbiased, we can provide an outside perspective that can identify and deliver win-wins," explained Copeland. Jane is part of the MIT Advanced Management Program and has Certificates for Digital Business Transformation; Machine Learning; Artificial Intelligence; Negotiation for Executives; and Innovators DNA and leverages this expertise to understand how dealers and BMW NA can capitalize on methods from other organizations to make positive strides towards digital transformation.

Some dealers have worked with her for more than 20 years, and many rely on her not only for tactical IT expertise, but also strategic guidance. Yet Jane refuses to be claimed by any one side, promoting fair and equitable collaboration between all parties. She has a unique approach born from her tremendous understanding of the industry, and by striving to live up to her mission to be fair to all, her solutions support the long-term goal of moving the business forward in a healthy way for everyone.

"I would like dealers and BMW to pave the way to success using digital technologies to overcome the systems status quo in a franchise environment!"