

Automotive News

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Q&A

THE DEALER SPEAKS

DAN FIELDS

PRESIDENT, FIELDS AUTO GROUP

Dealership group invests for 'nice, exciting, fun' stores

Merit Earl Fields was sales manager at Cadillac before becoming a Cadillac dealer on Chicago's North Shore in 1971. After his son, John Fields, quit a career as a contract-law attorney to join the car business, the duo began adding franchises: BMW, Saab, American Motors and more.

Today, Fields Auto Group sells 18 brands at 25 locations. The suburban Chicago company operates stores in Illinois, Florida, Wiscon-

sin, North Carolina and British Columbia.

It sold nearly 20,000 new and about 10,000 used vehicles last year, generating more than \$1 billion in revenue.

The founder's grandson, Dan Fields, is now president and shares ownership with his father, while his brother and uncle also hold positions at some of the group's dealerships. Dan Fields, 42, spoke with Staff Reporter Nick Bunkley.

Q: What are the biggest issues on your mind?

A: The technology that we're seeing in every area: diesel, electric, hybrid technology that's coming into the luxury brands, where most of our stuff is. That's a really exciting thing to see.

BMW has got some really neat products coming out in that area, using carbon fiber and new battery technology. I'm fascinated by the technology and think a lot of that will drive sales in the future — the



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Dan Fields

environmental aspects of the new products.

have in most of our large dealerships cafes that are really full-ser-

What is the technology that recognizes customers?

It's a chip that only is active on the property, so there's no privacy issues or anything. But when the customer enters our property, it identifies the customer, puts their name on a welcoming board and sends a text to our salesperson and our service adviser to let them know that they're there. Whether or not they have an appointment, we're prepared for them. And then a salesperson can come and visit and say hello to a service customer. It's an example of a way you can use technology to make the experience better and improve the business.

