



PRESS RELEASE

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Canadian Automobile Dealers Association (CADA) Chair Charles Saillant has announced that Andrew Ojamae of AutolQ Dealership Group, Barrie, ON, has won the 2023 CADA Laureate award for Business Innovation.

One dealer is selected annually by judges at the Ivey Business School at Western University in London, Ontario, in each of three categories: Ambassadorship, Business Innovation, and Retail Operations. Mr. Ojamae received his Laureate award in the Business Innovation category, for initiatives that significantly enhance performance or broaden the scope of business for new car and truck dealers.

“The Laureate award is very difficult to win. It spans all brands, self-nomination is not permitted, and hundreds of nominations are received each year. This exclusivity, and the rigorous selection process, makes the Laureate the highest honour a dealer can receive over the course of their career,” Saillant explained.

iA Dealer Services, Canada’s leader in finance and insurance products and services for automobile dealers, is the Laureate program’s exclusive sponsor. Alnoor Jiwani, Senior Vice-President, acknowledged Andrew Ojamae’s achievement. “Andrew’s philosophy is ‘Dream big, the only limits are the ones you set on yourself.’ We see through his many innovations at AutolQ that he really puts this into practice.

“Andrew and his executive team realize the only ‘product’ they can differentiate with is how they go to market: customer experience, product and service accessibility, and value-added services. They have implemented several initiatives to enhance their competitive position and unlock significant value.



“Examples include the ‘Any way you want it’ ecommerce strategy that delivers a great customer experience, a unique strategy that ensures they participate in all segments of the pre-owned market, and turning vehicle logistics into a profit centre through AutoIQ Delivery Services.”

Commenting on the selection of Mr. Ojamae as the 2023 Innovator Laureate from an elite group of five national finalists, Professor Kirk Kristofferson of Ivey said, “The finalists in the Business Innovation category have built long-term, sustainable businesses by fostering employee development and focusing on meeting the ever-evolving needs of customers. Crucially, they have also harnessed technology and data to differentiate their organizations from the competition.

“No one exemplifies this better than Andrew Ojamae of AutoIQ. He started by looking inward, unifying 17 dealerships and over 1,000 employees with a set of core organizational values, identifying employee potential, and developing five unique employee professional development programs.

“Andrew’s focus on employee growth and development is truly admirable. Moreover, his focus on understanding the customer vehicle-buying journey and removing customer pain points has led to an impressive competitive advantage.

“With the goals of customer happiness and cost efficiency in mind, AutoIQ’s Delivery Services turned a traditional cost inefficiency into a profit centre – a truly exceptional innovation worthy of a CADA Laureate.”

Mr. Ojamae was informed of his Laureate win by CADA Chair Charles Saillant, after which he said, “It was totally surreal when I was told I was a CADA Laureate. It’s shocking and humbling. I’m so proud of my team. The business innovation category is not really a one person award. We consider ourselves a pretty innovative dealer group, but ideas are a dime a dozen — it all comes down to execution.

“This award is validating for the work our team did. I think the class of Laureates and the contributions they make to the industry and their communities is an inspiration. All the former



Laureate winners have been an inspiration to me. I feel an obligation now to live up to that responsibility. I can't thank my team enough, and my business partner and fellow Laureate Mike Stollery, who is truly a mentor and an inspiration. And of course my wife Sherri!"

The Canadian Automobile Dealers Association is the national voice of the more than 3,200 new car and truck dealers in Canada. CADA has its headquarters in Thornhill, Ontario, and a government relations office in Ottawa. CADA's wide-ranging mandate includes helping member dealers improve their overall operations, and implementing initiatives that strengthen the relationship between new car and truck dealers and the communities they serve.

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