

Sunday May 17th 2009

AUTOMOTIVE DESKTOP 2009

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Odette International is an organisation, formed by the automotive industry for the automotive industry. It sets the standards for e-business communications, engineering data exchange and logistics management, which link the 4000 plus businesses in the European motor industry and their global trading partners.

<http://www.odette.org>

1. WORLD NEWS FROM JUST-AUTO.

<http://just-auto.com>



General Motors' Opel unit could end up making cars for other manufacturers if Magna International becomes its partner, German media have reported. Magna itself is a contract vehicle assembler with a plant in Graz, Austria. Customers have included Chrysler, Daimler, BMW and Mini. If Opel has to reduce output of its own cars, it could offer capacity to carmakers such as Ford or PSA/Peugeot-Citroen, Automobilwoche and Welt am Sonntag reported, according to Reuters.

Magna does not plan to close any Opel factories in Germany but might shut plants in Antwerp, Belgium, and Luton, England, Welt am Sonntag was quoted as saying.

Automobilwoche reportedly said Magna's idea was to establish an 'open platform' that could be used by multiple manufacturers so that model series could be made efficiently throughout their life cycle. The magazine quoted associates of Magna CEO Siegfried Wolf.

The German government's hunt for an Opel partner has come down to Fiat and Magna, reports said.

Magna would take over Opel jointly with Russian automaker GAZ and Russia's top lender, state-run Sberbank, German reports said.

Fiat wants a three-way merger with Chrysler and GM Europe operations, including Opel, Vauxhall and Saab.

German economy minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg has asked the companies present full plans by Wednesday (May 20).

Should General Motors file for bankruptcy in the US at the end of the month before reaching a solution for its Opel/Vauxhall subsidiary in Europe, the German government would press for a trustee arrangement for the company, economy minister zu Guttenberg has said.

2. THE WEEK IN BRUSSELS.

<http://www.smmmt.co.uk>



1. EU passenger car registrations down 12.3% in April

ACEA, the European automobile manufacturers' association, has published its latest car registration figures. In April new passenger car registrations continued to decline totalling 1,251,862 units, or 12.3% less than in the same month a year ago. New registrations in Western Europe fell by 11.6% in April. Austria (+12.8%) and Germany (+19.4%) were the only countries to show a growth in the market, reflecting the effect of fleet renewal incentives. Countries with such schemes in place, such as France (-7.1%), Italy (-7.5%) and Luxemburg (-8.5%) recorded a single-digit decrease, while other markets declined more severely – British registrations fell by 24.0%. The new EU Member States saw their results drop by 21.4%. (Source: ACEA)

www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/passenger_cars_european_market_down_123_in_april

2. EIB approves €750m of additional loans to auto companies

The European Investment Bank has approved loans to European-based automotive companies worth a total of 750m euro to help design and build cleaner vehicles with lower emissions. Since December, the EIB has approved 5.2 bn euro in loans to the automotive sector, 3.5bn are provided under the EIB's European Clean Transport Facility (ECTF). The ECTF is part of the EIB's wider response under the European Economic Recovery Package and targets significant reductions in the CO₂ emissions of vehicles through research, development and innovation, as well as the production of cleaner and more fuel-efficient cars and other modes of transport. Further loans for the automotive sector planned for submission to the EIB board of directors in June and July will also reach component suppliers. (Source: European Commission)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=BEI/09/78&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

3. ADAM report on climate, energy and fiscal policy published

A report funded by the European Commission on the EU mitigation and adaptation strategies has been published. The ADAM project (Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies: supporting European climate policy) was launched in 2006 and has now completed its work. The ADAM report will help to gain a better understanding of the trade-offs and conflicts that exist between adaptation and mitigation policies. Some of the key recommendations include the need for a full liberalisation of low-carbon energy markets and eventually removing the need for national emission reduction targets and burden-sharing. The findings of the ADAM project will feed into the IPCC's fifth assessment report, due in 2014. (Source: ENDS)

<http://www.endseurope.com/21333?referrer=bulletin>

3. THE WEEK IN WESTMINSTER.

<http://www.smmmt.co.uk>



1. Government grants auto companies £11m apprenticeship support

The Skills Secretary of State John Denham and the Schools Secretary of State, Ed Balls, have unveiled that government has made available £11 million as part of a new approach to help employers train skilled workers. The announcement delivers on a pledge by Ministers in last year's Apprenticeship Review to explore financial incentives so larger firms could take on apprentices, benefiting smaller companies in their supply chains which could take them on at a later date. Of the 16 firms which have reached agreement with government, six vehicle manufacturers are included. The UK automotive industry is 800,000 strong and its success depends on maintaining the highly-skilled workers within it. It is essential that the expertise of UK workers is supported as new technology and innovation will play a larger role in the development and production of forthcoming models. (Source: DIUS) A list of companies which will benefit from funding can be found at

www.dius.gov.uk/news_and_speeches/press_releases/businesses_apprenticeships.aspx

2. DECC announces smart meter roll out by 2020

Energy and Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband has announced that government is planning for homes and businesses in the UK to be fitted with 'smart' gas and electricity meters by 2020. Such meters would enable meter readings to be taken remotely and together with a display device giving householders and businesses real time information on their energy use. The project will affect 26 million homes and several million businesses. The Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has set out the different options for rolling out the new energy meter in a consultation document. The preferred roll-out option is the central communications model – where energy suppliers are responsible for the installation and maintenance of the smart meter but the communication to and from the device is coordinated by a third party across the whole of Great Britain. The consultation period will end on 24 July 2009. (Source: DECC)

www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn053/pn053.aspx

3. DfT announces 'Sustainable Travel City' plans

The Department for Transport (DfT) has announced that large urban areas across England will be able to bid to become the country's first 'Sustainable Travel City'. The winning city will receive from government up to £29 million over the next 3 years to encourage greener travel choices. The chosen city will introduce innovative new strategies and build on existing work to achieve this, such as work or school travel planning; cycle training; personalised travel planning; online journey planning; car share and club schemes; dedicated bus routes; improved bus stops and shelter; cycling / pedestrian routes; 20 mph zones; consideration of parking provision. The major urban areas eligible to apply suffer from the worst congestion in the country. The 9 areas are Greater Manchester, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, Merseyside,

West of England (Bristol), Nottingham and Leicester. Government will also provide up to £3 million of funding to smaller local authority areas to help them develop their own green travel initiatives. (Source: DfT)
nds.coi.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=401340&NewsAreaID=2&NavigatedFromDepartment=False

4. LATEST UK CBI ECONOMIC DATA.

<http://www.cbi.org.uk>



The Bank of England downgraded its central projection for UK GDP growth in its quarterly Inflation Report, on the basis of weaker activity than expected in the first quarter of 2009 and the judgment that it would take longer for bank lending to return to normal than previously assumed.

ILO unemployment stood at 2.2 million in the three months to March, up 244,000 on the previous three months - the biggest quarterly increase since 1980. Claimant count unemployment increased for the fourteenth consecutive month in April, to 1.51 million.

Average earnings growth including bonuses fell to -0.4% in the first quarter of 2009, down from 0.2% in February, with the annual growth rate turning negative for the first time on record (since 1964). Excluding bonuses, average earnings growth was 3.0% - also the weakest on record (since 1997) - down from 3.2% in February.

Industrial production fell by 5.3% in the first quarter of 2009, with manufacturing output down by 5.5% over the same period. On an annual basis, industrial production was 12.1% lower than the first quarter of 2008 - the biggest year-on-year decline on record (since 1948).

Producers' input prices fell by 5.0% in the year to April, in comparison to a 0.4% decline in March. Output price inflation slowed to 1.2% - the weakest since 2004 - from 2.0% in the previous month.

RICS survey data showed some tentative signs of a pick-up in housing market activity, with an increase in new buyer enquiries for the sixth consecutive month in April.

5. NEWS FROM "AFTERMARKET".

<http://www.aftermarketnetwork.com>



BOSCH BIDS TO GROW CAR SERVICE NETWORK AND CREATE NATIONAL ALTERNATIVE TO FRANCHISED DEALERS

BOSCH is spending a “very high six digit” sum on plans to expand its Car Service network beyond the 450 mark. Aftermarket recently visited the company at its Denham headquarters to find out more about its expansion plans. It is using adverts on Tesco delivery lorries together with national and regional radio advertising fronted by motoring celebrity Tiff Needell – of Top Gear and Fifth Gear fame.

The 50 Tesco lorries (pictured) carrying Bosch adverts are set to hit the road by the beginning of June. During June and July, 29 live road show events will take place around the country giving drivers the chance to have their cars checked by local Bosch garages. The company declined to reveal targets for the number of garages joining the scheme.

It says it is focusing on finding garages that meet its criteria rather than expanding numbers at any cost. Its ultimate goal is that no driver is more than 30 minutes drive from a Bosch Car Service network workshop. The company’s plans show it is convinced the garage market can sustain additional top-level independent workshops – either at the expense of less-advanced garages or franchised dealers.

“We think the market for cheap operators will be there but only for jobs requiring no technical background,” said technical services manager Howard Price, commenting on the future of the trade.

Chris Paxman, sales manager for the Car Service network, added: “I think we could really see a very big resurgence in the independent sector,” he said. “There’s a new generation of guys in their 30s coming through as garage managers who have been introduced to things like ATA accreditation from the start.”

Garages who meet Bosch’s criteria for joining the scheme pay an annual fee (or ‘contribution’ as Bosch prefers to call it) of £1,220. Bosch says it makes little direct profit from the fee, instead benefiting from the added demand for Bosch products the scheme helps secure and both now and in the future.

Bosch's scheme is now runs according to standards that are fully approved by the government's Office of Fair Trading (OFT) as meeting its high levels of consumer protection.

Howard said that rather than focus on the merits of the various garage codes in the sector, people should concentrate on the OFT logo as an over-riding "hallmark of honesty and fair trading" for garage codes.

He said the OFT was aiming to expand the number of codes in all industries that met its standards.

"The OFT is very serious about getting more codes approved," said Howard. "If you're driving down the road and see the OFT logo next to a Bosch logo, that's the important thing."

6. NEWS FROM BODYSHOP MAGAZINE.

<http://www.bodyshopmag.com>



INNOVATION INSURER HELPS INSURERS IMPROVE QUALITY OF SERVICE, SAVE COSTS AND CREATE PROCESS EFFICIENCIES

Innovation Group has launched Innovation Insurer – its next generation insurance processing platform providing insurers with an integrated approach to policy administration, first notice of loss, full claims processing, analytics, fraud and usage based insurance processing.

Specifically designed for the insurance industry, Innovation Insurer meets the needs of the entire insurance value chain - everything from claims management to 'on-demand' KPI reporting. Innovation Insurer takes advantage of the latest web-based technologies to deliver a flexible and scalable platform that can be fully integrated with existing legacy systems, work as a stand-alone platform or as a hosted service. Innovation Insurer is comprised of three main complementary software products that, separately or together, deliver performance breakthroughs for insurers:

Innovation Policy - a comprehensive policy management tool that works from quotation, through to inception and adjustment

Innovation Claims - a claims management process suite that allows insurers to maximise their savings and efficiencies and improve service levels

Innovation CLEAR - a business intelligence tool that measures effectiveness and profitability through 'on-demand' reporting

The software also allows insurers to design, configure, test and deploy new products in days and weeks rather than months, giving a competitive advantage to companies whose business needs require them to be agile and respond to ever-changing market demands.

7. FLEET NEWS ONLINE.
NEWS FROM BAUER's ON LINE PUBLICATION.
<http://www.fleetnews.co.uk>

fleetnews.co.uk



Tesco.com has won the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents' top award for managing occupational road risk for the second time in three years.

Judges recognised its continuous, comprehensive and systematic approach to managing occupational road risk.

Tom Mullarkey, RoSPA chief executive, said: "The fact that Tesco.com won this award in 2007 and now again in 2009 shows that the company takes seriously the safety of its employees and others on the road."

8. HIGHLIGHTS.



LOMBARD SECURES EXCLUSIVE NHS PASA DEAL WITH UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Low-CO2 Employee Car Scheme Launched on Campus

Lombard Vehicle Management has secured a sole supplier deal with the University of Exeter to provide the vehicles for its employee fleet for an initial three-year period.

The deal was done through the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (PASA) framework agreement which helps the Public Sector source its vehicles and was upgraded last year with the introduction of a website which pulls live comparative pricing information from contracted leasing companies.

The university is introducing a lease car scheme, open to the majority of employees who undertake business mileage. Users can choose any make and model within the thresholds of

120g/km CO2 for diesels-engines and 135g/km for petrol engines. The scheme was launched at a special day hosted by Lombard Vehicle Management with qualifying vehicles on display.

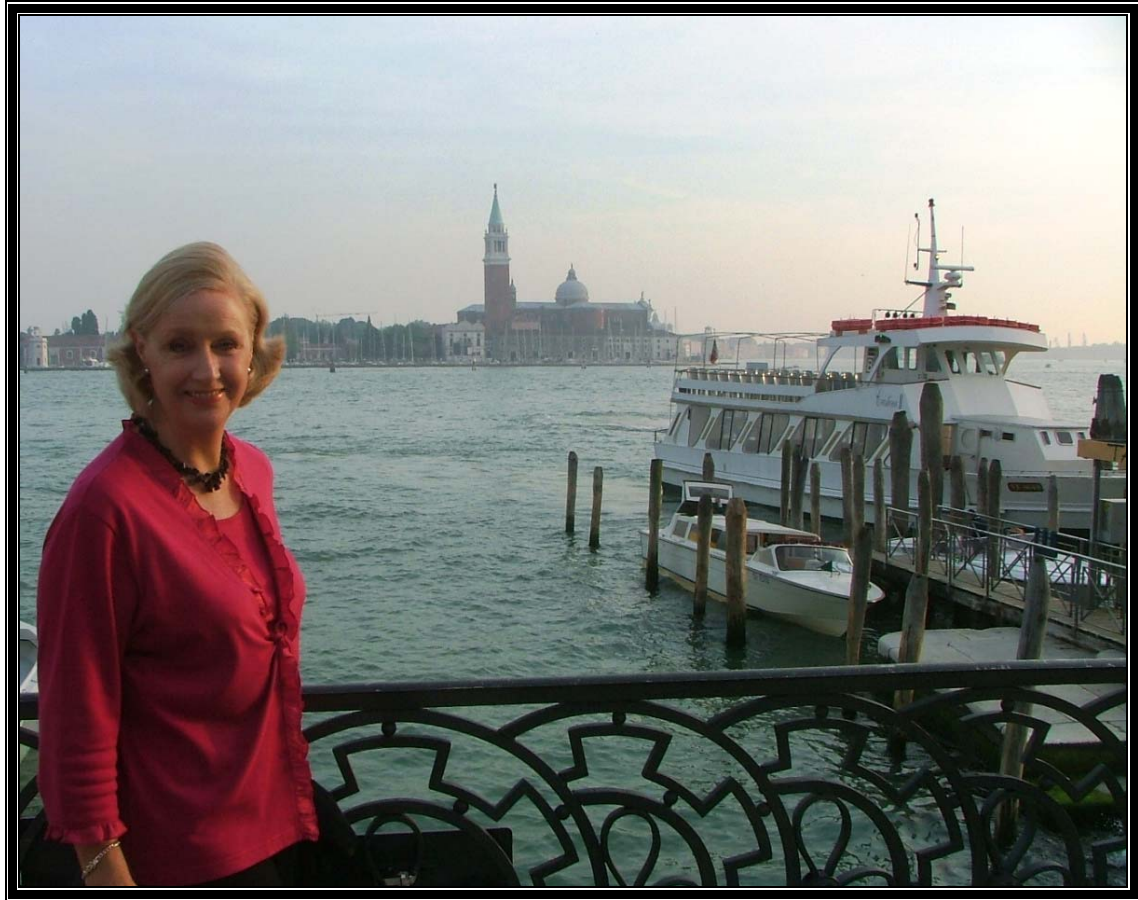
The first vehicles have already been delivered. Vehicles are being funded on fully maintained contract hire over terms of two and three years.

Andrew Johnson, the university's Assistant Director (Policy and Reward), says, "The new scheme enables the University to provide another value-for-money benefit for staff while also, through the CO2 emissions ceilings we have introduced, encouraging as many employees as possible to drive low-emitting cars. The scheme makes sound financial and environmental sense at a time when both of those factors are vitally important. Lombard has been a great support to us in implementing the new scheme and is able to source all makes and models competitively. We hope to develop a strong ongoing relationship with them."

The deal was handled by Emma Darby, Lombard Vehicle Management's Public Sector Relationship Manager for the south-west.

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9. E-COMMENT.



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This weekend sees my partner (above) and I together with the rest of the Felsted 10 in Venice. Wonderful place – we decided to fly to the closest airport (there are two) and take a twenty minute water taxi direct to our hotel in St Mark's Square and we never really looked back from that point. A splendid time was had by all; the Felsted 10 revolves around a very mixed bunch of good friends and regular readers will know we have been doing an annual jaunt together for about six or seven years. Dublin, Prague, Budapest, Seville, Barcelona, Rome have all been visited and it is all about having a good time in brilliant locations.

Venice surpassed itself!!

Sincerely

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AUTOMOTIVE DESKTOP is all about delivering information to you promptly and reliably and the success of the e-mail rests on the rich list of sources which is available to me – and of course to you. Here is a list of just a few of my favourites which have to be visited frequently and many of which provide an auto-email service as well. The list below is in random order and is my personal choice. I am not in any way remotely suggesting there are not many other extremely useful sites – there are!!

<http://www.aftermarketnetwork.com> Highly informative aftermarket site.
<http://www.ameinfo.com> A fabulously functionally rich site from the Middle East.
<http://www.am-online.com> BAUER's AM magazine is required reading.
<http://www.autowired.co.uk> Daily news by e-mail.
<http://just-auto.com> A huge database – has become the industry standard.
<http://www.automotivepr.com> automotivepr has a blue chip client list – visit!
<http://www.autonews.com> Run by the global automotive news provider Automotive News
<http://europe.autonews.com> Automotive News Europe – excellent European perspective.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk> Few can compete with Auntie Beeb's truly global coverage.
<http://www.bodyshopmag.com> Visit Soapbox first – Chris Mann at his best!
<http://www.thecarconnection.com> Daily news of new stuff. Top class.
<http://www.reuters.com> The Reuters name says it all – a brilliant site.
<http://www.economist.com> Essential out-of-office reading!
<http://news.ft.com> The Financial Times. Up there with the best.
<http://online.wsj.com> Wall Street Journal. Such a nice site to use – so good I subscribe.
<http://www.nobull-communications.co.uk> Clients include Peugeot, Volvo, Manheim, Avis.
<http://www.nytimes.com> New York Times. Some of the best articles around are here.
<http://www.pfpr.com> Ranked Top 50 UK Consumer Consultancy by PR Week 2006/2007.
<http://www.cw360.com> Computer Weekly. Best for e-commerce and new IT trends.
<http://www.awknowledge.com> Packed with automotive data, knowledge and reports.
<http://www.mbendi.co.za> First rate automotive coverage and not at all confined only to Africa.
<http://www.smmmt.co.uk> SMMT. Top site – as you would expect it to be!
<http://www.fleetnews.co.uk> Fleet News Online - BAUER's site; stuffed with fleet info.

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