

JOHN HAIRABEDIAN AND HGREGOIRE

A disruptor's dream picks up speed

How one millennial and team are redefining the car buying experience

John Hairabedian, the 28-year-old president of HGregoire in Canada and HGreg.com in the U.S.A., is passionate about moving beyond the status-quo in his industry. He knows that tradition and experience, while important, don't automatically translate into success.

When John became president, he had two goals in mind: redefining the car buying experience and solidifying the company's reputation as an industry disruptor.

"In each market we've entered, we've been labelled disruptors," says Hairabedian.

"Traditionally, dealerships were corner lots with a very limited number of cars and an over aggressive salesperson. We've tried to break the mold and rally behind the consumer, giving them exactly what they want and deserve, and focusing on customer needs as opposed to our bottom line."

Our dealerships are large, modern and sleek – each populated with enthusiastic, tech-savvy staff ready to help consumers find their perfect car with no pressure, no gimmicks. The company's sales representatives are not on commission, online help is offered with no strings attached and HGregoire's no-haggle pricing policy guarantees buyers the best price and value, right from the get-go.

"We're obsessed with removing friction," says Hairabedian. "Our associates are well trained and focused on recommending the best car for our client's needs and lifestyle. We make it easy for a buyer to compare a Mazda with a Hyundai or a Nissan, for example, test drive them all under one roof and get honest advice.

"When you chat with us on our website, we don't ask for your name or phone number. We think of our service like a concierge at a hotel - we just want to help you. We don't use our site as a way of collecting customer information."

The HGregoire mindset isn't about adding bells and whistles or things they think customers might find fun and quirky, but rather identifying what it is people don't like about car shopping and removing those things from the equation.

"We think, 'What makes people uncomfortable?' Take negotiating for example, no one likes to haggle, so we don't. Typically, at other dealerships, a salesperson comes over and quotes a price, and the customer must make a counter offer. We've eliminated this part of the

process. We sell thousands of vehicles a year without negotiating a dollar. It removes a lot of needless anxiety from the transaction.”

Hairabedian recounts a story that a customer shared about a previous car purchase, a purchase not made at HGregoire.

“She drove off the lot with her new car and in the trunk was a vacuum. That's very gimmicky, and certainly not our philosophy. You'll never leave one of our dealerships with a vacuum, that's for sure.”

What drives this commitment to innovation? John Hairabedian comes from an entrepreneurial family; his father Greg began HGregoire in 1993. In fact, Hairabedian's first job was to clean the snow off cars on the lot. Although not the most glamorous task, it taught him humility and gave him an appreciation for every position within the company.

Now as leader, Hairabedian, with a passion for innovation and a background in technology, is bringing a new perspective and vision to the automotive industry.

Under his leadership, HGregoire has expanded into new markets in the United States under the HGreg.com and the HGreg Lux banners. There are now seven HGreg.com dealerships in Florida and one HGreg Lux, a luxury pre-owned dealership in Pompano Beach, Florida.

It isn't easy to start a new company in an unknown market, but HGreg.com is now a leader as a pre-owned car dealership company in the state of Florida and continues to offer customers a redefined experience. Meanwhile, HGregoire continues to expand its footprint in Quebec with over 22 thriving new and pre-owned dealerships.

“I think I'm most proud of our team,” says John. “We have a great team. I get excited about bringing great people together. The rest was all them.”

Today, HGregoire has 30 dealerships across North America and continues to grow. Founder Greg Hairabedian is still involved, mainly in the company's expansion projects.

When asked to share the best advice he's received from his father, the younger Hairabedian says:

“Always aim to be different, never be content with where you're at and never say that your job is done. My father always said, ‘once you say your job is done and you don't feel the need to grow any more, that's when we have to close your doors.’”