

THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT for the Ebbett Group

Looking after their own – all 450 of them –
and their countless customers – grows a strong loyalty
...and that's the Ebbett way.

SPENDING TIME WITH Jamie Russell, the Ebbett Group Marketing Manager, opened my eyes to how much auto companies have changed through the years.

Sitting in the very classy Osten café in their showroom on the corner of Grey and Clyde Streets, in Hamilton East, we were bracketed by two seriously top motor vehicle marques, VW and Audi.

Boy, did it shoot down the old days of greasy waiting rooms that smelled of a mix between engine oil and hand-wash.

The Ebbett name may have been at the forefront of the industry in the Waikato for the last 90 years but this is one company that is not content to rest on its laurels.

Interestingly however, before launching into the exciting technology-led future of the group, Jamie is keen to impress on me that their key values are actually as relevant today as they have always been.

Much of our conversation is focussed on the customer and the Ebbett drive to offer an outstanding experience in every interaction.

Although much of this engagement is now delivered in a modern and digital manner, the concept of treating your customers well is just as relevant as at any time in their last 90 years.

At our meeting I also hear a lot about the culture of their business (defined as - Respect, Integrity, Care & Excellence if you want to know).

Now, "culture" is not a new corporate concept but I've rarely heard it defined with such conviction. This culture is not just "on show" to the customers, it's lived by the management and staff as well.

An example I particularly liked was the Ebbett VW initiative to put a California camper on the road and give each staff member a free week to take it anywhere in the North Island (see them at: www.kiwifornia.co.nz). That's a culture I'd like to be a part of!

But, back to a future that seems to be coming thick and fast for this progressive group.

The new Toyota and Lexus dealerships out by The Base will soon be followed by another enormous development in the same area to accommodate the flagship Holden brand and a huge service centre.

There is also the new Volkswagen concept store that opened in Pukekohe recently. It offers 360° interactive interior and exterior views of each car on a high-definition digital screen – what a difference to when we bought my wife's car even just a few years ago!

We talked (way beyond our expected time) on their ambitions in digital marketing, on-line service bookings, the introduction of electric vehicles and so many other initiatives it was a little difficult to keep up.

However, as we sat together in Osten Café enjoying our flat whites, I thought that for all the progress we can expect in the Ebbett Groups future, it's reassuring to know they're also sticking to the values that made them so successful in the past. **□**



◀◀ AN INITIAL CONCEPT FOR THE NEW EBBETT HOLDEN DEALERSHIP IN TE RAPA