

CANTON AUTO EXCHANGE

Fueled by Trust and a Supportive Business Community



Canton Auto Exchange doesn't have to advertise because most of its business comes from referrals. The 27-year-old used car business belies the stereotype of its industry: the owners stand by their vehicles so well that many customers never buy their cars anywhere else once they've bought a vehicle from Canton Auto Exchange. Spill tomato soup on the floor of your car a year after you bought it? The staff won't just tell you what to buy to clean it up – they'll wash away the stain for you.

Business partners Chris Vitti and Jonathan Sidrane opened the business in 1990. Canton Auto Exchange and its companion car repair and maintenance business, Canton Auto Exchange Service, both located on Route 44, employ seven people. "It's a tight knit community," he says. When someone is looking for a used car, "most of the mechanics in town will say, 'Go see Canton Auto Exchange.'

"Chris and I are partners. When you come in, you talk to one of us. You know who we are. Everything is on a handshake. There's no gray area. It's black and white."

-Jonathan Sidrane,
co-owner



”The local merchants support one another, referring each other business. For example, employees of other businesses, such as Larsen Ace Hardware, have bought cars from him. Sidrane, who moved to Canton seven years after opening his business here, shops at the nearby Bahre’s Package Store. “There are probably seven big alcohol stores in the area. I’d rather go to Bahre’s and give them my business,” he says. “You walk in there, you get what you want. The people are nice.”

While most customers come through word-of-mouth from the Farmington Valley, West Hartford and Torrington, the business’ website draws customers from throughout the state and several Northeastern states.

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People trust Canton Auto Exchange because they’re in business for the long haul. Their business model is based on making a small profit selling large quantities of quality, reliable used cars. For example, the law requires brakes on used cars to be good for 60 days, but when the mechanic inspects a car for sale, he installs new brakes if the existing brakes have less than 50 percent of life left.

The owners want their customers to leave happy, feeling like they got a fair price for a car they can feel safe in, Sidrane says. “Chris and I are partners. When you come in, you talk to one of us. You know who we are,” he says. “Everything is on a handshake. There’s no gray area. It’s black and white.”

