

**New in cars+...**

All Release Notices can be found at the online [cars+ Manual](#)

**December Releases**

- [Vehicle exchanges that were entered in error can now be deleted](#)
- [New CDPID privilege to allow deposit/authorization shortfall on selected corp accounts](#)
- [You can set a Minimum T&K revenue required to allow adding a Frequent Flier number to an RA.](#)
- [The Vehicle History File can be searched by RA Number](#)

**Staff Pick**

Our favourite change to cars+ this month is...



When cars+ is set to display the user's default location as the pickup and return location in the Reservations program, then the reservation search will now default to that same location.

**Training**

Pointers, tips & tricks for staff who have recently joined you

**New Users**

Online training session **19 February**

**Register Online** [Webinar](#) Web-based seminar, pre-live online educational, pre-viewers can submit questions, see slides while the speaker interacts - the 'a'

**"Hard Product" or "Soft Product" – which should you promote?**

by Peter Lunn, Thermeon APAC



**In Australia a fierce battle** rages between the two major domestic airlines for market share on prestigious and lucrative cross-country routes. Both airlines are heavily PR'ing the fact that they have all-Airbus-330 widebody aircraft on the routes. However, both are being heavily criticised for inconsistent quality (especially in their business class offerings):

- One has a number of very impressive new craft, but two notoriously old and worn second-hand planes, whose in-flight entertainment systems are known to fail on about 40% of flights.
- The other has decided that their newest craft will no longer have business class sleeper-chairs. Instead: traditional sit-up seats with a 'workspace' (even on the notorious 'red-eye' overnight services).
- The result is dissatisfied business class customers on both carriers because they do not know what to expect, from one flight to the next.

**The questions for all car rental companies:**

When a customer looks online or in your brochure they will see a picture of a vehicle, and in all probability some key attributes of the vehicle (ie air-conditioning, transmission, hatch/sedan). This is your **'hard product'** (just like a seat on an Airbus 330).

- Do you have that infamous 'Or Similar' get-out clause in your class description?
- How many times have you had to get legalistic and bring that clause to your client's attention?
- What are your chances of repeat business from that customer?

Unless you are in a prestige or specialty market, product differentiation within your classes is not necessarily a good thing. Make your fleet consistent? Tell your customer what to expect - and deliver? Makes sense, right?

If your fleet alone cannot differentiate you from your competitors (like the airlines, most of us are offering very similar core fleet), concentrate on your **'soft-product'** to create that point of difference. Favourable insurance or breakdown policies? Convenient collection options? Picnic packs for weekend escapes? Great local advice at every location? Unique add-ons?

- What drives your customer to you?
- What is your point of difference?
- How do you make your customer a promoter of your business?

*Peter Lunn has spent over 15 years in various roles aligning operational processes and IT systems at a major Car Rental organisation.*

**cars+ Tips & Hints** Did you know.....

... "Edit Opening Fields" is a manager's level program that allows sensitive edits to RAs. Many of these restricted edits can be granted to individual Counter Agents by setting up a Feature Edits Profile [Learn how](#)

Colleagues,

Happy New Year one and all!!

January traditionally means one of two things to car rental companies depending on the hemisphere in which you operate .

In the South, with the high season peak past, for many the race to de-fleet Risk vehicles is on! Ops and Fleet Managers should be in healthy competition: one to retain fleet, the other to dispose of it. A friend to both is our Fleet Planning Calendar - know what vehicle classes are needed by location so that excess stock can be de-fleeted ASAP.

In the North, marketing plans are coming into action in order to build res from the earliest part of the season. Make sure your marketing departments know the variety of promotions, rates and programmes available through cars+. If in doubt, ask us - we've probably got it covered already!

Andy  
[Andy Thorburn](#), CEO

**XML News**

Interface **now** to:

