

FSB's Deputy CEO speaks with Halfords Autocentres' Head of Customer Services about 'going the extra mile'

written by Kunal Mehta | 21/07/2021



By [Kunal Chan Mehta](#) Article Date: 21th July 2021

☐ Male Voice ☐ Female Voice

Leading motoring and bike retailer Halfords is famed for its excellent customer service: precise, honest, and competent. As it transitions to become a leading motoring services focused business, with its unsurpassed [executive team](#), Mr Mohammed Zaidi, FSB's Deputy CEO, catches up with Karen Beasley, Halfords Autocentres' Head of Customer Services, to understand more about the company's modus operandi to its customers, culture and careers.

1. Thanks for making the time for FSB. So, how do you go the extra mile for your customers? Pun intended of course.

We go the extra mile for our customers by offering expert advice in a personable friendly way and treating every customer like family. We know that visiting garages for some customers can be quite daunting, so we talk to our colleagues about the importance of good customer service, and provide clarity about what a good experience looks like to ensure our customers feel reassured and valued throughout the process.

2. For me, excellent customer service is more than what you say or do but rather about allowing customers to make their feelings known. But what is customer service excellence to you?

At Halfords, service excellence is about offering our customers the best possible experience, by making the customer journey seamless at every touch point, and treating every customer like family. We have enhanced our digital experience enabling customers to find what they need, and book appointments at their convenience through a choice of garages, stores or via our mobile fitting service where our technicians visit customers in their homes or work place. This is reflected in our TrustPilot scores which are 4.5 out of 5 stars for Halfords Autocentres and 4.8 out of 5 for Halfords Mobile Expert.

It is our colleagues who really make the difference, by building trust and confidence – delivering quality workmanship and a friendly local

service.



Karen Beasley, Halfords Autocentres' Head of Customer Services, leads in understanding customer service excellence
©Halfords

3. Sounds like Halfords Autocentre colleagues are the real driving force behind your success. Do you agree?

Without a doubt, the way in which our colleagues deliver for our customers is the key differentiator. Our brand will attract customers, our colleagues will keep them through providing a service which is second to none.

4. How does your company culture emphasise customer service?

We spend a lot of time talking to our colleagues about the importance of great service, this includes recruiting for the right behaviours, Customer First training, measuring customer satisfaction and offering continuous praise, reward and development for doing the right thing.

Also the Halfords Group is built around four core values: One Halfords Family, Wowing our Customers, Being Better Every Day, and Taking Pride in Expertise.

5. It sounds very promising – but do you agree a single bad experience in one department can lose your company

customers?

We are fully aware of the need to deliver across the whole organisation. Our company values – One Halfords family, pride in expertise, wowing our customers and being better every day supports this ethos and our drive to keep enhancing the experience we deliver to our customers.



With 404 stores and 374 garages, Halfords is the UK's leading provider of motoring and cycling products and services © Halfords

6. You aim to be the UK's No.1 most trusted garage – are you not already?

We are certainly at the top of our sector for delivering customer satisfaction, based on UK CSI results and have top box scores for our internal and external customer ratings. We will continue to drive our customer ethos, to ensure we are the best we can be.

This is reflected in our TrustPilot scores which are 4.5 out of 5 stars for Halfords Autocentres and 4.8 out of 5 for Halfords Mobile Expert.

7. Sustainability is a well-established and growing area. Are your services mindful of 'green' living, minimising plastic consumption and ethical recycling?

As part of our environmental strategy we have carefully established processes to take back

products such as windscreen wiper blades, bulbs and batteries from customers for recycling and we do not send any products to landfill. A very small amount of product that cannot be reconditioned, recycled or returned to the supplier is sent to an Energy from Waste (EfW) plant.

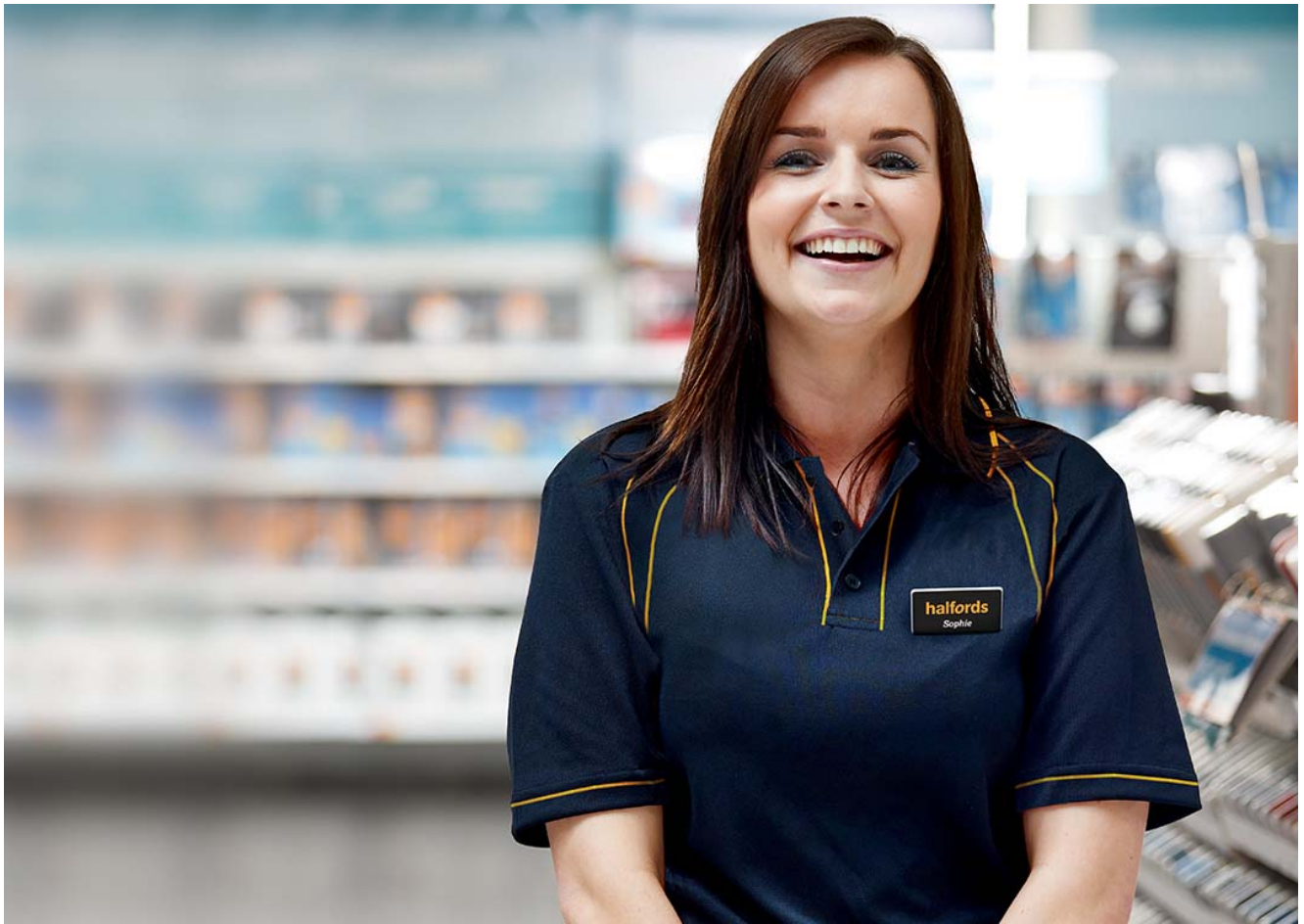


The Autocentres proposition provides customers with unrivalled value and service from a trusted brand; delivering dealership quality service at more affordable garage prices. © Halfords.

8. Services make up a whopping 26

per cent of the Halfords group revenue, do you think the movement on electric cars will increase this?

With the government's decision to ban the sale of internal combustion engine cars by 2030, we are developing plans to ensure we can meet all the servicing and repair needs of customers with hybrid and electric cars, as well as ebikes and escooters. This year we will have trained the equivalent of at least two electric technicians for every store and garage in the UK and it is our ambition to be a market leader in this space.



The company invests heavily in training to give its people the skills they need to develop their careers – whether providing advice and services to customers in store or helping garage technicians acquire the skills they need. © Halfords

9. Do UK drivers appreciate the importance of servicing their cars? I have always felt that the MOT itself never really checks for engine oil and brake fluid changes leaving room for lots of driver assumption.

Our research last year found a worrying 7.6 million cars have been driven on the roads without a valid MOT.

20% of motorists polled across the UK have at some stage driven their car without having had a valid road worthiness test. 31% weren't aware that they could face up to a £1,000 fine for driving without a valid MOT, while 16% didn't know they were at risk of invalidating their insurance which means they could be liable for damages in the event of a road accident.

We would urge customers to maintain their cars by getting an annual service and MOT as a minimum.

Halfords is a Sunday Times Best Big Company to Work For, employing over 10,000 colleagues across 400 Halfords stores and at more than 300 Halfords Autocentres. There are currently numerous career opportunities across the Halfords Group, for more information visit: [Retail, Autocentre and Support Centre jobs Nationwide | Halfords Careers](#)

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