For immediate release 15th March 2016

**Mazda dealers invest £12m in brand upgrade**

**and focus on a culture of customer excellence**

* More than 90 per cent of Mazda’s UK dealer network on track to be refurbished by late April.
* Mazda Academy training team bought in-house to Mazda UK headquarters.
* Bespoke training for dealer network designed to foster a culture of customer excellence.

Mazda’s UK dealers will have invested some £12million in the brand by spring this year upgrading their facilities to match Mazda’s stylish and spirited model range, which thanks to an unprecedented year of new car launches, is now one of the youngest in the industry.

The entire Mazda range now features award-winning SKYACTIV technology and eye-catching KODO: Soul of Motion design and the Mazda dealer network is investing to ensure facilities and customer service match the quality of the product range.

“It’s very pleasing for us that our dealer partners are so willing to invest in Mazda,” said Brett Hague, Mazda UK’s Head of Franchising and Network Development. Adding, “more than 90 per cent of dealer sites – some 107 – are on track to be refurbished by late April with 14 sites being either rebuilt or relocated”.

The investment reinforces Mazda UK’s position as the franchise of choice for dealer groups looking to expand their portfolio. The new look inside and out is just the outward sign of what is a much deeper change within the 135-strong network as Mazda UK looks to build on its sales success which has delivered some 60 per cent growth over the last three years.

“We’re looking for a cultural change,” said Mr Hague. “We want a philosophy of customer excellence which is more than just customer satisfaction. Buying a car is a significant purchase so we want to ensure the event matches the very best in modern high-street shopping experiences. Our aim is to deliver a personal service that ensures everyone buying a Mazda feels connected and is positively surprised throughout the process”.

To help do that, the Mazda Academy, an outsourced training facility, is being moved in-house to Mazda UK’s new and highly-praised Dartford, Kent, headquarters. The nine Academy staff will be tasked with developing bespoke training for each of Mazda UK’s 135 dealer partners. “Every business is different and we don’t want a one size fits all solution which is the industry norm,” said Mr Hague.

Part of the challenge is to reduce the attrition rate that, industry-wide, is between 35-40 per cent. “We want to be well below that and that means challenging the dealer network to recruit differently by being more customer service focused and not just taking a salesman from another dealer because that’s the way it’s always been done”.

“We want frontline dealer staff to focus on delivering a first-class customer experience that makes the car buying process enjoyable and simple. Our target for 2016 is to see dealer profitability going up, staff attrition going down, while at the same time introducing a new way for Mazda to measure customer satisfaction.”

Adding, “We want our customers to enjoy the Mazda experience so that they become our brand ambassadors and tell their family, friends and colleagues,” said Mr Hague.

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