



● The real money in the automotive industry is in the after-market and, as any entrepreneur knows, it pays to follow the money.

This is exactly what serial entrepreneur Jodi Stanton has done with the creation of her company and website, CarbonBlack TyreXchange at carbonblack.com.au.

The site, which has interactive features, is a niche application for the automotive products and services market. It provides users with information on the closest dealer and best prices for tyres and other spare parts.

The site allows for online quoting for new tyres. Stanton says the seller does all the work for the consumer with a five-step online quoting process. There are several hundred dealers linked to the site and several thousand registered users.

Stanton is a former consultant in capital markets with McKinsey & Co and co-founder of a job website for mature-age professionals called Adage.

She established CarbonBlack to provide consumers with the intention of providing the best deals on replacement car tyres.

"We've sent more than \$1.75 million in sales leads to tyre dealers alone, saving consumers time and money with our online custom quoting," Stanton says. "Essentially, customers get a value-add. Because we are independent we can not only identify dealers but we can provide the manufacturers with customer information such as, 'Who is asking for what and why'."

"We keep the consumer at the core through consumer ratings and customised experience using web 2.0 technology."

The operation is small but has caught the eye of private equity investors and a leading automotive spare parts database provider with whom Stanton is negotiating for the capital to expand the operation.

The plan is to extend the service to cover all automotive parts, spares and accessories and to establish the operation in the United States. Stanton, who is American by birth, says there is no competition in the US market.

She claims she provides services for 10 per cent of the local market and predicts this will rise substantially with the extended product capability. The

site has had 100,000 tyre searches since January.

"For the next year, it's going to be [about] getting the database and consumer activity right – making the customers 'sticky'."

The CarbonBlack revenue model is based on offering advertisers a choice in pricing between per-lead fees and a subscription fee. Stanton says the market was not comfortable with a commissions-on-sales-leads basis and so the alternative model was developed.

The site's beauty is that it becomes more useful to both consumers and dealers the more it is used, she says, as users provide interactive reviews of products and services for the next customer to see. Stanton has also developed a dealer-only section of the site where companies in the industry can buy and sell excess and obsolete stock.

About 12 million replacement car tyres were sold in Australia in 2006. **BRW**

Interviewed by Tony Blackie

## Jodi Stanton

### CarbonBlack TyreXchange

Position: **Founder and managing director**

Milestones: **2005: CarbonBlack established**

**2007: Built dealer-exchange site**

**2007: Launched market-research facility**

**2008: Site services 10 per cent of market**

**2008: Private equity negotiations**

## LIFECYCLE: UPTURN

A serial entrepreneur makes inroads with her online tyre site