

KEEPING UP WITH THE SHAFFERS

Hyundai dealership is a family affair

“My father-in-law Cary Shaffer opened the dealership in 1989,” says Shaffer Hyundai general manager Jon Kull. “He had been involved in a few dealerships with his brother prior to that in Valparaiso. It’s evolved into a real family business. My mother-in-law is vice president, she runs the office. My brother-in-law is the used car manager. We have more family members in parts and service. Sometimes I think we could have a reality show called “Keeping up with Shaffer Hyundai” - instead of the Kardashians. My father-in-law is excited to see what he’s built being passed down, but that’s still a few years down the road.”

Though the Shaffer family has a lot of experience, Jon is a relative newbie to the car business, signing on a year ago after leaving an IT company of which he was a founding member. “It’s a big change of pace for me, but I came in

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**Jon Kull, General Manager
Shaffer Hyundai**

fresh and brought some new ideas to the table,” says Jon. “There is quite often a negative perception about the way the car industry operates, and we operate differently. I want people to know I have an open door policy when it comes to talking with a general manager. I love being in the mix of things and I sit right



Pictured above, the Shaffer Hyundai family (L to R) John Shaffer, Jon Kull, Cary Shaffer, and Joanne Shaffer. Pictured top right, Shaffer Hyundai showroom in Merrillville. Pictured bottom right, the 2013 Hyundai Equus.

out on the showroom floor if you want to talk to me. I tell our sales and service reps if you treat everyone like you would treat your own mother, our dealership will be second to none. That’s how we go into a transaction. That’s the feeling we want to get across. We want it to be relaxed, and feel like you are working with family. No gimmicks. No bait-and-switch. No hidden expenses.”

Returning customers will see a lot of other familiar faces at Shaffer. “We have very little turnover,” said Jon. “Our top salesman has been here over 11 years. Our service manager has been here nearly 20. We have a topnotch technician who has been here almost 20 years.”

Once people buy a Hyundai, they

keep coming back. “Hyundai is one of the tops in brand loyalty,” says Jon. “The Hyundai warranty is one of the top considerations with buyers. It’s 5 years/60,000 miles ‘bumper to bumper’ and 10 years/100,000 miles on the powertrain. The vast majority of competitors can’t touch the warranty.”

In fact, Hyundai has been so popular Shaffer was having trouble getting cars last year. “Now we have as good of a selection as anyone in Northwest Indiana,” says Jon. “Inventory is full. Production is up. The Elantra is a big hit, outstanding mileage, affordable. The Sonata and Santa Fe are the mainstays and will always be. With the Azera, Genesis, and Equus we are breaking into the luxury market which is really excit-



TONY V. MARTIN | THE TIMES (EQUUS PHOTO PROVIDED)

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ing. I’ll put our product up against any out there. Like I said we have something for everyone. Our entire family drives a Hyundai. I am so confident in Hyundai that I put my child in the backseat of one. That’s how much I believe in Hyundai safety, quality and reliability.”