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founders Jonathan Ord, Brad Perry: auto dealership experience

Call it on-the-job training

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When Jonathan Ord and Brad Perry started software vendor **FireSocket** (firesocket.com) five years ago, neither had experience in the car business. That was a problem for the pair, who planned to sell customer relationship management software to auto dealers.

So Ord and Perry went to work at a car dealership for 8 1/2 months.

"We worked for free so they wouldn't fire us," jokes Ord.

Adds Perry: "We wanted to understand in the dealership world how all the departments work together or should work together to create the synergies you typically don't see among the departments."

Today, **FireSocket**, of San Clemente, Calif., has about 400 dealership clients, including the Tuttle-Click Automotive Group and Earnhardt Dealer Group. Ord says FireSocket's annual revenues from dealerships are \$10 million. He also says the company has no debt and has been profitable about four years.

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