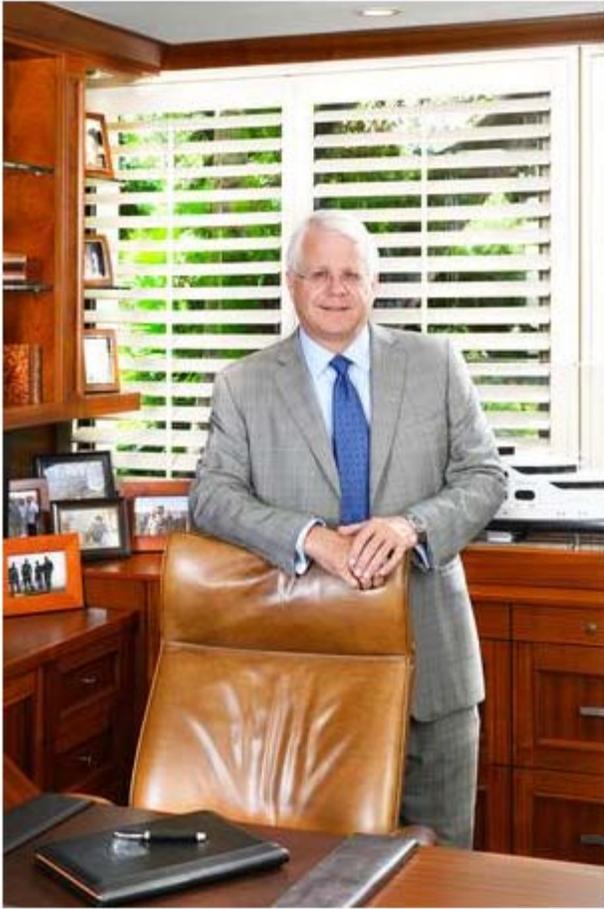


## JM Family defies, sets, outpaces market shifts

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'Our people give us the competitive edge that makes us successful,' Colin Brown says.

national economy continues to recover, and nowhere more so than in South Florida. To wit, where JM Lexus is the top dealer nationwide, Lexus of Pembroke Pines is second. Nationally, car sales hit 16.5 million in 2014, up from 15.6 million in 2013, Brown said. With 2.5 million new drivers taking to the roads each year, a company as diversified in the industry as JM Family only stands to gain, he said.

"Those new drivers have to drive something," he said. "As new cars are being sold, all our businesses take advantage of that." But ask JM Family executives, and they'll say success is measured by more than billions in sales or millions of cars. It's about the customer service and family ethos that reside in the company name. The company continually has been named a *Fortune* magazine Best Place to Work, as well as No. 8 on the Great Place to Work in Retail list.

JM Lexus received the WomenCertified Seal of Excellence for the fourth year for dedication to best practices for women customers, and the Elite of Lexus distinction for the 17th consecutive year for providing exceptional overall customer service.

"Our people give us the competitive edge that makes us successful," Brown said. "This is the value system Mr. Moran instilled in this company, and that we continue to nurture and strive to improve."

To be sure, challenges remain. Automotive is "extremely competitive," Brown said, with constant threats from existing rivals and new manufacturers entering the market. Subtle shifts in the economy can sway consumer confidence and buying patterns. As for consumers, the Internet has changed buying habits and the sales experience.

For its part, JM Family has invested millions of dollars in online and software tools to help consumers shop and help dealerships allocate, sell and accessorize vehicles.

If the general measure of success at any car dealership is the number of vehicles that roll off the lot, JM Family Enterprises sets the standard.

In 2013, the company's distributorship, which serves five Southeast states, accounted for 17.4 percent of all Toyotas sold at retail in the U.S. Last year, the figure rose to 17.9 percent. For the first six months of 2015, JM Family is at 18.8 percent, CEO [Colin Brown](#) said.

At the company's flagship dealership, JM Lexus in Margate, the company sold or leased 8,300 new Lexuses in 2014, making it the nation's largest volume Lexus dealership for the 23rd year, Brown said. Based on activity through the first six months of the year, the dealership is tracking to sell or lease 9,600 cars in 2015.

"That's beyond 'wow,'" Brown said. "That's staggering."

Founded in 1968 by [Jim Moran](#), JM Family Enterprises operates four main divisions. Southeast Toyota Distributors is the Toyota distributorship serving Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas and Alabama. The company's vehicle-related service and maintenance contract division, JM&A Group, sold 3 million contracts last year. World Omni Financial Corp. finances 58 percent of the Toyotas sold by 176 dealers in the five-state region. Aside from being the top Lexus dealership nationwide, JM Lexus, the company's only dealership, is No. 2 in sales of certified pre-owned vehicles.

At JM Family Enterprises, the Great Recession is fading in the rearview mirror. Ranked 23rd on the *Forbes* list, the company tallied \$13.08 billion in revenue in 2014, up from \$12.5 billion in 2013, \$11.49 billion in 2012 and \$8.9 billion in 2011.

The company's success can be linked to several factors. First, the

The company is also looking for investment and acquisition opportunities, and new ways to innovate the business.

Another metric the business holds dear: customer time. New car shoppers used to visit up to five dealership before buying, said Jim Dunn, VP and general manager with JM Lexus. Now they visit 1.2. The growing use of electronic contracts helps expedite the sales process and today represents 20 percent of all sales contracts.

“We want to respect their time and make the shopping experience a lot more customer-friendly,” Dunn said. “Innovation is a core value. Retooling our selling process is an ever-changing process. I learned a saying here: ‘If it’s not broke, break it.’”

Jeff Zbar writes for the Business Journal's special reports, including awards sections.