



# OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

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**Chief Operations Officer**  
Mike Patton Auto Family  
LaGrange, Georgia



**AUTOMOTIVE RECRUITERS INTERNATIONAL, INC.**  
A Division of Lordstone Corporation

Consultants To Management for Executive Search & Selection

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# INTRODUCTION

The following pages describe an excellent opportunity for a principled, organized, automotive retail leader with multi-store experience. This opportunity would be well suited for a professional who would find purpose and meaning working for a progressive, reputable, multi-generational dealership group committed to **highly ethical and moral business practices.**

The following profile was written as a result of spending a day and a half in onsite meetings with the executive leadership of Mike Patton Auto Family. This unfettered access within our client enabled us to assess the culture of the company, the personalities that make up the team, and the company's goals, objectives, capabilities and hindrances. I believe this is important for you to know because unlike Mike Patton Auto Family, the HR practices and procedures within much of automotive dealership community today emphasize hiring speed over quality and performance over values and cultural fit. These hiring practices are further perpetuated by recruiters, who by seeking to maximize revenue through a high volume of assignments, are eager to oblige client requests for little consulting, quick delivery of resumes and fast hires. The behavior of both groups encourage a never ending cycle of executive turnover, unfortunately at the expense of management, shareholders and profitability. It also represents the antithesis of our approach which aims to thoroughly assess each client who retains our services and each individual desiring candidacy. Only then can we ensure the right match has been made, resulting in long-term value for clients and career satisfaction for the individuals our clients employ.

By documenting our findings in the enclosed profile, we hope to elicit positive responses from successful candidates or referrals to qualified individuals. We trust the following pages will achieve this goal and would welcome the opportunity to talk with someone you know who meets most or all of the requirements described in this profile. As to how they can expect to be treated:

- 1. They can be assured of complete confidentiality on our part.** Any information shared with us will only be shared with our client at the appropriate time.
- 2. We treat everyone the way we would want to be treated if our positions were reversed.** This practically translates into doing what we say we are going to do in a timely manner, promptly returning phone calls, and providing frequent and honest feedback to both candidates and clients.

As to our veracity in adhering to the above-mentioned points, we invite all interested parties to "check us out" by contacting anyone with whom we have previously done business. You'll find we are unusual in that we would much rather conduct a handful of searches each year in an exceptional manner than execute many in an average or mediocre manner. Why? Because we feel it's not only our mission but our calling to perform the most professional, highly ethical executive search consulting, resulting in the creation of long-term value for our clients.

Thanks again for reviewing the following profile, and we appreciate your interest.

Jeffrey R Ketchum  
President & CEO  
Automotive Recruiters International, Inc.



## *the* OPPORTUNITY

**As a family-owned, highly principled, multi-location automotive dealership group, the Mike Patton Auto Family seeks a Chief Operations Officer whose leadership will aim to increased effectiveness, profitability and growth for the business. This is an excellent opportunity for someone who has a proven leadership track record at a multi-store dealership to become a valued and influential team member in a well-known and respected auto family that has built an outstanding reputation of integrity in its 40 years in business.**

Operating with a firm foundation of strong values, the Mike Patton Auto Family seeks to honor God through impacting the lives of its employees, customers, and community. Working under the direction and supervision of President and CEO, Chris Patton, the Chief Operations Officer will plan and direct all aspects of the dealership's operational processes and will actively and progressively lead and mentor both the Fixed Operations and Variable Operations Directors and their associated teams. The right candidate will have the opportunity to grow as he or she helps the company regain the market share they once had, as evidenced by the 12 stores they once owned in the early 2000s.

The Mike Patton Auto Family has a strong desire to positively impact the lives of its employees and to help them grow within the company. One of the company's core values is employee development, and they, "strive to create an atmosphere that inspires and enables people to reach their full potential." Not only will the right candidate have the opportunity to grow him or herself, they will also have the opportunity to help others grow and will be able to positively impact lives.

The new COO will be joining a dealership family with an outstanding reputation, top-notch, modern facilities, and strong franchises. With close proximity to three solid metropolitan markets, there is tremendous opportunity for growth. The right candidate will help the company grow its current franchises and will also be instrumental in

the growth of the company as it expands and builds new facilities, acquires additional franchises or takes on other automotive endeavors.

If you are an experienced leader in the automotive industry, there are many reasons that may drive you to explore this opportunity:

- Perhaps you work for an automotive dealer whose principles and values are not in alignment with your own. What a wonderful opportunity this is for someone to work for an automotive dealer that is committed to treating both customers and employees with respect, and who will not compromise integrity in order to make a deal.
- You may be working for an existing automotive dealer that stifles creative thinking and does not allow you to make the changes necessary to grow the business. The Mike Patton Auto Family values and encourages creative ideas and outside-the-box thinking. As such, your opinions and suggestions will be strongly considered. Once agreed upon, you will have the authority and encouragement to implement positive change.
- You may be in the position where you are General Manager over three to five stores, but you aren't able to influence how the organization is run. Instead, you may be seeking the number one or number two job in a dealership group where you will be a key influential leader and decision maker responsible for running an entire business.
- You may be working for an organization that is content with the status quo or has already reached its growth potential. The Mike Patton Auto Family is forward-thinking and is always looking for new growth possibilities, whether that be maximizing internal opportunities, acquiring additional franchises or buildings.



## the COMPANY

**Mike Patton Auto Family is a third generation, family-run, automotive dealership group. Employing 100 people, the dealership consists of three stores carrying the strong and growing franchises of Honda, Ford/Lincoln, and Chrysler/Dodge/Jeep/Ram. Located about an hour southwest of Atlanta, the Mike Patton Auto Family serves the Columbus, GA, Atlanta, GA, and Auburn, AL markets. As a Christian organization, the company's policies and guidelines reflect values such as honesty and integrity. The Mike Patton Auto Family focuses heavily on growing its people, and it seeks to honor God through impacting the lives of its employees, customers, and community.**

Mike Patton founded the company in 1973 with the belief that every customer and employee should be taken care of. He began as a VW dealer, acquiring more franchises throughout the years and updating and building new facilities. The company peaked in size in 2001 with 12 different stores and over 300 employees. In their 40 years in business, the Mike Patton Auto Family has become an instantly recognizable name known for integrity within its market. Mike still provides advice and guidance, though his sons now own and run the business. Chris Patton is President and CEO, and Brian Patton is Variable Ops Director. In 2003 they adopted

a One Price system, which Chris describes as a spiritual decision meant to cement the company's integrity.

It should be noted that although the Mike Patton Auto Family is a Christian organization, the company does not discriminate, and neither promotion nor compensation are based upon the acceptance of faith, though they provide an atmosphere where employees have the

opportunity to know God and make God known. Each sales meeting is opened in a prayer, and Chris gives a short monthly devotion in which he talks about an issue and tells a spiritual truth. The company also thinks of growing and developing its people as one of its most important duties. The Mike Patton Auto Family has a phenomenal reputation within its market, though its leadership is committed to regaining the market share that it once held, using a "one price" method.

With a total of 72,000 square feet of facilities on 19 acres, including 63 bays and 42 lifts, the company's leadership believes that most of the opportunity for improvement resides in variable operations, especially in the used car department. The company

is also looking to future acquisition opportunities with franchises like Hyundai, GMC, Buick, and Chevy within the area and region.

### **Mike Patton Auto Family holds the following values:**

- **Integrity:** We do what is right even when no one is watching.
- **Excellence:** We are constantly redefining our goals, expectations, boundaries, and potential.
- **Employee Development:** We strive to create an atmosphere that inspires and enables people to reach their full potential.
- **Spiritual Growth:** We provide the opportunity for all to know God and to make him known.
- **Community Impact:** We use our time, talents, and treasures to make a difference in those who need it most.



## *the* POSITION

**Working under the direction of the President & CEO, Chris Patton, and in conjunction with the Controller, the Chief Operations Officer will plan and direct all aspects of the dealership's operational processes, objectives, and initiatives for the purpose of customer satisfaction, team development, market share growth, and healthy profitability. The position will actively lead, mentor, and develop both the Variable Operations and Fixed Operations Directors and their associated teams.**

The mission of the new COO will be to lead, influence, and instill a high degree of unity, professional organization, planning, follow-through, accountability, and profitability throughout the Mike Patton Auto Family in a manner that is complimentary to the core values, mission, and ministry of the organization. The COO will oversee the daily operations of the organization, thereby enabling key family members to pursue their internal and external ministry efforts, while also developing their roles as business leaders. The Mike Patton Auto Family seeks someone who is proactive rather than reactive and can manage the operations in an organized manner.

Initial responsibilities of the new COO will be to develop accountabilities and to put them into place, executing a consistent and cohesive sales process. Within the first 30 days of employment, the COO will have planned a sales training program and will have assessed the performance of both direct reports and established a development plan for each. Additional focus will be on the used car department, with the goal of hiring a used car manager to eventually increase monthly volume to 150 units.

Further responsibilities of the new COO will include the establishment of an ongoing recruiting and development plan and putting the right personnel into place. Within a year, this role will have brought cohesion to the management team, improved execution of the negotiation-free sales process, enhanced customer

satisfaction, developed a marketing plan, improved basic processes to eliminate mistakes and waste. Looking further down the road, the COO will have been heavily involved in long-term personnel development, ingraining bullet-proof processes, and growing the company into additional profit centers, new facilities, and the acquisition of other franchises.

The successful candidate will be responsible for developing people within the organization by developing, encouraging, mentoring, and retaining a winning management team and evaluating and coaching them on a regular basis. They will ensure that proper staffing is in place in all Fixed and Variable departments in order to meet goals and objectives, and they will establish and implement effective HR practices. Finally, they will establish performance objectives, which they will regularly measure, they will refine compensation systems, and they will build a performance-driven organizational culture.

The COO will continuously improve operational processes and will foster an effective system of communication throughout the organization. They will meet regularly with department heads to ensure that objectives and performance goals are being met and to elicit ideas for improvement. This role will also be highly involved in the strategic direction of the auto family, developing, with the input of the leadership team, the annual business plan. The COO will facilitate creativity in growth into additional profit centers and will act as an advisor to the CEO, informing him about business activities, potential threats, opportunities, and strategic recommendations.

As a leader, the COO will passionately share the vision and values of the Mike Patton Auto Family, will develop a team atmosphere within the organization, and will maintain the highest ethical standards and positive demeanor.



# QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

**As Chief Operations Officer, the successful candidate will have a stable track record of successful general management experience within a multi-location dealership group. This individual will be highly organized, process minded, and will preferably have experience with a “one price” sales model, though this is not mandatory and can be taught. Furthermore, the successful candidate will have values that do not conflict with the Christian principles on which the Mike Patton Auto Family operates. As with any other position within the Mike Patton Auto Family, successful candidates need not be Christians, however, they will need to be comfortable with the spiritual significance and principles of the business model.**

The company seeks an individual who sees the “bigger picture,” someone who will not compromise his or her integrity just to make a car deal. The new COO should have a positive and charged personality and should lead by using positive reinforcement, by giving constructive criticism privately and praise publicly. This person should be a learner, constantly trying to improve themselves while simultaneously teaching and improving others. They will be a team player, willing to make tough decisions for the good of the organization, and their personality will maintain a balance that allows people to warm to them quickly without compromising accountability.

The successful candidate will have:

- Effectively coached, mentored, and developed high performing teams that have functioned in a unified, complimentary manner.
- Established, implemented, and monitored a formal recruitment, training, and talent management plan which has resulted in decreased turnover amongst staff.

- Brought a high degree of organization, planning, and process/systems improvement into an organization, which has resulted in significant gains in market share and increased revenues and profitability.
- Displayed a high degree of tact, professionalism, and class in the way they have acted and communicated, despite having managed a high flow of activity and multiple responsibilities.

The Mike Patton Auto Family seeks an individual with the following competencies:

- Strategy
- Integrity
- Organization and Planning
- Excellence
- Listening abilities
- Ability to Select “A” Players
- Training/Development/Coaching
- Performance Management
- Inspiring Followership
- Energy/Drive
- Enthusiasm/Passion



## *the* LOCATION

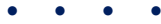
The Mike Patton Auto Family is located in LaGrange, Georgia, home to nearly 30,000. LaGrange boasts a small town atmosphere, well-educated workforce, thriving business and retail base, award-winning schools, and an outstanding quality of life. In 2000, LaGrange was named Top Intelligent Community of the Year for installing a municipal broadband internet network and using technology to better the lives of its citizens. The region's scenic beauty and mild climate has led to a burgeoning tourism industry, which draws golfers, hunters, boaters, bird watchers, and bicyclists. 26,000 acre West Point Lake, a few miles to the west of LaGrange, attracts bass fishermen from across the country.



LaGrange is located within an hour of the major metropolitan areas of Columbus and Atlanta, Georgia, and Auburn, Alabama. Also in close proximity is Birmingham, Alabama, which lies two hours to the west. For anyone who enjoys fishing, sailing, or sunbathing, weekend getaways to either the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf Coast are also possible, as both are within a four hour drive of LaGrange.



# CONTACT INFORMATION



Our client is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, sex, ethnic or national origin, or physical handicap.

If you know someone who meets most or all of the requirements described in this brochure, please feel free to suggest that person for consideration. If possible, it would be helpful if that person were agreeable to your nominating them.

We fully respect the need for confidentiality of information supplied by interested parties and assure them that their backgrounds and interests will not be discussed with anyone, including our clients, without their prior consent. Additionally, reference contacts will not be made until mutual interest has been established.



Automotive Recruiters International, Inc., a division of Lordstone Corporation, is a decade old management consulting firm specializing in retained executive search & selection. We assist automotive OEM's, suppliers, dealers, and distributors in locating and hiring leadership within the 90th percentile.

Our mission is to perform the most professional, highly ethical executive search consulting, which results in long-term value for our clients.

We fully respect the need for confidentiality of information supplied by interested parties. For further information, please contact:



**Jeff Ketchum**  
President & CEO  
Gladstone, MI  
jketchum@lordstonecorp.com



**Linda Nyberg**  
VP of Administration  
Fort Myers, FL  
linda@lordstonecorp.com



**Kim Hawley**  
Director of Research  
East Moriches, NY  
kim@lordstonecorp.com

**Automotive Recruiters International, Inc.**  
A division of Lordstone Corporation  
[www.automotivestaffing.com](http://www.automotivestaffing.com)

Tel: (888) 727-2010  
International: +1 239 344 9514  
P.O. Box 469  
Gladstone, Michigan 49837