

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



EFG Companies and Northwood University Announce F&I Innovator of the Year Competition

-Program to act as rallying cry for greater F&I innovation in the retail automotive space-

DALLAS, TX (Aug. 19, 2015) EFG Companies, the innovator behind the award-winning Hyundai Assurance program, together with Northwood University, today announced an F&I competition designed to jolt the automotive industry into a higher standard of innovation.

The F&I Innovator of the Year Award, to be held annually, will pit six teams of Northwood's junior and senior undergraduate automotive marketing and management students against one another to conceptualize and build a new F&I product while earning course credit. A panel of leading dealer principals, EFG executives, and Northwood's automotive program educators will judge each team's business case in November. EFG Companies will award the winning team \$25,000, and, more importantly, will develop the winning F&I product for the retail automotive marketplace. The company will also return a percentage of the product's revenues to Northwood University.

The competing teams will be tasked with developing a business case for their new F&I product. Each team will be assigned an F&I director as a mentor to act as a sounding board and guide for one hour per week. The students must research, rationalize and demonstrate the market viability of the new product, and its potential to facilitate F&I product sales in franchise dealerships. In addition, the teams will keep video diaries of their progress, challenges, breakthroughs, etc., that will be uploaded to YouTube each week. The competition will run from September 7, 2015 – November 13, 2015.

"Since the 1980's, F&I products have been developed from a dealer/F&I perspective outward, versus a consumer perspective inward," said John Pappanastos, President & CEO, EFG Companies. "The increasing compliance and customer retention pressure, and the challenge of appealing to a new and highly informed generation, have predicated the need for the industry to turn innovation on its head. These students represent a fourth of the U.S. population with \$200 billion in annual buying power. Our hope is that other F&I providers will follow suit in finding new ways to innovate and drive value for dealers."

The F&I Innovator of the Year competition will provide Northwood junior and senior students with a deeper understanding of F&I's importance for dealer profit and customer satisfaction. Currently, dealers generate 35 to 40 percent of their profit from the sale of F&I products. The pace of change in this area of dealership profitability is evolving rapidly due to continuing pressure on lenders, and consequently, on the dealer's finance reserve from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB).

"This competition exemplifies the Northwood University philosophy of hands-on learning. It provides our students the unique opportunity to see first-hand how entrepreneurship and leadership can impact the industry as a whole," said Keith Pretty, President, Northwood University. "Through this competition, we are providing students with an up close and personal opportunity to assess the challenges facing dealerships today and create a product or solution that has never been done before, and can viably drive profit margin for a dealer."

###

About EFG Companies

EFG Companies combines almost 40 years of experience serving as an industry innovator of consumer and vehicle protection programs with the company's commitment to raising the industry bar in providing superior client engagement. With their field and administrative teams AFIP and ASE certified, EFG's professionals provide world-class product development and administration, go-to-market strategies, training and auditing support across a multitude of channels. www.efgcompanies.com

About Northwood University

Northwood University is committed to the most personal attention to prepare students for success in their careers and in their communities; it promotes critical thinking skills, personal effectiveness, and the importance of ethics, individual freedom and responsibility.

Private, nonprofit, and accredited, Northwood University specializes in managerial and entrepreneurial education at its full-service, residential campus located in mid-Michigan. Adult Degree Programs are available in six states with many course delivery options including online. The DeVos Graduate School offers accelerated, evening and weekend programming in Michigan and Texas. The Alden B. Dow Center for Creativity and Enterprise provides system-wide expertise in family enterprise, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and new business development. International education is offered through study abroad and in Program Centers in Switzerland, China (Changchun and Wuxi), Malaysia and Sri Lanka.

<http://www.northwood.edu/>