Ever since its foundation in 1897, the Birmingham headquartered RAC has been consistently at the forefront in developing motoring services. From introducing uniformed patrols in 1901 and roadside emergency telephone boxes in 1912, right through to the present day when it boasts the world’s most advanced computer systems to deal with calls for roadside assistance. Today, RAC employs over 4,000 staff across four bases in the UK.

Millions of business and private RAC members enjoy access to an enormous range of motoring products and services throughout their driving lives, ranging from the familiar and much appreciated roadside assistance in the event of a breakdown to insurance, continually updated legal and technical advice and up-to-the-minute travel information.

The RAC has undergone significant internal change in recent times with the acquisition by Aviva in 2005 and the transition from Aviva to Carlyle ownership in 2011. At that time it was made clear that Carlyle saw strong long-term potential to grow the business and to develop the roadside business. “In a business such as ours, it is essential we have systems that can be adapted quickly and simply to accommodate changes to financial reporting structures, new lines of business and new reporting requirements,” says Nathalie Nicastro, Finance Systems Accountant for RAC. RAC requires the ability to continuously amend what type of information it captures, how this information flows through its processes and how it is presented to users and/or external stakeholders. It is vital that the company can manage all new information feeds related to new products and service offerings while investing profit straight back into the organisation and providing transparent reporting across the business.

“Then there’s more subtle changes that we have to deal with,” says Nathalie. “The economic downturn in recent times has influenced the level of care and maintenance that customers provide to their cars. For example, following the hike in fuel prices we calculated a twenty per cent increase in motorists running out of fuel because they were delaying filling up to save money. Such trends have resulted in increased call outs and have had an impact on resources that could be avoided. Having the right management systems means we can spot trends and account for such change quickly to provide the right service levels.”
UNIT4’s Agresso Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software provides the IT backbone for RAC, helping it deal with the expected and more importantly, the unexpected challenges and changes of such a service-centric business. RAC recognises the value of the latest technologies in helping it to work efficiently and effectively. It has appointed new automotive experts to help identify the needs of customers and drive forward new strategies that enable those needs to be met, while also growing the business sustainably. Indeed it has implemented a number of real-time, on-line systems that provide immediate assistance to customers and allow RAC teams to quickly use a network of support to manage the customer journey, whether it is patrol van assistance, an accident recovery or provision of onward travel.

Organisational changes and new service offerings accounted for in a matter of hours
UNIT4 Agresso is especially suited to organisations operating in a state of frequent and dynamic business change and RAC believes its suite of ERP and business management solutions has helped it to adapt to changes of all types and complexity over the years.

Nathalie commented: "Undoubtedly we have faced, and continue to face change to both our internal and external environment. The UNIT4 Agresso ERP suite has played an important role in our success and has supported our strategy to offer specialist services to our customers as we seek to maintain and build market share. It can be readily configured to meet exact business and informational requirements. When we introduce a new service, such as our new accident management service, Agresso provides us with the ability to implement quick and efficient changes to the organisational structure and processes in the system at the User Interface level, where most systems would require expensive specialist time to make changes at an application level. Our interfacing system, which enables sales to our individual members, is continually supported by UNIT4 through the use of a bespoke solution and configuration of a separate Agresso client. This means as soon as a new service launches, we can target it to the right customers and account for sales immediately so we maximise customer service and business performance at all times."

UNIT4’s objective is to deliver solutions that provide reliable, accurate and timely business and finance information while enabling change to be embraced quickly and easily.

In a rapidly changing environment, UNIT4 Agresso gives RAC peace of mind that it can respond to the majority of change as and when needed and without the big price tag or complexity associated with other solutions. Such flexibility keeps the costs of on-going business change and disruption to a minimum.

About UNIT4
UNIT4 a global business software and services company that creates, provides and supports software for Businesses Living IN Change – delivered via the cloud or on-premise – to help these fast-changing organisations manage their business needs effectively. We strive to set the global standard for business solutions that help our customers to embrace change independently, in the most simple, quick and cost-effective way.

We have a broad portfolio of solutions that address different markets, requirements, technologies and types of organisation. The UNIT4 group incorporates a number of the world’s leading change-embracing software brands, including: UNIT4 Agresso, our flagship ERP suite for mid-sized services-intensive organisations; UNIT4 Coda Financials, our best-of-class financial management software; and FinancialForce.com, the cloud applications company formed with investment from salesforce.com. UNIT4 has operations in 26 countries across Europe, North America, Asia Pacific and Africa (as well as sales activities in several other countries) for easy, local access to service and support.