



# **Communicate Smarter**

to Close More Deals

**leadd**

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## Communicate Smarter to Close More Deals

Today's car shopping journey starts online. A prospect's first interaction with your dealership typically begins on your website or third-party site as they check inventory. If they have a question, they may use any number of channels to communicate, including email, phone or texting. Or they may complete a lead form or use an online retailing tool on your website to learn more about the vehicle and start the deal process.

To successfully bring these shoppers further down funnel and close more deals, it's critical to deliver a consistent and relevant experience across all channels of communication, both online and off-line.



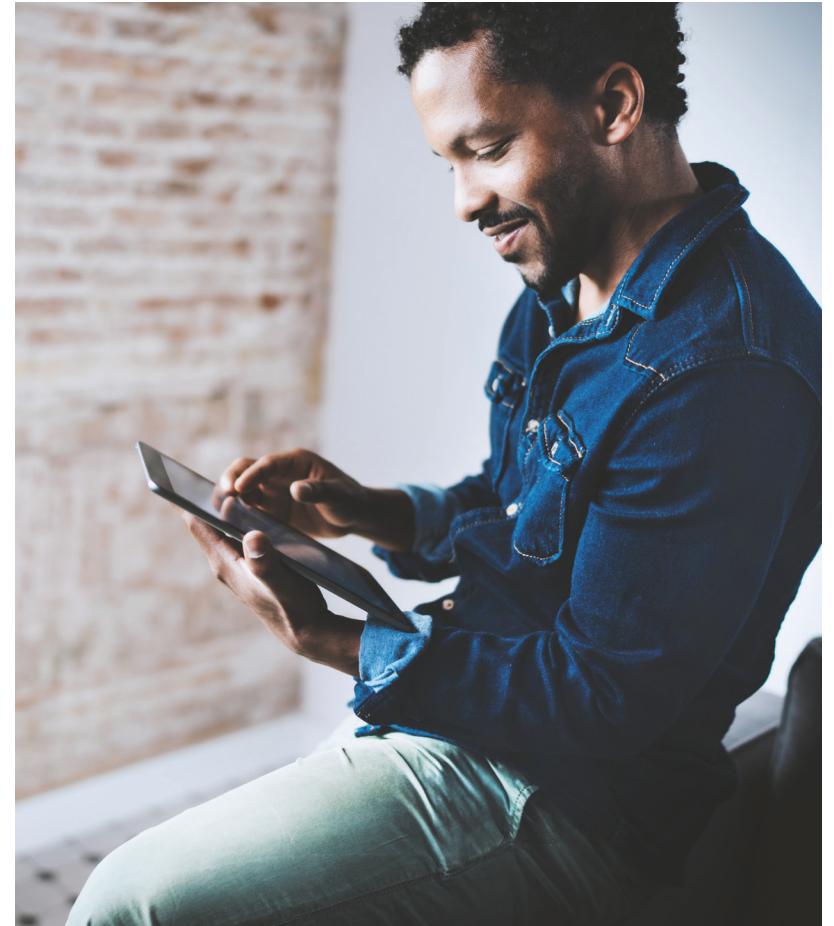
Think about it. If a shopper gets an email with an offer then sees competing offers on your website, it can be confusing. Or, if a shopper starts the purchase process online, then wants to finish the deal in-store, they expect the dealership staff to be able to pick up the process where they left off at home. If a customer arrives at the showroom and is told they have to start all over, all the way at the beginning, that's far from an optimal experience.

## Communicate Smarter to Close More Deals

Your marketing strategy is closely aligned with the customer experience. Therefore, your marketing messages need to be targeted, relevant, informative and timely. You can achieve this by using data on the customers' current shopping behavior and activities online, their previous behavior and their communications with your staff.

**Consumers that view a consistent message across multiple channels increase their purchase intent by 90% and improve their perception of that brand by 68% —Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB)**

When was the last time you took a critical look at your marketing strategy? Is your dealership still sending out mass communications with offers based on what you hope will help make your numbers? Unfortunately, this type of shotgun marketing delivers shotgun results.



## Communicate Smarter to Close More Deals

An omnichannel marketing strategy delivers the right message to the right customer on the right channel at the right time. Targeted, personalized campaigns deliver greater ROI because they allow your customers to respond and communicate using the channel that best suits them, and it gives you more data on where each customer is most responsive. If you're looking for a way to elevate your marketing game, an omnichannel marketing strategy will bring customers down funnel, increase response and conversion rates, and ultimately close more deals.

**When customers receive outreach in two or more channels, levels of engagement are 166% higher compared with single-channel outreach, according to Braze.**



## The Power of Good Data

To deliver targeted marketing messages, you need data that tells you what shoppers are looking for and what's most important to your customers. That way, you can connect with personalized communication or segment a list to meet your campaign objective. The key is delivering a consistent customer experience.

Rather than trying to entice all of your active customers with generic offers promoting your next sales event or an oil change, create specific offers based on where customers are in the buying funnel or in their current ownership lifecycle.

In sales, targeted lists can be created for lost customers who have abandoned the buying process, customers who have lease expirations coming up, or customers who have recently purchased a vehicle, and so on. In service, targeted lists can be used to deliver offers based on your customers' most recent service experience, declined service or manufacturer recommended maintenance. For example, create separate lists for vehicle owners who are due for a specific type of routine maintenance, warranty expiration or recalls.

The ability to segment and create a good list is why it's so important to ensure that your CRM data is thorough and accurate. The more data you collect about your prospects and customers, and the more accurate that data is, the more likely your messages will have the right information to trigger a reaction.

The better your data and lists are, the greater your marketing return on investment.



## Use Multiple Tools to Create a Unified Experience

An omnichannel approach ensures a unified experience for customers, no matter what channel they use. A painless omnichannel experience means customers can start the process in one channel, and seamlessly pick it up on another without having to fill out duplicate forms or provide the same information over and over.

For automotive retailers, an omnichannel experience means that customers can engage with your sales process in any channel, with a seamless hand-off, culminating in the offline, in-store closing process. A well-executed omni-channel approach allows your customers to do research, collect information and communicate in the ways they are most comfortable, all while moving further and further down your sales funnel. A CRM ecosystem that seamlessly integrates data from multiple channels is essential.

To create an omnichannel campaign, use the following tools simultaneously to deliver personalized messages to your targeted list, then tie it all together with your in-store experience.



## Digital Retail

The most important piece of an omnichannel approach is creating a seamless experience across all of your channels. This is where a fully integrated digital retailing tool is non-negotiable.

If a customer collects inventory or pricing information from your website, it absolutely has to match up with the information they're met with when they come into your store. If it doesn't, your dealership looks both inconsistent and untrustworthy – and your customers will not have a good experience.

## Email

Email remains the most popular channel in marketing because it's quick, easy and inexpensive. Your customers want to hear from you! What they don't want to receive are irrelevant or uninformative messages.

Fortunately, relevant email campaigns can be created and sent out in a matter of minutes. And email campaigns can direct customers to other channels where you can move them down the funnel.





## 3-Click Marketing

Event-based marketing campaigns are proven to convert at higher rates than other campaigns. With an event-based campaign, your goal is to find and reach out to customers who may have a need or are in a position to trade up their vehicles. For example:



- Customers approaching the end of lease or warranty
- Customers who purchased a vehicle several years ago
- Customers who recently purchased a vehicle
- Customers with equity in their vehicle
- Unsold showroom visitors in last one/three/seven days
- Customers who didn't show for their appointments
- Prospects waiting for a particular make/model

To create a 3-Click Marketing event-based campaign, simply use the advanced search function in your CRM to narrow down search results, depending on what type of list you want to create. To find customers with equity, use an equity mining tool.

### 3-Click Marketing

- Click 1: Select everyone in the search results to create an audience
- Click 2: Select an appropriate template with offer and call to action

## 3-Click Marketing

It's as easy and as simple as that!

Additionally, most CRMs have the ability to set up automated email messages based on specific behaviors. For example, if a customer declines service, automated emails can be programmed to go out in 30, 60 and 90 days.

### To boost response rates for sales conquest campaigns, emphasize:

- Low monthly payment options
- Fair-market values for trade-ins
- Free, no obligation appraisals
- Your dealership's unique value proposition



## Text

Similar to email marketing, texting is a fast, inexpensive and reliable way to boost connection rates with customers. In fact, 85 percent of mobile device users prefer a text from a business over phone calls or emails, according to AT&T.

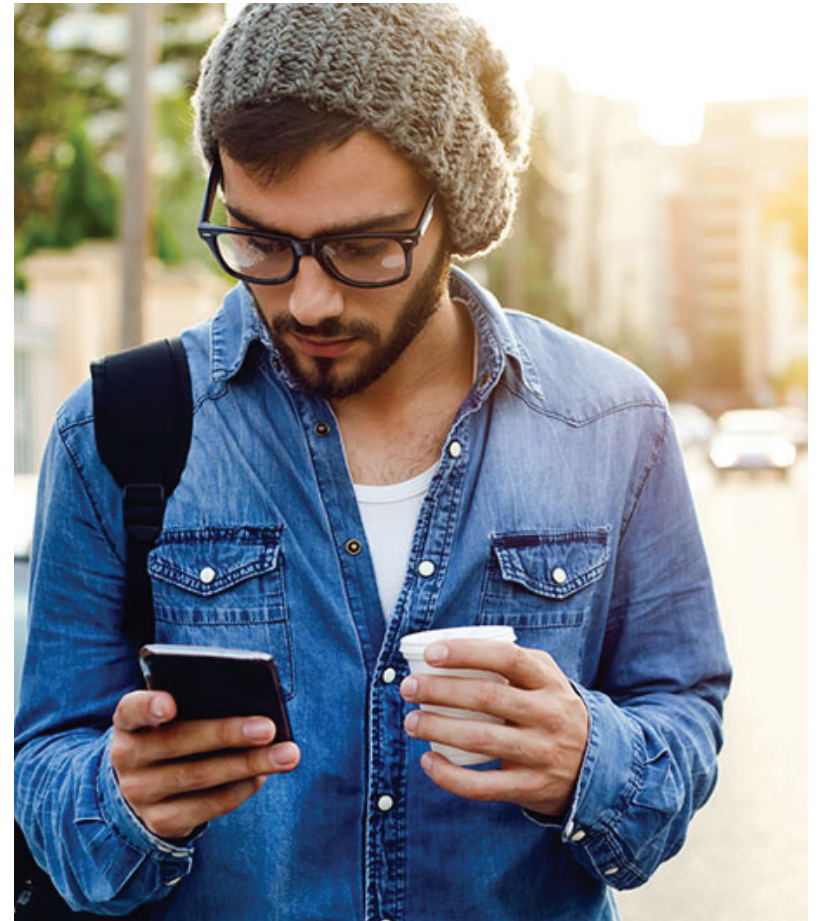
### Texting stats to know:

- 98% of texts are opened, compared with 20% of emails
- 95% of texts are read within 3 minutes of sending
- 83% of consumers respond to a text message within 30 minutes

Consumers like texting because texts are easy to respond to. As a bonus to your dealership, texting greatly reduces phone tag!

Texting is a powerful communications tool, but it's important to know the rules when it comes to texting your customers.

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) includes specific rules about how businesses can use text messaging to communicate with customers. Make sure you review the rules carefully before taking any action. Train employees, so they know how to stay in compliance.

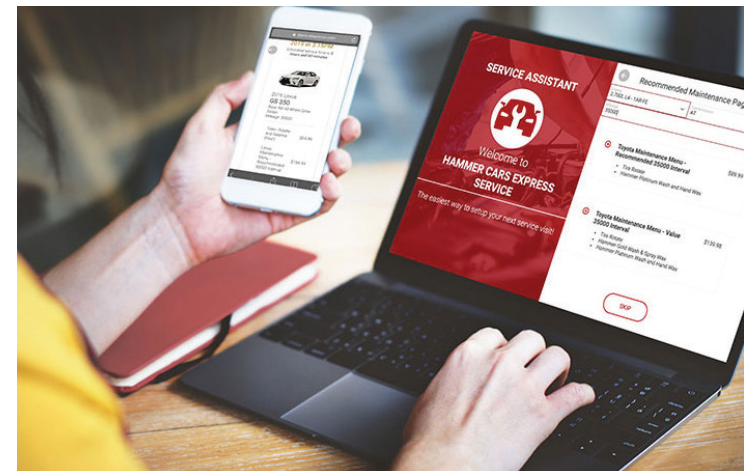


## 10 Reasons to Text Your Customers

Although your customers must opt-in to receive SMS marketing messages, employees can send texts related to existing transactions and relationships. Examples include:

- Confirm an appointment that has just been scheduled
- Send appointment reminders
- Answer customer questions & inquiries (lead response)
- Text vehicle inventory photos and videos to customers
- Send service recommendations with photo or video of a part to the customer
- Send notifications to service customers when a vehicle is ready for pickup
- Text link to invoice so customers can pay online
- Send a short SMS-based survey after purchase or service
- Invite customers to leave a review with a link to your preferred platform
- Thank them for their business

Use these text exchanges to ask customers if they would also like to opt-in to receive special offers and promotions. And then make sure the information they're getting via text lines up with their experience across other channels and in-store.



## Texting Best Practices



**Text enable your business/landline phone number.** One in three consumers have tried to text a business but have never received a response, according to Zipwhip. Text leads are valuable so make sure your text response times are the same as your response times for phone and Internet leads.

**Purchase mobile devices for employees.** An employee's private phone is typically not tied to your CRM. Allowing your employees to text customers using their personal smartphones can jeopardize customer privacy and increases the likelihood of non-compliance. Additionally, if communication is happening on personal phones, your employees can take customer data with them if they stop working at your dealership.

**Use text messaging software integrated with your CRM.** It's crucial to be able to monitor and measure conversations. Make sure you can capture and store all text communications between employees and customers in your CRM. This allows you to monitor employee productivity and review exchanges for training purposes.

**Make sure messages are hyper-relevant & consistent.** People are less tolerant of spam texts versus spam emails. It only takes one or two irrelevant messages to drive customers to opt-out of your text list. For example, don't send a text about a sales event to customers who have recently purchased a vehicle from your dealership. You should also make sure that any information you're texting is the same as the information the customer will receive over email or from a salesperson or service advisor in the dealership. For the best results, make sure every text message is personalized and informative.

## Texting Best Practices

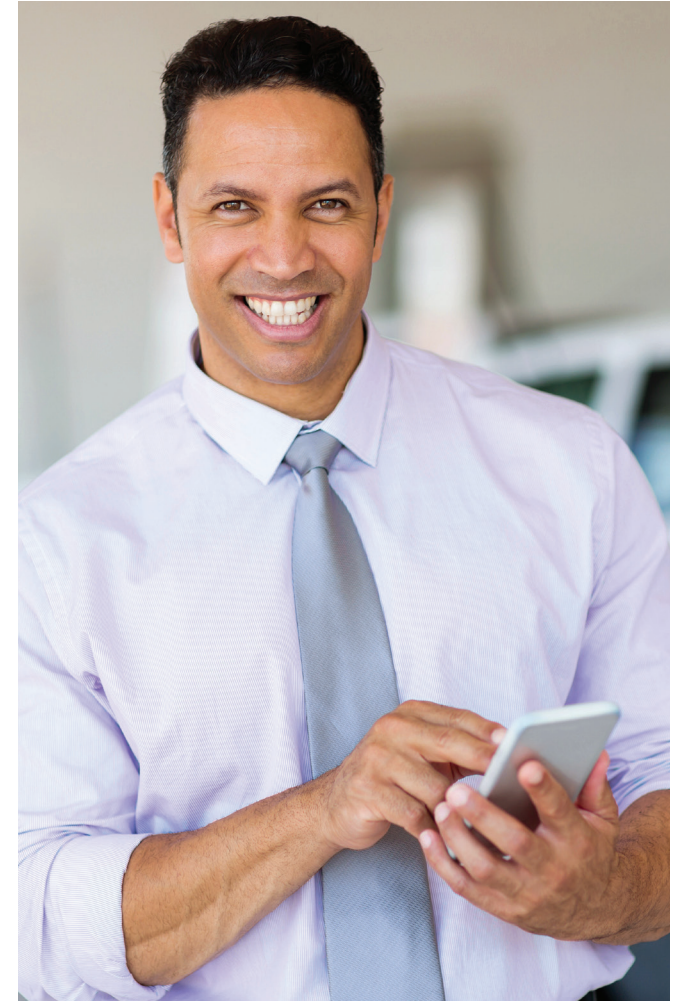
**Gather analytics.** Route all device numbers through a call tracking solution so you can gather analytics to measure customer opinions, feedback, reviews and more. Not only do these analytics reveal valuable training opportunities, but they can also be reviewed to identify what works and what doesn't.

### Suggested Text Marketing Campaigns

- Sales events
- New OEM incentives
- Service specials
- Loyalty program details & updates
- Link to your newsletter
- Link to recent videos

**77% of consumers said they opted in to a brand's text messages to receive coupons or deals**

—Salesforce



## BDC

Many dealers use BDCs for lead follow up and for handling inbound sales and service calls. But did you know that BDCs can deliver great ROI for outbound marketing campaigns as well?

Outbound call campaigns are highly effective for motivating customers to take action. For some customers, nothing beats the sound of a friendly, knowledgeable human voice reaching out to you on the phone.



For sales campaigns, one option is to assign calls to your sales team or internal BDC. Another option is to outsource campaigns to an experienced automotive BDC and arrange for them to assign hand-raisers to designated dealership personnel.

To maximize ROI on BDC marketing, your campaigns must be highly relevant and personalized. Make sure the people on your call list are good prospects for new or pre-owned vehicles. And make sure your messaging is united, so the information customers get from your BDC is the same as they get from your other marketing channels.

## BDC Campaign Tips

Improve the ROI of your outbound call campaigns by following up with an email that references the call or the voicemail you left. The email should be personalized and feel like it's coming from an individual at your dealership.

Try calling at different times throughout the day, including while customers are at work. Many people look for an excuse to take a break during their workday.



Be polite, but don't waste time with chit chat. Make sure you have a strong, clear, easy-to-understand message that offers something of value.

Some customers won't want to buy, but you can still use time on the call to collect and update customer contact information, vehicle mileage and driving patterns. The more data you have on your customers, the more sales and service opportunities you will be able to identify in the future. You can also use this opportunity to amplify that unified message across channels to reinforce the trustworthiness and ease of doing business with your dealership.

Furthermore, you can ask customers for objective feedback on their experience at your dealership. Know that customers will be more honest if you use an objective third-party BDC for this purpose rather than a caller from your dealership. Use their feedback to train your sales team and create a better customer experience.



## 5 Effective Outbound Call Campaigns

Target Customers	Campaign Objective
Customers who have been in for service in the last 7 days	Identify vehicles that are a good fit for your used stock plan. Offer free trade evaluation.
Inactive service customers > 6 months	Offer an incentive to return; \$25 or \$50 off their next service is better than 10% or 20% off.
Sold customers who have never been in for service.	Three to six months after purchase, gather and update contact info; offer a discount for a first oil change.
Customers with equity in their vehicles	Make customers aware of new purchase incentives; offer to lower monthly payment. Offer service special as Plan B.
Unsold showroom prospects < 7 days	Offer alternate vehicle options that fit their budget; schedule new appointments.

## Direct Mail



No, direct mail is not dead! Direct mail is still a highly effective marketing channel when used as part of your marketing strategy.

According to the Direct Marketing Association, direct mail has a response rate of up to five percent, versus just under one percent for digital.

And when included in a multi-channel marketing approach, direct mail can greatly increase campaign ROI.

Direct mail is tangible, keeps your brand top-of-mind and increases the shelf-life of your marketing messages. Use it strategically, and combine with other channels for maximum effect.

Communicating in an ever-changing world can be tough. Your dealership will need to utilize all the tools at your disposal to engage with customers in the best channels for them while providing a consistent message to garner trust and move buyers down the funnel. A seamless experience is critical to ensuring that your customers are happy and will complete the buying process with your dealership – not a competitor's.

# elead

sales@eleadcrm.com

elead-crm.com