

How Data  
**Drives**  
the Customer  
**Experience**

*...it's easier  
than you  
think!*

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# A 360-degree view of customers



## A 360-degree Customer View

Processes at a traditional dealership aren't necessarily geared toward providing exceptional customer experiences. Yet, companies like Amazon and Apple have proven that a great experience is what keeps customers coming back and recommending you to friends and family. Buyers may even be willing to pay more for a particular service simply because they like working with your dealership.

So, what's the most effective way to deliver a better experience?

### **Get to know your customers better.**

The more data you have on your prospects and customers, the easier it is to personalize their experience with conversations and strategies to meet their individual needs. That makes them feel more seen, heard and valued. And that makes them happier.



## A 360-degree Customer View

In this free guide, you'll learn how the most successful dealers leverage flexible CRM technology to aggregate, view and analyze all customer data in one place. A 360-degree view of each buyer helps your dealership create, manage and nurture personal, long-lasting relationships throughout the customer lifecycle – from shopping and purchase to service and loyal customers for life.

**When you get to know your customers better, you can build strong relationships and close more sales.** And your customers will transform from simple buyers into passionate brand evangelists.



# Car Buying & Selling Strategies



# Create a Compelling Online Shopping Experience

Influenced by the Digital Age, car buying and selling trends continue to change drastically. With car shopping today starting mostly online, more and more customers want improved research tools and the ability to complete at least some steps of the buying process on your website. With time and patience at a premium for both buyers and dealership staff, these digital retailing tools are a win-win, making it more informative, easier and faster to do business.

It may take years for consumers to feel comfortable completing 100 percent of a car deal online, but that doesn't mean you should adopt a wait-and-see approach. When you implement an integrated online car buying solution into your sales strategy, you

have the ability to gather valuable data points for every in-market customer who uses the tools. You can track vehicles of interest, financing details, F&I product viewings and trade-in details – all within your CRM or DMS. This significantly streamlines the salesperson's discovery process and helps create a seamless, tailored experience in your store.



## Create a Compelling Online Shopping Experience

In addition to technology solutions, you may want to consider tweaking your marketing to help educate online car buyers. You will need multi-channel digital marketing strategies to drive buyers to your website. Many of today's buyers go straight from a manufacturer site, search engine or social media platform, to your dealer website. That's where you need to place targeted marketing campaigns.

### Crucial components of any digital retailing solution:

- Penny-perfect calculations, including state and local taxes and fees and the customer's credit score, included in the final price.
- CRM integration so that the work done online automatically flows to your showroom for a consistent experience that builds trust. And vice versa, work done in the showroom will automatically be available online if they continue the process at a later time.
- Constant interaction between your customers and the system so managers can oversee the process and not lose control to third-party competitors.





# What do Car Shoppers Want Online?

Enable data-driven marketing tools to track how customers interact with your website and other online retail sites. You can then turn this shopping intelligence into actionable insights and personalize your communication with the right information to speed up the car buying process. These marketing tools aggregate all your data in one location so you will know what customers are shopping for, and where they are looking, to increase competitive advantage dramatically.

When you talk to technology providers, you'll hear terms like AI, Machine Learning and Big Data. Sure, they all sound good, but how does any of that actually help your dealership? Essentially, it's the equivalent of dropping digital breadcrumbs that allow you to trace where the customer is going and what they are researching. The data is aggregated right inside your CRM to broaden your insight into their online behavior and engage them with smarter, more personalized conversations.



So, how does this help you? Having a better understanding of the customer's challenges or needs enables salespeople to stay in touch at key points in the customer lifecycle. It also lets them quickly gauge a buyer's interests based on their online behavior, so they can respond with a customized offer that makes sense. This means you can deliver a specially-targeted message at the perfect time for better results.

## What do Car Shoppers Want Online?

Additionally, you can receive alerts on cold leads that have become active again when they search for vehicles on third-party sites. This enables you to know when to transfer the lead back from automation to a salesperson.

And this isn't just great for dealers – your customers will have a more tailored, relevant experience that improves their overall car buying process.

**It pays to nurture customer relationships.**

Increasing customer retention by as little as 5 percent can increase profits by up to 95 percent – Bain & Company research group.



## Leverage a Virtual BDC

Today's always-connected consumers expect instantaneous communication, and often your phones are the first chance to make a great impression. When your staff is too busy to answer incoming calls, the quality of your customer experience immediately begins to decline, and you risk losing out to your competition. In fact, the Harvard Business Review found that if a company does not respond to a lead within 5 minutes, the chances of closing that lead decrease exponentially.



Is it a smart decision to outsource customer interaction to a virtual BDC? Let's face it. We've all heard a few horror stories about outsourcing your phone operations. So do your research to make sure you're not sending BDC operations to just any provider.

To be successful, you should utilize the skills and experience of an automotive BDC network that truly understands your business and how to overcome its challenges. Whether you need backup or full coverage for your sales and service operations, finding the right BDC partner is critical for tracking all your phone and email interactions inside the CRM. Outsourcing to extend your reach in lead management, inbound calls, short-and-long-term follow-up and equity/data mining business development can be a win-win that pays long-term dividends.

## Leverage a Virtual BDC



Whether it's instant, scheduled or long-term engagement, customers need to feel as though they are interacting with a live person. Both live appointment coordinators and automated engagement tools can help keep leads engaged so that your teams can focus on building relationships inside the store. But appointment coordinators can provide an extra layer of personalization with your customers and business, working directly with your staff to warmly handoff calls if needed.

Be sure your messaging is consistent across all BDC and online channels so that customers have the same experience no matter how you communicate with them. This contributes to a better customer profile, which leads to a better overall experience.

### Do you know why some customers don't buy from you?

Up to 20% of customers leave a dealership because they do not receive the information requested, personality conflicts or another negative experience. They are not likely to share the reason with their salesperson or even other team members/managers. But 97% of callers will answer a short survey and share that information with an appointment coordinator. When you know your customer's true experience better, you can re-engage and turn negatives into positives.

# Integrate Your Service Drive

Often times, the service experience at a dealership is disjointed from the sales experience. By unifying your departments, capturing critical data inside the CRM, you can provide the seamless experience consumers demand and compete at higher levels than ever before.

Connecting with service customers in a more personal way has never been more critical. When you capture and manage service drive activities and include them in the CRM record, you streamline the customer experience and boost your absorption rate.



A better experience with your service center starts with the CRM and integration of all your service-related solutions: online appointment scheduler, a mobile greeting/walkaround tool and an MPI process that combines video, text, menu selling and online bill pay. This is highly effective in building trust with customers through transparency to maximize RO values and capitalize on upsell opportunities.

Advisors can quickly view customer and vehicle information, service history, pricing menus, inspections and recall data. This personalizes and speeds up the service process, contributing to a better overall customer experience.

## Integrate Your Service Drive

Continue to build solid relationships by integrating automated service marketing. Predictive behavior modeling helps you tailor multi-channel marketing strategies to a customer's specific preferences and needs – without adding staff.

### How can existing relationships get you the used car inventory you need?

Use your existing customer database and the equity mining tool in your CRM to bolster your used car inventory at a reasonable cost - but you need strong customer relationships to maximize results. When customers feel comfortable with you and trust your dealership, they are more likely to seriously consider trading up to a new vehicle and to become repeat sales customers. Set clear parameters for qualified prospects and stay in front of customers by delegating follow-up to your BDC.



# Train a High-Performing Sales Team

As consumers demand more information, transparency and honesty, prioritizing relationships over the hard sell is the way to win in today's market. So, how do you create and manage a high performing sales team?

First, hire for character, not for skills. Skills can be taught, but character cannot. Hire people who make good employees in general and then prioritize character traits like a positive attitude, integrity, high energy, purpose and the ability to work as a team. The trend is moving towards hiring service-minded product specialists versus tenured sales pros.



Second, spend 80 percent of your time managing your top producers, not trying to train up low producers. If you spend your time with a salesperson who sells 10 cars a month and you get a 10 percent increase, that's one more car per month. Spend that time with a salesperson selling 20 cars a month, and the same 10 percent increase nets you two more cars a month. You double your results from the same effort.



Third, focus on the top five KPIs or activities that are most critical to your sales process and hold your team accountable for these activities daily. It's smart to include logging all activities in the CRM to your list. You can't build relationships if you don't have customer information in your system. When the data is there, you can coach your team on how to consult the CRM to maximize follow-up efforts. This helps your team work smarter and more efficiently while making the customer feel valued and heard.

Fourth, prioritize relationships. Meaning, don't try to sell the customer with every contact. Establish a different approach to regular communications versus targeted sales campaigns. Relationship-focused messages should be informative, educational and offer value. For example, timely seasonal service tips, new vehicle accessories notices or a service coupon mailed directly to them.

Finally, coach your team with fast feedback. Don't wait until the end of the day. Stay away from remarks like, "You said this wrong," or "Go back and do it this way." Instead, try a different approach such as, "We didn't get the outcome we wanted. What would you do differently?" Involve the salesperson, make it interactive and supportive.

### 5 Steps to Better Performance:





**More  
sales**  
today and far  
into the  
**future.**



When you get to know your customers better, you can build stronger, long-lasting relationships that boost your bottom line.

Get a bird's-eye view of every customer interaction with flexible CRM technology that aggregates a customer's data profile in one place. Pair that data with high-performance sales tactics and around-the-clock BDC support to create relationships that close more sales with happier customers.

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