



AUTOMOTIVE WEBSITE MERCHANDISING BEST PRACTICES

A guide to dominating the
digital landscape

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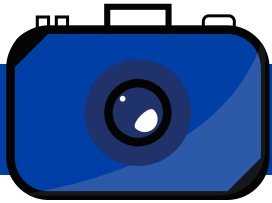
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INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, digital and mobile advancements have ushered in a new era in automotive merchandising. Now, more than ever, online showrooms are playing a critical role in engaging and influencing auto shoppers. With more than 93% of consumers starting their car shopping journey online, providing a digital shopping experience that is every bit as personalized and interactive as a visit to a physical dealership has become an imperative for dealers around the globe.

The good news for those who haven't yet upgraded their digital merchandising capabilities is that powerful but simple to use tools are readily available. This eBook provides insight into the practices and activities that leading dealers are using to dominate the digital landscape.



PHOTOGRAPHY BEST PRACTICES

In today's digital-driven world, visual and interactive content plays a critical role in the consumer shopping journey. In fact, 86% of consumer interactions with VDPs involve photos or vehicle visualizations. Why? Because consumers want to explore and fully understand every aspect of a vehicle before they ever set foot in a physical dealership. For dealers, this means that vehicle photography processes and capabilities have a major impact on converting website visitors into leads. Here are a few simple ways to get started.

- Get vehicles online as quickly as possible in order to reduce missed sales opportunities.
- Use dynamic photo prompts to ensure that key features are always highlighted.
- Shoot vehicles in a consistent format.
- Take full advantage of camera controls to improve photo quality.
- Reduce visual distractions and clutter with tools like Background Blur.

UI/UX BEST PRACTICES



With so many alternative choices just a click away, today's online shopper has little tolerance for sub-par website experiences. Within a matter of seconds, the typical consumer will size up a dealer's website and decide whether to stay or bounce to another site. Initial impressions and experiences with site navigation, visual design and vehicle feature content play a critical role in getting them to engage. Here are some UI/UX tips to KEEP them engaged.

- Highlight important vehicle details by placing them above the fold.
- Leverage interactive merchandising tools to enable consumers to tailor the browsing experience to their own particular needs and interests.
- Display view counters to highlight vehicle popularity and create urgency.
- Employ a recommendation engine for more personalized shopping experiences.
- Provide zoom and pan tools to enable shoppers to interact with high-resolution photos.
- Take advantage of native mobile capabilities like gyroscope and virtual reality to deliver unique small-screen experiences.



BUILDING ACCOUNTABILITY INTO THE MERCHANDISING PROCESS

One of the most overlooked areas for improvement at most dealerships is the merchandising process itself. All too often, dealers assume there is little that they can do to speed up the time it takes to get vehicles onto their website, so they fail to hold anyone accountable for performance in this area. In an industry where time IS money, this can be a costly mistake - resulting in unnecessary vehicle carrying costs and lost sales opportunities. Here are some of the ways to take control of this important process.

- Establish a clear reporting path.
- Set goals for key performance metrics like days to market or cars shot per day.
- Consider putting incentives in place for stretch goal attainment.
- Schedule daily stand up meetings.
- Report and analyze performance data on a regular basis.



HARNESSING THE POWER OF DATA

When properly equipped, dealer websites can play a much more important role than simply presenting vehicle inventory to online shoppers. In fact, with relatively little effort, virtually any dealer website can be used to generate a valuable new set of data; data that represents a proprietary asset that can be harnessed in a number of ways to drive meaningful business impact. Here are just a few of the ways that this data is helping dealers sell more vehicles faster.

- Gain insight into the vehicle features that generate the most interest and engagement with shoppers in a dealer's local market.
- Personalize BDC lead follow-up based on the self-identified needs and interests of individual online shoppers.
- Reengage website visitors with hyper-personalized digital ads after they leave a dealer's website.
- Measure and compare the impact of all digital merchandising and advertising investments.

Now that the consumer shopping journey has migrated to the online world, dealer websites are an integral part of the brand experience. As a result, digital merchandising competency is now a “must have” for every dealer. Whether your digital transformation is well underway or you are just getting started, we hope that this eBook provides some practical advice and ideas to help you along the way.



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