



DEALERSHIP

W E E K L Y I N F O R M A T I O N N E T W O R K

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Matt Kellogg – ECommerce Director of Gates Auto Group

- Right before this call, I was on a call with two Google automotive experts. They have offered a new data playbook - it was mind blowing in some capacities and it reinforces what we want to talk about here.

A few top-level stats from Google:

- 63% of customers discover their purchasing online.
- 81% spent time researching their vehicle.
- 71% of purchases do not submit a lead.
 - Up from 39% back in 2013.
- 41% have their first communication when they arrive at the store.
- 55% of new shoppers consider CPO.
 - Up from 30% in 2016.
- 69% will only shop online with mobile.
- 88% of purchasers still search 3 days before they purchase.
 - Number one last step before they go to the dealer.

What this data tells us:

- “Store visits” are going to be the new metric rather than conversions.
 - A lot of people do not want to put their information online anymore. They’re shopping but not engaging.
- With all of the technology that we have for engaging with customers, we should be starting conversations – not looking for leads. The conversation is the critical piece. We pay a lot of money to drive traffic to our websites but it is the ultimate handling of that conversation that ends up with a better (or lesser) ROI – long term.

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- Make sure that you're analyzing your customer database and that you're using that data base to go after existing customers that already trust you. Use the money and database to create custom audiences to go after those people.
 - o Some of the most important numbers are sales retention, so why not go after those customers who already trust you?
 - o Go after them for their trades, especially right now, with the new-car inventory so low.
- You should create your audiences based on who you want to attract, don't just do a shotgun approach. If you're trying to attract a specific audience, be visceral with it. Look at your data and see what you need out of your data.
- If there is a disconnect between the person who is managing your digital strategy, you could be doing some massive campaigns but it's not cohesive. You'll be losing money if it's not the area its needed in. It has to be targeted and all people involved have to be communicating.
 - o For example: this month, we're not doing anything on new cars because we don't have them. But you have to be having those conversations with everyone involved to keep track of that.

Questions:

- That 41% - is that referring to when a client comes to the location, in person?
 - o Yes, that's is the client actually coming to the store and that is the first time they have had any engagement. That's just showing up – they've researched beforehand but haven't engaged.
 - o Regardless what it tells us is that more people want to make sure that when they show up, they're not wasting their time.
- What're you doing that's differentiating yourself from other people?
 - o Custom video. It's absolutely king. Having customized video is essential because the customer feels more valued. They feel like you took the time to answer their question instead of template emails. Optics are everything. Make those personal experiences memorable.

Dean Ostrowski – BDC Director for Gold Coast Cadillac in New Jersey

- There's so much more that the BDC has become for our industry. People are now expecting to have the level of attention that luxury brands have been giving for years. The BDC route has become where people are going because, for one, there hasn't been an option for months.
- The big thing that's changed as a result of Covid is that people want you to set them up with VIP appointments. They want you going through the process with them – caring and listening to them. Then, when they do show up, they're ready to do business.

- We don't want to get back to the way things were. The way that we're structuring our business, at this point, is to value time – not just for prospects but for our own people as well. We're able to do things more efficiently with less people and less time.
- Coming into this position after the shutdown, the first thing was looking at response times. If you're taking 30-45 minutes to respond to customers, that gives the impression that we don't care about their time.
- Focus on what's not going to change – the desire to save time, effort and money. Focusing on response time is never going to change. Getting people information quickly is something that customers will always want.
- If leads are down, when they do interact with you – it's a big deal. It's all about differentiating yourself.

Questions:

- Are you seeing the ease of doing business when there's a higher level of trust is what's driving the store visits?
 - o Yes, people are time focused, they're looking for that relationship that they can trust. They're looking for loyalty back and forth. Time is now more important to people than money could ever be.
- How do you handle the transition of a customer from BDC to sales effectively?
 - o Personalized turn over. You make the appointment with the person. They meet you and then you introduce them and hand off to the sales staff. You keep it personal. You keep them as comfortable as possible.