



Powerful Automotive Lead Generation:

The Marketing to Lead
process in today's car
dealer networks

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Introduction

In today's digital world the car buying journey has changed radically and it is continuously evolving. The way a dealership or a retail network meets the challenges expressed in the below questions is crucial for success:

1. More than 95% of car buyer journeys start online – who gets the on-line leads?
2. Is the website more important than the show room? How are these car selling places related in the perception of car buyers?
3. How is more traffic generated on a dealership's website? What about SEO? How is it kept up-to-date and how are corporate identity and brand standards applied? How to make visitors stay longer?
4. How are unidentified website visitors treated? Is there any process to service them?
5. How do on-line customer experiences influence their buying behavior?
6. How are the lead and inquiry gates of the dealership's website and landing pages?
7. How is social media covered in customer communication?



The number of dealer networks understanding that the dealer websites are the most important marketing and sales asset that they possess is constantly increasing. Yet dealerships are facing challenges related to the creation, maintenance, and exploitation of their digital assets. These challenges refer to excessive cost, lack of qualified personnel, lack of dedication to market innovations.

The insights from the effects of the Covid19 pandemic have shown the urgency of speeding up digital transformation in sales and after sales in car dealer networks (84% of the dealerships feel their digital competency is insufficient, 80% of the dealerships are determined to develop it, according to a recent IfA/Autohaus study in Germany)

In the case of authorized dealer networks run by NSC's or importers, these challenges add to the need of modernizing the dealer network, standardizing of processes, inheriting promotions, campaigns, and best practices, monitoring network performance, and adjusting the operations to the requirements of digitalization.

Importers and large dealer groups as well as individual dealerships are looking for solutions that are built for the automotive retail, are state of the art and can ensure fast reaction to market changes and continuous innovation.

HOME PAGE

LOGO

IMAGE BANNER

NAVIGATION

NEWS

CONTENT

01

1st step:

Create and manage a dealership's website

The website is the dealership's main and most valuable digital asset. All dealerships have created at time in the previous two decades, full of enthusiasm a dealership website and have been maintaining it in an ad-hoc manner on various occasions: change of OEM CI, addition of new sections, adding links to importer / OEM websites. Maintenance is expensive and web-site quality depends on the automotive expertise of the marketing agency and the budget at hand.

Functionality and Sitemap

Functionality of dealer websites has been evolving and as of today contains a fixed set of sections related to the business functions of the dealership and the standards of the OEM. A typical website has the following sections:

Homepage, Model Range (presentation of models, Used Cars / Inventory, Book a Service, Book a Test-drive, Request a quote, Financing, Promos & News, After Sales & Services, About Us (Profile, Team, Showrooms & Facilities, Contact Us & Store / Branch Locator on Map, Live Chat / Request call-back / Co-browsing, Social Links)



Once established a dealership's website requires constant attention and maintenance of content:

- Static sections need to be maintained when business changes occur (new locations, change in personnel etc)
- New models section needs to be updated according to the changes through the OEM
- Promos and News require regular content creation and update

It is essential to the digital transformation that the business processes in the dealership are adjusted to maintain the website the same way they maintain the showroom: the website is the dealership's digital showroom and workshop reception.

Integration with the dealership systems

In today's digital world it is a mandatory requirement, that these sections are seamlessly integrated with the dealership's sales and after-sales systems. The following table can be seen as a connectivity map:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| • Model Range | optional link to configurator |
| • Used Cars / Inventory | integration with inventory system |
| • Book a Service | integration with after-sales system |
| • Book a Test-drive | integration with CRM / sales workplace |
| • Request a quote | integration CRM / sales workplace |
| • Financing | integration with financing calculator |

Lack of integration results to the loss of valuable digital leads and devaluation of the website. It creates back-office overhead and fragments the customer journey: the vital link between on-line and off-line interactions gets lost.

In terms of integration architecture one can distinguish three kinds of touchpoints:

- Lead and inquiry gates, creating sales leads or service appointments
- Input sources, mainly the inventory system and
- Content links (configurator, financial calculator)

An efficient design connects the first two points to the sales/after sales workplace thus creating a combined, "seamless" connection and avoiding fragmentation.

Of course, besides the above functional aspects there are also some basic technical factors to be considered, the ones that apply for any website: availability, initial loading, and response times for website actions. Failing to meet these requirements may result to even permanent loss of visitors and future customers.



Managing the websites of a whole retail network

The challenges and the requirements in content creation and management become greater when we consider a dealer network managed by an importer or NSC or a dealer group (holding) or big multi-brand dealership groups. They have a set of related websites. They share a basic template as well as parts of the content. Also they have parts that are completely individual.

So, there is a need to manage parts of the website centrally through a network administrator, while at the same time allowing the dealership's staff to manage other parts. For example, "new models" are a network subject while test-drive requests should belong to the individual dealership. A solution for those challenges is "templates". Templating ensures fast deployment of new websites, compliance with CI standards and big savings in SEO cost. Further synergies arise, when the stock of the whole network is published on all websites or when chat agents and showroom virtualization can be used for all websites of the network. The biggest advantages lie however in the fast deployment of promotions, campaigns, news, and any dynamic content to any given set or even to all dealership websites in the network.



2nd step:

Attracting visitors to the website – generating traffic

Having a website with the right content in place and having assured its proper maintenance is like building a showroom and making sure that it looks inviting and comfortable for the customers while including the newest models as well as a variety of interesting used cars.

And how do we make sure that we have enough visitors? Location, signage, advertisement, and dedicated events are examples of assets on the way to bring visitors to the showroom.

Location and signage in physical world correspond to Search Engine Optimization (SEO) in the digital world. Organic SEO is particularly important but also requires high specialization and can be costly and time consuming. Like the rent in a prime location. Therefore, centralizing this for a whole dealer network makes deep sense. It is like sponsoring all dealerships of the network to rent better locations!

Digital campaigns on all possible and available channels (omni-channel campaigns) are the most effective means to bring visitors to so called landing pages and thus to the dealership's website. The effectiveness of channels varies according to the market and the ever-evolving car buyer's habits.

Automotive Omnichannel Campaign Management

In the last ten years the need for Omnichannel communication with prospects and customers has risen exponentially due to the increasing popularity of digital media: SMS, email, social media, messaging platforms, various e-commerce platforms are used extensively.

And what about cars? Where do the potential car sellers find the potential car buyers? It is not just the classical old-school digital platforms like the OEM and dealer websites and the big variety of independent marketplaces. Every new channel that emerges is a potential digital platform for car selling, Also by reaching the car owners for the after sales campaigns.

What makes automotive Omnichannel campaigns so different, so “special”?

- Not only contact persons but also vehicles need to be targeted
- Campaigns are triggered by special automotive milestones like last service visit, end-of-leasing, mileage etc.
- Many of them are perpetual, they run every week, month, ...

Considering the dealer network operated by an OEM, NSC, importer or dealer group they should be deployed centrally with dealer specific audiences and messages.

Considering the lack of specialized marketing and design personnel in many dealerships, preset campaigns that are easy to edit and integrate OEM content are essential, when it comes to being beneficial for a dealer network.

The ability to handle events as triggers and goals is in the heart of defining the campaign behavior and measuring the campaign goals.

Measuring the business performance of automotive campaigns by mapping the cost to the tangible business results like workshop visits, leads, test-drives etc. completes the necessary functionality of a campaign system for the automotive retail.





3rd step:

Make them stay longer – web-visitor loyalty

Managing the websites of a whole retail network

So far, the website of the dealership / the retail network has many visitors. Which are the reasons for these visitors to stay longer and not switch to some other website displaying cars, even cars of the same brand?

At this point user experience and UX design become the most important competitive advantage for any dealership. Creating a pleasant visitor experience in the showroom is the natural goal of any dealership. This is also necessary for the dealership's website.

Besides state-of-the-art UX-optimized design, augmented reality gadgets are of great value for visitor loyalty. The virtual showroom has been proven to be one of the dominant gadgets creating customer loyalty. It is one of the first applications contributing actively to the gamification of the user experience and thus increasing website visiting times.

Another very useful tool are various interaction pop-ups that deliver guidance, ask questions and offer the visitor the opportunity to get more information even start a discussion without giving up his / her anonymity.

04

4th step:

Engage strategically and at the right moment

These still anonymous show room visitors that are visible and can be observed as to where they go and what they look correspond to cookies on the website (provided that the web visitor accepted the usage of cookies).

There are real time monitoring systems that monitor their behavior and are able to display them on a sitemap as they wander through the website. Two types of opportunities appear here:

- a digital salesperson can start an interaction after observing the behavior
- a rule-based bot can propose interactions based on visitor behavior and – conditionally to the visitor's reactions – lead the visitor to an interaction with a salesperson.

Of course, the website visitor should always have the possibility ask for live assistance and engage in a chat or video-chat. Enhanced live assistance systems include co-browsing, the capability for the salesperson to guide the visitor through the website and assist him/her in configuring a car or filling out some form. Exchange of documents and e-signing can further enhance the live assistance feature of the website to create visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

At any point in time and any location of the site map, success of the dealership's digital presence shall manifest if the visitor decides to identify him- or herself by entering his personal data and communication opt-ins through a Lead Gate or an Inquiry Gate. At this point the marketing-to-lead process comes to an end and the lead-to-order process is initiated, the presales process comes to an end and the sales process starts. The person behind the cookies decides to reveal itself.

The hit-rate of transforming cookies to identified visitors is influenced both by how and when the Gates appear and the convenience of the data capture experience.

Best practices at this point are:

- as few fields as possible – only the necessary
- present the Gate at a visible but not aggressive manner
- when presenting the Gate based on rules make sure the visitor is interested



Inquiries vs Leads

What is the difference?

Inquiries are not verified / qualified. This means that some actions need to be taken (automatically or manually) to verify the two components that transform an inquiry to a lead:

- is the person existing (email existing, phone existing?) and if so checked against the database to avoid duplicate creation
- is the interest clear (depending on the where the gate appeared, the form and the comments by the visitor)



05

5th step:

Generate and qualify leads

Best practice suggests intelligent forms that support automatic inquiry qualification. **Leads** are a combination of a contact person and an interest and can be forwarded to the salesperson to start the sales process.

The differentiation between inquiries and leads allows for a finetuning of the borders between presales and sales, allowing call center agents to interact with inquiries whereas salespersons are interacting with leads. In this way call-center agents can perform inquiry validation and proceed in a presales workflow with more sophisticated qualification and evaluation steps towards more **qualified leads**.

After successful validation / qualification the lead is forwarded to the lead management system or to the sales workplace together with the channel and the source.

Digital leads are hot if they are young. The habits of today's digital car buyers determine that their lifetime is short, and they have a high churn rate. Therefore, it is of great importance to ensure their immediate processing through a salesperson.

The OneDealer Toolset

The OneDealer Toolset focuses on supporting digital transformation and customer facing in sales and after sales for automotive retail networks.

All tools are scalable to provide solutions for dealers, dealer groups, importers and NSCs.

They are modular and can be deployed standalone or integrated in a single- or multi-vendor landscape.

They include:

- Mysite, multi website management for retail networks
- Omnichannel automotive Campaigns for Sales and After Sales
- Virtual Showroom
- Interaction builder
- Live Assistance
- Inquiry qualification and Lead generation

Interested to find out more?



About Us

Based in Germany with offices in Greece and Austria, OneDealer International GmbH was established in 2015 with the mission to help automotive retail businesses thrive in today's digital market.

The OneDealer Automotive Retail Platform is helping Dealerships of all sizes (Importers, Distributors, Service & Repair Shops) managing their entire business in a more efficient way, by combining the opportunities of the online world with the strengths of the traditional dealership channel.

Trusted by leading global automotive brands worldwide, OneDealer is consistently delivering customer success, fast and within budget, powered by cutting-edge SAP technology.

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