

WHITE PAPER PUBLISHED ON AUTOMOTIVE DIGEST

How Car Dealers Can Create Higher Conversion Rates Using Local Search Engine Optimization

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By understanding the correlation between the prevalence of local-specific searches, search engines rankings and consumer conversions, dealerships can tap into a growing and action-ready audience. This gives a clear picture of how consumers are searching for businesses in their immediate proximity, making decisions on where to shop, and choosing to turn from searcher into customer.

Local Search and How it Impacts Car Dealers

Car dealerships compete with each other for the limited demand that is partially dictated by the size and velocity of car-buying of the nearby population. Successful car dealers are the ones which are able to capture the largest share of the demand by enticing local consumers via a variety of marketing tactics.

Local customers should be the target of every dealership, and search engines are where local consumers are turning to for information about cars. According to new research from Google titled "[Understanding Consumers' Local Search Behavior](#)," 4 in 5 consumers use search engines to find local information and [64 percent](#) of local customers use online search engines and directories as their main way to find local business.

Once dealerships accept that search engines are the primary way consumers are researching their upcoming car purchase, the next step is to understand the significance and importance of ranking highly. Research shows that [53 percent of searchers](#) click on the top organic result when searching online. The second result receives just 15 percent and less than 10 percent for the third. Moving from being ranked second to first can result in thousands of additional customers and substantial revenue gains over time.

When constructing a local SEO strategy, dealerships must focus on content first and foremost. According to Google, while local searches happen throughout the consumer buying process, a majority of the searchers are either looking for inspiration or researching a produce. Car dealerships can capitalize on this by organizing their website and creating content that fits into local search patterns.

CONSUMERS SEARCH FOR LOCAL INFORMATION THROUGHOUT THE PURCHASE PROCESS



Google's research indicates that while search tendencies vary depending on the device being used, consumers are most likely to be looking for a dealership's physical location information. Dealerships should make sure to create a page for contact information and a separate page for driving directions, which gives searchers specific answers to their queries.

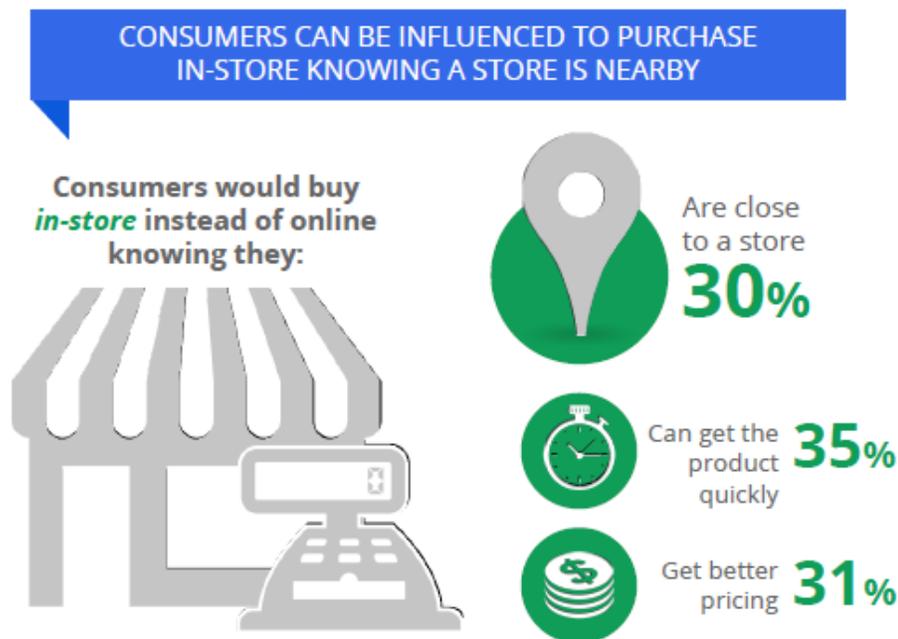
CONSUMERS SEARCH FOR A VARIETY OF LOCAL INFORMATION



Why Local Searchers *SHOULD* be a Target Audience for Dealers

Google's research points toward the conclusion that local searchers are more likely to go from looking online to making a purchase. For dealerships looking to maximize the ROI on digital marketing efforts, targeting the highest possible conversion rate, the audience that's most likely to turn into sales is local searchers.

Eighteen percent of local smartphone searches led to a purchase within a day compared to 7 percent of non-local searches according to Google. The research also points toward local searchers converting more quickly, with 50 percent of people who make local searches on a phone and 34 percent of tablet and desktop searchers visiting a store within a day. So what influences local searchers to visit a physical location and make a purchase? According to the study, being able to know that a store is close by, knowing that the product they want is in stock and competitive pricing are the three biggest factors.



Top Three Local SEO Best Practices for Car Dealerships

1. Create Individual Landing Pages

The organization, design and coding of individual landing pages account for almost [20 percent of the factors](#) that impact local search rankings. For dealerships, the first step must be creating individual landing pages for all of the various brands, models and services being offered at each location, each with specific contact information. For example, a dealership that sells Hondas and Hyundai's should have a separate landing page for each brand, with a unique phone number consumers can use. By adding dedicated local pages — each with a unique URL — search engines can index the information, determine the focus of the content and give searchers more specific answers to their queries.

2. Directory Syndication and Search Engine Listings

Digital directory syndication is one of the foundational strategies of local SEO because of its ability to raise search engine rankings and increase online visibility. Citations are mentions of your business across directories. The more places your citation appears on the web, the more credibility is given to your business by the search engines. Some of the bigger providers include YellowBook, Yelp and CitySearch. For car dealers, there are specific niche directories that can improve a dealership's local search ranking, and they should be specifically targeted to influence car-specific shoppers.

All of the major search engines also have their own directory listings which are integrated in their local search results. Car dealerships should claim and maintain these search engine listings, making sure that they are wholly accurate. Without complete accuracy and consistency with other digital directories and the dealership website, it could negatively affect a dealer's search ranking.

3. Consumer Reviews

[Eighty-five percent](#) of consumers read reviews for local businesses before making a purchase. Dealerships that have an extensive collection of positive reviews from former shoppers have the opportunity to gain a competitive advantage against other local dealerships. Dealerships that actively seek out reviews from consumers should keep a close eye on what's said, because negative reviews that aren't replied to can have a negative effect on business.

Conclusion

With 4 in 5 consumers using search engines to find local information and between 34 and 50 percent of local searchers moving offline to visit a physical store within a day, the opportunity is clear. Local SEO has the ability to increase search engine visibility, which in turn will help increase sales for car dealerships. For dealerships looking to implement a local SEO strategy, they should begin with the creation of locally optimized individual landing pages, digital directories, search engine listings and the strategic use and oversight of consumer reviews.

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