

Automotive Digestibles Blog - April 2016

## **“You Take the Front Cover--We’ll Take the Back”**

### **Pay to Say in Automotive News:**

Kbb.com recently placed a \$25K print ad on Back Cover of Automotive News. In the same weekly issue Automotive News edited and posted a foot long editorial column in the News Section with “Go to Site” content to supplement and augment the messaging in the print ad – all in the same weekly issue.

### **Print Ad Warfare Front & Back:**

Not to be outdone, Edmund’s placed its “Site Enhancer” paid advertorial with another \$25 K partial overlay cover ad on the front page of the April 18 Issue of AN. Whereupon Kbb.com goes to back cover of the industry’s leading publication with its own plea for new car traffic using a heavily snap coated, slow to biodegrade stock paper to feature a print ad depicting an attractive sophisticated exotica woman standing amid new cars on a dealer lot while suggesting her curiosity will lead to serious consideration.

Cox Automotive does seem be “serious” about the core message of its full page 4/c advertisement titled “How the Curious Become Serious” and Edmunds is intent on gaining the same new car traffic as its rival with its “Site Enhancer: campaign

### **No longer a separation of editorial & advertising:**

Also of note is that Automotive News like all surviving automotive trade magazines seems to have blurred the lines between advertising and editorial content with more and more editorial coverage derived and repurposed from the PR Release content” of major full-page advertisers. Hence the article “*Ads will tout Kbb.com “Go-to-site” for new car info*” headline in the news section of the April 18 issue of Automotive News.

At least the content in the rather annoying front cover partial over-lay ad for Edmunds was labeled “Advertisement” at the top in discrete un-bolded small font.

### **A New Opportunity for Cox Automotive, Kbb.com, & Edmunds**

Perhaps, all three of these dominating suppliers of leads to and services for dealers could gain more dealer good will, new business development from dealers, and open a conversation with dealers if took a new and needed approach to winning dealer business.

**How?** Both companies would “invest” ad budgets, public relations, and marketing communications resources to help educate consumers about the real issues that dealers confront. Suppliers would begin to advocate the dealer experience and educate their audience.

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## **Seeking to get “Behind” instead of “In Front” of Dealers:**

Leading industry suppliers could render their communications media power to support dealers as they face their real problems with consumers and new car shoppers such as the whole sales process at the dealership, the continuing dealer image in minds of the public, and the lack of trust, transparency and truth about the obsolete ways vehicles are sold and supported.

Can you visualize a TV ad or full page print ad or a banner that delivers a message that actually seeks to show the public and new car shoppers that dealers are people who seek to provide vehicle transportation with trust and integrity?

## **Meantime, Alternative(s) to the Dealer Business Model emerge:**

There are many 90 plus startup and upstart companies working every day to disrupt, displace, or augment the automotive dealer business model. [Automotive Digest.com maintains such a “list”]. Some say that it is a matter of time until dealers must change and expand their current business model into a total transportation management center.

## **Dealer Business Model in peril?**

Some say that the whole dealer business model is in peril and that dealers are about to experience major disruption. That being the case, could it be time to stop “selling” the dealers with expensive advertising and start helping the dealers tell their story to wary, skeptical, and mistrusting customer base?

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