

# Leads Aren't Dead.

# Think Engagements Instead.



Today's consumers have changed, spending more time online than ever before (many hours on mobile devices) visiting myriad websites before buying. They are barraged with so much information and an endless sea of advertising that the information age has actually become the indecision age. The path to purchase isn't direct, and the traditional sales funnel as we know it has shifted to a 360-degree shopping experience.

Leads have changed too. Smart marketers understand the importance of website tools and communications processes that engage with consumers in a deeper manner than merely driving lead forms, that replicate offline customer relationships online, and that create a meaningful digital brand experience to increase loyalty and ultimately, sales.

But how do you break through the digital clutter to get car buyers to engage with your brand and your dealership much like you would engage with them on the lot?

We've categorized the steps you should take into three easily implementable categories to help you own consideration – to get consumers off the digital merry-go-round, onto **your website**, and eventually into **your showroom** to sell them a car or a truck.

## 1. Get them to your website.

In order to reach the most serious car buyers, in large numbers, your ads need to be where millions of serious car buyers are each and every month – in this case, at automotive research sites that provide consumers with new and used car pricing information, side-by-side comparisons, test drives, reviews, and more, and at web properties designed to fully engage automotive consumers and drive them directly to you.

### *Target your ads.*

Even though millions of in-market car buyers visit automotive websites every month, many don't become leads because they haven't completed the research process, or they aren't quite ready to

submit their contact information yet. That doesn't mean they aren't ready to visit your website to buy a car. It simply means they haven't been fully engaged with targeted make, model, and location offers that entice them to click through directly to you. Successful advertising hinges on offers that drill down to the make and model of interest, and a customer's geographic location.

### ***Drive consumers to the right pages.***

A common fallacy in our industry is to implement ads that drive consumers to targeted, make / model / trim-specific landing pages, such as VDPs, in order to increase conversions. This isn't altogether true. Maybe that customer wants to see all of the colors offered for that sedan, instead of just the white one. Direct car buyers to more general areas, such as Vehicle Search Results pages, to give them more options by offering a broader range of models, or additional inventory – and ultimately, a better buying experience – when it comes to finding the perfect vehicle at the right price.

## **2) Keep them from leaving your website to do more research – to another dealer or to another brand.**

It is critically important to have a clean, easy-to-navigate website with tools that help consumers move down the transaction funnel quickly and efficiently, to guide them to their final purchase decision, and offer your customers tools that convert them from website visitors into showroom visitors.

### ***Fine tune the basics.***

Showcase all of your inventory in the best light possible and be sure your specials and incentives are clearly identified. Provide informative car buying content, such as the benefits of buying CPO versus new or used, or the benefits of buying versus leasing. Enable your customers to review your F&I products and to get an estimated or firm trade-in price.

### ***Provide an intuitive car payment calculator.***

Increase engagement further by providing a payment calculator that offers shoppers instant and customized monthly car payment options based on individual credit and inventory eligibility, and get those leads delivered directly to you – straight from your own site. Be sure to utilize a calculator that matches your customers' monthly payment budget with your website inventory.

### ***Implement audio, video, and co-browsing capabilities.***

Implement an in-browser engagement platform that uses text, phone, audio, video, and co-browsing features to turn your website into a virtual showroom. This gives you the ability to interact with your website visitors much like you interact with customers at your physical dealership while creating a multi-channel communications opportunity that is both reactive (consumer-

initiated) and proactive (dealer-initiated) in the process. Escort website visitors around key areas of your website with co-browsing features, much like you would escort customers around your lot, while monitoring website visitor activity in real-time, including areas of your website consumers visited and the time they spent on your site.

### ***Make text a best bet.***

Your customers want to text you, and chances are, they're texting your main number right now but you might not even know it. Be sure to utilize a web-based lead management system for text – one that is easily integrated into your CRM – that includes full outbound AND inbound texting capabilities, opt-out management to assist with legal compliance, access and utility across all dealership departments and staff, and landline texting capabilities for all existing phone numbers. Not only is texting a great communications tool for sales, it's a great communications tool for every department in your dealership. If you're not managing it the right way, however, you could face hefty fines.

### ***Instant retargeting is your friend.***

As we know, car buyers look at multiple sources of information during their shopping process so even if they stopped shopping at your website, it doesn't mean they're done shopping altogether. Invite them back just after they left, or while they're browsing a competitor's site, and generate a second chance to capture them.

Present your consumers with an offer, or lead form, when they first arrive at your site, and another as soon as they leave – or within a few minutes of departure. The last page they'll see before signing off is your dealership's branded offer lead form. When you rapidly re-engage your customers in the purchase process, you stand a much better chance of increasing your website's conversion rates to sell more cars. The instant retargeting we're talking about here isn't pop-ups or pop-unders, so they can't be blocked.

### **3) Challenge your process.**

From the very first correspondence, dealers should communicate the following. 1) Why buy brand? 2) Why buy from me? 3) Provide information about the vehicle of interest. 4) Offer information about alternative vehicles that might be a great fit. 5) Offer used car options that might be a great fit, including any off-brand vehicles in your inventory. And always get to know your customers by asking those three critical questions: 1) Who is the vehicle for? 2) How will they use it? 3) What features do they find most important?

For a full suite of products that enhance your brand and drive website traffic and showroom visits, contact Autobytel at (866) 589-5498 or visit <http://dealer.autobytel.com>.



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