

Auto-Matic-Marketing

The Hidden Manual For Working With Car Dealers



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From: Mike Fitzpatrick

On behalf of DealerTrend, I would like to thank you for downloading this Auto-Matic-Marketing Manual!

We created this manual to help you have success with car dealers and their digital marketing. The beauty of an electronically published manual is that we can continually edit and update it. From fixing misspellings to adding new content sections, we plan to continually improve this document.

Some sections in this manual have a corresponding video. In those cases, the video link will be available both at the beginning and the end of the related section.

If you find value with the Manual and would like to take your automotive business to the next level, make sure and check out our [Auto-Matic-Marketing Dealer Network Platform](#).

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Car dealers can be excellent digital marketing clients

There are several good reasons to pursue car dealers as digital marketing clients.

First of all, as either a digital agency or an individual digital marketing professional, you have the opportunity to make great money. Since car dealers are conditioned to pay monthly for various types of software and services, you can expect recurring revenue for the services and products you provide. As a high cash flow business, car dealers are more than willing to spend good money on pretty much anything that has a positive return on investment. This means that you can introduce new software and services as you see the opportunity, to get results for your car dealer clients; each being an opportunity to make additional revenue and produce results.

Another great reason to have car dealers as clients is that they are great showpiece for your portfolio. Many potential clients understand just how competitive the automotive industry is, and your ability to work with car dealer clients can increase your local authority and value.

Finally, the automotive industry needs more high-quality digital marketing help. They have been underserved in the digital arena and need additional quality assistance.

The purpose of this manual

I've worked in the automotive industry for more than 20 years: 11 years working in car dealers as a salesperson, Internet Marketing Director, and in Finance and Management; and the last 12 years working on the vendor side of the industry, providing software and digital marketing solutions.

I've been fortunate to meet and work with some great people while working in the automotive industry: hard-working individuals who want to help people find and buy the right vehicle at a fair price. Unfortunately, as in many industries, there exists a certain percentage of people who are in it for the wrong reasons; and it's these people who give the auto industry a bad reputation.

Some of my long-term goals are to help car dealers thrive, to repair that bad reputation, to create more success, and to make buying a car a fun process for consumers; especially with local used-car dealers that have found themselves in an ultra-competitive market. Local dealers

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are looking for help but aren't finding it within the current ecosystem as large corporations like Carmax, Berkshire Hathaway, and AutoNation are taking over the industry.

Helping used car dealers succeed by keeping it local

Car dealers make up a big part of your local economy, but probably spend their digital marketing budgets with non-local companies. All while there are high-quality, local digital-marketing professionals who haven't even considered car dealers as clients. We believe this is because it's a difficult niche to break into without some specialized knowledge or products.

Typically, the car dealers' only choices have been provided by 'big enterprise' companies which create bells-and-whistles products designed to be easily sold to car dealers, but which don't necessarily provide real, sustainable value to their clients. These products end up being barely used by the dealers after purchase because of lack of training, time, and understanding. Or worse yet, they don't do half of what was promised by a (perhaps "overzealous", shall we say?) salesperson in the first place.

Over the last several years, DealerTrend has evolved its focus from offering websites and digital-marketing services directly to car dealers, to offering its WordPress plugins and inventory services to agencies. This happened without any outside sales effort on our part: these agencies came looking for us to help with their car dealer clients. In just about every case, the car dealers had reached out to them first, hoping for an alternative.

My point is that local, independent car dealers are open to working with good, local agencies. So if you are interested in working with car dealers, this manual is designed to teach you the ins-and-outs of the car business.

By the end of this manual, we hope you will have a working understanding of how automotive inventory is managed, you will understand the shopping process that car buyers go through, as well as acquiring an action plan to get started working with car dealers right away. Best of all, you can offer the products and services that you already know and use.

Inventory and the automotive industry

[Video Link For "Understanding Car Dealers"](#)

One of the obstacles toward working with car dealers is understanding how inventory is managed. Cars aren't your standard e-commerce product, such as a t-shirt. Each vehicle is unique and can have one of several thousand possible combinations of options and equipment.

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Automotive inventory is the epitome of 'garbage in garbage out'. As such, the software that manages inventory needs to have extra intelligence built-in to make sure that what comes out is better than what went in.

Let's go through step-by-step how inventory gets to the Internet for marketing.

Data Entry

Data entry is the first step of a vehicle's life on the World Wide Web. Someone at the dealership types the vehicle information into a Dealer Management System (DMS). The hope is that the information entered at this point is accurate and complete. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case.

"what is entered into the DMS has a direct impact on what their customers see on the web."

In most cases, dealerships have multiple people adding vehicle data. When a vehicle is traded as part of a purchase, the desk manager may put in partial data, then the finance manager may add to that prior to printing the documents. If a vehicle is purchased at an auction, it will have another path to data entry, most likely with someone in a back-office doing accounting work. With multiple people tasked with data entry, it tends to be inaccurate, incomplete and inconsistent.

A big part of working with car dealers is helping them understand that what is entered into the DMS has a direct impact on what their customers see on the web.

DMS Export or Data Polling

To get the data out of the Dealer Management System and on its way to the web requires the



DMS provider to either send (export) it or another company to poll (retrieve) it directly out of the system. In most cases with local independent dealers, the DMS providers offer an export. They essentially create a CSV (comma separated value) file and place it on a designated server using FTP (file transfer protocol). At this point, the company receiving the data needs to consume it for use.

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Data Translation and Scrubbing

Even though data entry is important to maintain accuracy, there is intelligent software in place to clean up where possible.

Because there are hundreds of vendors in the industry with various schemas, it is sometimes required to translate data. Field names like 'manufacturer' or 'vehicle_make' are translated to a single label ('canonicalized') that the software understands, in this case, it would be 'Make'.

Translation and canonicalization is required because there are hundreds of companies in the industry that all have different schemas for what to call the attributes of a vehicle (the 'ontology'). A standards effort exists called STAR (Standards in Automotive Retail) in the industry, but unfortunately, does not seem to be widely adopted in web marketing.

Once software is able to understand which field is which, it can then 'scrub' the information to help with accuracy. Not all companies offer this, nor do all companies need this; but it is important that at some point the dealer's inventory gets run through a data-scrubbing service before it is presented in public.

VIN 'explosion' is part of the scrubbing process. It's when you take a 17 digit Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and explode it into its known parts. VIN explosion cannot determine the vehicle's exact options, color, etc., but depending on the manufacturer it is a good start to getting complete information about a vehicle.

Wikipedia information on VINs: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vehicle_identification_number

After VIN explosion, inventory can be run through a 'scrubbing' algorithm. This is where the system looks for other known data points, e.g., trim, engine, transmission, options, etc., to *hopefully* get the vehicle information down to a single possible match. An accurate presentation of a vehicle can be made once a single match is achieved.

Note: not all automotive software is created the same way. So these terms and processes may be different from one company to the next, but the concepts will be similar.

Vehicle Marketing Systems

Vehicle Marketing Systems (VMS) are built to market vehicle inventory on the web, merchandising it for display on the dealer's website or 3rd-party sites like Autotrader or cars.com.

Vehicle marketing or online vehicle merchandising is mainly about creating a story about a vehicle with images, videos, descriptions, headlines, pricing, and pretty much anything that helps a potential buyer learn more about a specific vehicle. In most cases this type of

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marketing happens in a Vehicle Marketing System. By the time a vehicle arrives in a VMS, VIN explosion and data scrubbing have already happened, in most cases. So it is the job of someone at the dealership to enhance the data with photos, images and a vehicle description. This person can be an employee of the dealership or an outsourced company.

Data Collection

Data Collection is the act of collecting, entering, and perhaps creating original data regarding a vehicle: taking photos, editing video, as well as making sure that all of the vehicle's features are checked in the VMS. A dealer may hire an outside company to do this work for them. The Data Collection company will acquire the data from the DMS, add photos or provide other services, then make that data ready to export to the website company or 3rd-party websites.

Add-on services: CarFax and Autocheck

These are subscription services that a dealer pays for, after which, all of their vehicles go through a kind of "background check". These services let potential buyers know things like: how many owners a vehicle has had, and, whether or not it has been in an accident.

Syndication (Imports and Exports)

Inventory syndication is a common occurrence in the automotive industry. This is where the dealers' inventory is sent to 3rd-Party sites like Autotrader and cars.com. The goal for the dealer is to get their vehicles in front of as many prospective customers as possible, since they are ready to buy.

Helpful links - Inventory

["Understand The Car Dealer" Video](#)

Understanding the Car Buyer

["Understand the Car Buyer" Video](#)

As one of the larger purchases in a person's life, car buying usually isn't an impulse buy. Purchasing a vehicle can take anywhere from 3 months to more than a year depending on the person and situation. During this time, car buyers talk to friends and family, research online, and ultimately go to dealerships to test drive and purchase a vehicle.

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There's a lot of research available on how car buyers move through this process. For our purposes, I am going to share with you how Google understands and explains the customer purchase path. After all, they should have more data than just about anyone.

Back in April of 2011, Google published "The Zero Moment of Truth Automotive Study". This study was based on their previously published book called the "Zero Moment of Truth" or "ZMOT". The ZMOT concept helped to clarify how consumers are doing more research before ever setting foot into a retailer (These are both great reads and I'll have them linked to under the video). The purpose of the Automotive Study was to determine how behavior related to automobile shopping has changed in a digitally-powered world, what role new media like social and mobile play in shopping for automobiles, and how shoppers' expectations of the physical dealership has changed.

It wasn't a revelation that car buyers were spending so much time researching during the "Zero Moment of Truth" or the "pre-shopping phase". As consumers, we've been doing that for big ticket items, like cars, well before the internet was commonly available. It was, however, very helpful to have the process broken down into a simplified fashion like this. As helpful as ZMOT was in helping to explain the modern purchase path, it was still a little too complex to help car dealers create actionable marketing on their own.

In November 2015, Google published a follow-up paper called "The 5 Auto Shopping Moments Every Brand Must Own".

5 Shopping Moments

The 5 Auto Shopping moments paper is based on what Google terms "Micro-Moments" where new consumer behavior has evolved from a new mobile world and a consumer's journey is fractured into real-time, intent-driven moments.

Breaking the consumer path down into moments, in the context of automotive, allows us to create actionable steps for the dealer to take. This puts you in a position as a marketing professional to help them be their best at each moment for the consumer.

Which-car-is-best moments

The first moment is referred to as the "Which car is best moment".

This occurs when a consumer determines they have a need, or desire, for a vehicle — so they are just getting started.

In this moment 6 out of 10 shoppers are unsure of which car to buy, which is completely understandable with the seemingly limitless number of choices in the market. From vehicle

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classes such as cars, trucks, SUVs, crossovers, then brands and Makes like Ford, Chevy, Toyota, and the choices go on and on.

In this moment consumers start by consulting trusted resources:

- They talk to friends
- Read blogs
- Peruse forums
- Research on sites like KBB or Edmunds

According to the 5 Moments paper, video has continued to grow as a major part of the buying process across the various moments and the “Which Car Is Best Moment” is no exception.

As a matter of fact, 69% of shoppers are actually influenced by the videos they are watching. The volume of video reviews watched is amazing: with 3 million hours viewed in just the first 9 months of 2015 and 1.2 million of that (or almost half) being on mobile devices.

While we go through the rest of the Moments, be thinking of how you can implement the strategies that you already know while also thinking of new ways of helping car buyers. Your ability to quickly implement a strategy based on a research paper like this is a tremendous advantage for you and your dealer clients.

Is-it-right-for-me moments

This is the moment where consumers start to search for specific features to fit their needs and desires. As an example fuel efficiency was a major criteria to determine if a vehicle was right in 2014, but has given way to searches like:

- seating accommodations
- hauling capacity
- trunk space
- or safety related features

Since seasons, gas prices, new features and new vehicles are always changing, as a marketer you can use tools like Google Trends or Analytics to stay on top of what consumers are looking for. This helps when you are creating SEO'd landing pages or even consulting with the dealership so that they know what is “hot” in the market.

As the marketing person for the car dealer this is something that you'll want to know so that you can create custom landing pages and tools to help consumers find the right car for them. Of course video is also helpful in the “is it right for me moment”. According to Google, car buyers are consuming:

- Test drive videos

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- Walk around or walk through videos
- Comparison videos
- Features & Options videos

You can implement helpful content without video to help here too, but having video is a good tool for car buyers and a great way for car dealers to earn trust with potential clients.

Can-I-afford-it moments

Moment 3 is the “can I afford it moment” At this point of the buying process consumers are looking for things like:

What’s my trade worth

“vehicles for sale under a certain amount like \$15k”

The dealer can help here by including things like:

- Payment calculators
- List a possible payment on the vehicles on their website

Something to realize here: When it comes to used vehicles a lot of consumers aren’t aware of what they can afford in the bank’s eyes. This creates an opportunity to educate potential buyers on what it is banks look for in a loan. Maybe even go to a local credit union and ask them if they publish loan criteria and if they do can use that on the dealer’s website.

You can even get together with the dealer and put together a car loan landing page with commonly used terms within the automotive industry that most buyers don’t know.

Things like:

- What is loan to value?
- What is deal structure?
- What is payment to income?
- What is considered disposable income?
- Other factors

Pricing is probably one of the most confusing parts of buying a car. For years this was done on purpose to help the dealers win on the negotiation table, but to win in today’s market the dealer needs to earn the trust of potential buyers. Making the pricing and loan terms understandable is a great first step.

Where-should-I-buy moments

As consumers get closer to the purchase they move into the “where should I buy moment.”

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This is the moment where a consumer weighs various criteria when choosing which dealer to do business with.

Examples:

- Online searches for "Car dealers near me" doubled from 2014 to 2015
- Search interest in dealer phone numbers was up over 78% in the same time period (the majority of which, not surprisingly, happened on mobile).
- Car Dealer Review searches are also up, and help buyers determine which dealer will deliver the best experience. Just as more car shopping happens on weekends, search for dealership reviews spike on the weekends, making up 56% of these weekend searches, and then during the week searches for dealership reviews happen more on desktop.

Another important search to note

- Specific vehicle searches to find if a dealer has their desired vehicle. E.g. "2010 Toyota Tacoma". This type of long tail search has grown more than four times faster than overall auto search interest. So long tail search is more important than ever.

This is also why strategic inventory syndication is so important

It's no surprise that mobile is highly used by car buyers and therefore an important piece to any car dealer marketing, with 1 in 3 using a mobile device to locate or call a dealership.

Am-I-getting-a-good-deal moments

Last, but certainly not least is the "Am I getting a good deal moment" In this moment customers just want to know that they are getting a fair deal.

This used to be a matter of going with our gut, but today car buyers are using their phones.

Mobile searches from dealership lots increased 46% in the last year, and half of all car shoppers with mobile devices use their smartphones while at the dealership.

The top action people perform with their phones while on the lot is to confirm they are getting a good price on a vehicle. Searches for Kelley Blue Book and competing dealers occur more often when at the dealership.

So now that you know how car buyers move through the purchase process you can help car dealers put their best foot forward at each moment. This will help insure long term success for everyone.

As mentioned I have included some links below to some great resources, including the 5 moments paper and the Automotive ZMOT study.

In the next video I am going to give you an action plan and presentation that you can take to car dealers right away to start earning their business.

Helpful Links - Car Buyers

[Understand The Car Buyer Video](#)

[Digital Trends Auto Shoppers Infographic 2016](#)

[Digital Drives Auto Shopping](#)

[Zero Moment of Truth Automotive Study](#)

[Zero Moment of Truth ZMOT Study](#)

[Five Auto Shopping Moments](#)

[Think With Google Automotive Topics](#)

Your Action Plan for Success

[Your Action Plan Video](#)

So far we've covered why car dealers are great clients, how car dealers market their inventory, and learned a what car buyers go through when shopping for a vehicle.

As mentioned before I've been in the car business for over 20 years. Working in car dealerships and as an automotive digital marketing and software vendor.

While on the vendor side I have worked with well over a thousand car dealers either directly or by consulting with marketing companies. In this section I'm going to share a strategy for you to create success with car dealers for the long term and with the least amount of effort. Essentially what I've done is distill down to what I would do if just starting out with car dealers again. What I am going to share with you will help you avoid a lot of the obstacles and setbacks that I had to learn the hard way.

- We're going to start with which dealers you should be focussing on to get the best return on your time.
- Then move into how to position yourself and your company to dealers
- The advantages you have over the competition
- and we'll review the presentation materials that I've personally used and developed to use with car dealers, and I am going to give that to you to use right away.

Which dealers to target

There are several types of car dealers, from small niche dealers that have 1 or 2 cars available for sale all the way to huge dealer groups that have over a hundred franchise rooftops selling thousands of cars per month.

The sweet spot to start with is locally owned, medium sized, independent car dealers. So used car dealers that sell in the 25 to 150 cars per month range.

There are several reasons for targeting this group, including:

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- Access to decision makers - You can usually get a meeting with the decision maker early in the process which will also be the owner in most cases. As you know working directly with the owner is always a positive for digital marketing.
- Independent dealers also tend to be low (or at least lower) maintenance clients. Especially if you're getting them results.
- And they need the professional services that you can offer. I'll expand on this in just a minute.

You probably noticed that I didn't say go after the big franchise dealers and dealer groups. There are several reasons for this and later on I'll share with you products and strategies for that segment, but to get started just focus on the medium sized independents. This will be a much shorter, gratifying path to success, and is much more scaleable.

Let's take the target audience one step further and isolate what type of independent dealer based on their digital marketing knowledge.

If we were to score a person's online marketing knowledge on a scale from 1 to 10 with 0, knowing nothing and 10, being an expert (not knowing it all, but very strong). Then we want to focus on the dealers that are a 1-2 or a 6-10. Let me explain what I mean by that; dealers that are a 1-2 will know that they don't know and will be happy to have your help. Dealers that are 6-10 know what needs to be done, but don't have time to do it themselves. The 6-10 group also knows enough to understand that there is no such thing as a silver bullet and that a successful online marketing strategy takes time and work. This group will appreciate what you bring to the table.

You want to avoid the 3-5 group as they have a tendency to think that they know a lot more than they actually do. I am guessing you've had clients like this in the past since they exist in every industry. They'll have you make unnecessary time consuming changes with the conviction that those changes will revolutionize online marketing... just walk away. Over the last 10 years this type of client has probably cost me more time and money than just about anything I have done.

If you focus on the 1-2 and 6-10 groups you will build a business of happy clients that look to you for advise and work that actually gets results over time. Working with the 6-10s is great too because you'll have some good brainstorming sessions that are driven by facts which will make you a better online marketing professional overall.

Okay, so now that we've covered who your target client is let's discuss how to position yourself to those clients.

Positioning Yourself In The Industry

Most of the time, salespeople show up at a car dealership trying to sell them a single product or service from a single company.

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As I mentioned just a moment ago, car dealers need the professional services that you can offer... something that takes a completely different approach. Instead of attempting to sell a specific product or service, you're going to sell yourself and your company as the "Outsourced Internet Department".

This is because independent car dealers need help managing the basics. They need more help than one or two products. As a matter of fact they probably already pay for products and services that they don't even know how to use. They're busy selling cars and will need help implementing things as simple as claiming and maintaining their Google My Business page.

Another reason that you can help them succeed as an outsourced Internet Department is that independent car dealers are competing against franchise dealers and national used car chains that have full time marketing departments. Hiring a quality full time internet manager at \$4k to \$10k per month is not possible for most independent car dealers.

You Have The Advantage

Companies that are successful online are usually the companies that can quickly adapt to new opportunities. Car dealers are busy buying and selling cars, not keeping up on the latest online strategies.

As their personal outsourced internet department you'll be in a position to bring new products and services to the table well before the rest of the competition has even heard of what you're doing. And depending on the product or service you may have opportunities to mark these up, increasing your revenue by adding real value.

By taking this approach you'll have a tremendous advantage over the other digital marketing companies within the automotive industry too. You have a broad knowledge of digital marketing, not just what you've been taught by a single company selling a single product.

A lot of industry salespeople are converted car dealership employees. They've been hired and trained how to sell one product and aren't digital marketing professionals. In most cases they use the company pitch and don't know how to say "no, that's not possible".

By being **local** you can meet with the dealer in person once a month or as often as you want. Car dealers prefer and will benefit more from face to face interactions over long distance vendor relationships.

You can help advise them on other products and services, giving you the opportunity to make sure that the product that they are being offered is legitimate and fits into their overall marketing strategy. You will be helping the dealer make decisions based on results not based on company or product limitations.

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In addition to the competitive advantage that you have over automotive specific companies, you now have an advantage over other local online marketing companies as it relates to car dealers. We will continue to provide content to help you and your dealer clients succeed.

Market, Measure, Optimize Presentation

[Market, Measure, Optimize Presentation Walk Through Video](#) (bottom of page)

So now let's get into how to sell those advantages to a car dealership.

Of course step one is to get an appointment with the decision maker(s).

Once you've done that you can use the included presentation to sell your services to them. As all presentations go, you may want to modify this a little to fit your style, but I would recommend keeping as much of the flow as possible.

I have recorded a video walk through of the presentation also, but here are some notes to explain how I would present the slides.

Presentation notes

The first couple of slides will lay the groundwork by introducing yourself and your company. Take some time to add your logo and a personal introduction page.

Then move into some "overview of the obvious" to establish the frame of what you'll be offering.

We start by introducing Bob. Bob is a representation of "the customer". As Bob moves through his day he is bombarded with advertising, from billboards, television, radio, newspaper (not really), and digitally on a desktop and on his mobile device. With customers being inundated with marketing messages, they have gotten very good at blocking out most of it.

In the past marketing companies would break up the 3 phases of marketing as awareness, consideration and purchase phases. This worked well when advertising was focused on traditional media only. When there were three tv stations and a local newspaper. It is much more difficult now that there are 100s of tv stations and newspaper circulation is almost nonexistent.

Modern marketing needs modern methods. We know the 5 moments that car buyers go through when looking for and purchasing a car. Using this information and the ability to set up and read analytics along with other matrix, you don't need to market this broadly. You can be much more targeted leading to a higher ROI. You and your company are the ones to make that happen.

Next you will demonstrate your knowledge of the car business.

Add your logo to this page also, since this will be your process. You'll notice that we aren't trying to make this difficult. The goal is to set yourself up to be the long term solution for the

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dealership. You're going to assess where they are currently and continue to add and adjust... Market, Measure, Optimize.

We will also be educating the dealer on best practices with this presentation. Even if they don't sign up with you they will be left with a great impression of you and your company. Giving you the opportunity to circle back around in the future. Be persistent, in the car business timing is everything and sometimes it is just a matter of showing up on the right day.

Let's say you work for an automotive website provider and a new process or service becomes available. The company you work for doesn't want you selling that, or even suggesting it for that matter. Think of the Agility that you have with a WordPress website that you control versus a platform site that you don't.

They compete against major companies who have a focus on online sales.

They need someone that can help them claim their local presence and maintain it over time.

[Action Plan Video and Materials](#)

Car Dealer Lingo Glossary

DMS: Dealer Management System: used as an accounting and inventory management system at the dealership. In a lot of cases, it is possible to get a direct feed from this system to reduce redundant data entry to the dealer's website.

3rd-Party websites: These are websites like Autotrader.com or cars.com that a dealer will send their inventory to for additional marketing and exposure.

Inventory Exports/Imports (feeds) | Syndication: Transferring car dealer inventory from one system to another is done via inventory feeds: Imports and Exports. There are several companies in the automotive industry that pass inventory back and forth for various purposes. The optimum is to create a straight-line flow of inventory. From the Dealer's DMS into a marketing system that can handle pricing, photos, descriptions, etc., and from that point, send out to any 3rd-Party sites as desired.

VIN explosion: This is where a 17-digit VIN is expanded to extract its known information. The digits within a VIN have specific information, e.g., transmission type. Unfortunately 17 digits isn't enough to provide everything about a vehicle, and that is where data scrubbing takes over.

Inventory Data Scrubbing: Since a 17-digit VIN isn't enough to get all of the details of a vehicle, some systems implement data scrubbing. Data scrubbing takes all known elements of a

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vehicle: VIN, options, trim level, etc. and references that against a database. The goal is to have data that is as complete and accurate as possible.

Vehicle descriptions: Also called “dealer notes”, a vehicle description is a phrase, sentence, or paragraph that describes and markets a vehicle. “Little old lady drove this car to church once a week” kind of thing. Usually the description is displayed on the VDP (Vehicle Detail Page) and is usually included in Exports to 3rd-Party websites.

Vehicle Detail Page (VDP): This is the product page where you would get more information about a specific vehicle. Get used to hearing and using “VDP”.

Search Results Page (SRP) or Search List Page (SLP): The inventory search page isn't as consistent as VDP (Vehicle Detail Page) in how dealers and vendors reference it, but it will usually be something that refers to a list or search page. This is the page where consumers would search for the type of vehicle(s) that they are interested in prior to clicking into the VDP.

MSRP: Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price. Usually only applicable to New vehicles. The OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) suggests this price as the price to be advertised to customers.

Invoice: This is what the dealer pays the manufacturer for the vehicle. Normally this doesn't take into account dealer holdback or dealer rebates.

Cost: This is what the dealer owns a vehicle for after everything is accounted for.

Flooring: It is very common for dealerships to have a loan for the vehicles that they have on their lot. A flooring plan is the relationship that the dealer has with a bank. The amount of credit they have, the interest rate, etc.

Retail Price: Full price prior to any discounts. This can be called several things as each system and dealer seem to have their own way of referencing pricing in general. “Asking Price”, “Retail”, “Full Price”, etc.

Sale Price: Price after dealer discounts.

Sales Up or 'Up': An “Up” is a potential customer who comes onto a car lot. In an ‘up’ system at a car dealership, salespeople take turns based on some internal rules. Usually whoever has been outside waiting the longest, e.g., “You're up” or You're *Up* came to be.

The Box: The ‘box’ is a reference to the finance office. After working in finance at a car dealership for five years, serving over 10,000 customers, a day at the office can feel very much be like being in a ‘box’.

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Turn: A turn is when a salesperson turns a customer over to another salesperson or sales manager. The idea is that the second salesperson may get into rapport better than the first, or hopefully the customer just gets tired of saying no and buys the car :).

Green Pea: New, inexperienced salesperson.

Walk Around: A walk around is a product presentation where the salesperson “walks around” the vehicle selling it’s features and benefits.

Test Drive: This is the act of a person driving the vehicle of interest prior to purchase. It is the job of the salesperson to get said person to take a test drive as part of the sales process.

Four Square: Historically, the “four square” was the preferred negotiation technique used by car dealerships. It is still used at some dealerships, but has slowly lost favor because of the internet and the desire of consumers to have more transparency. The idea is to draw two lines on a sheet of paper (preferably with a marker); one horizontally and one vertical intersecting at the middle. This creates “four squares” on the paper. Within the four boxes the dealer will put the trade-in value, the down payment, the price of the vehicle, and the resulting payment. The salesperson is taught to work all four squares, one at a time in attempt to get the customer to pay more in each box.

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Market, Measure, Optimize Checklist

This checklist is a starting point for working with car dealers. It is a list of things that we know are effective. Most of these you probably already do with your other local digital marketing clients, others are car-dealer specific. This list is by no means exhaustive, but is a good starting point.

Google Analytics

- Install Google Analytics on website or get added as user
- Create conversion goals
 - VDP views
 - Form submissions
 - Map/Hours pageviews
 - Print Directions
 - Print Vehicle from VDP
 - Setup event alerts
 - IP Block
 - Block known bots
- Create automated email reports
- Google Analytics Reviews (face to face meetings with dealership)

Reviews

- Current state of Google/Yelp reviews. How many? Average rating?
- Have they claimed their business listings; Google? Yelp?
- Is there a process in place to gather reviews?
- Is there a process in place to respond to reviews?

Website review

- SEO best practices
- Sell the dealer? About page, home page, review page, etc.
- Sell the people? Photos, bios, videos, etc.
- Video of the owners and dealership

Email Marketing

- Is there a current email marketing strategy?
- If so, what is it? How often? Who is in the email list?

Sell The Dealership

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- Implement a review gathering tool with the goal of asking for reviews and encouraging positive reviews on Google & Yelp if there isn't one in place
- Update the dealership "About" page. Add video about dealer if possible
- Google My Business Page
 - Verify accuracy of Name, Address, Phone and other information
 - Add videos
 - Add photos
 - Add links to all possible properties
- Yelp business page
 - Verify accuracy of Name, Address, Phone and other information
 - Add Photos
 - Add Dealer (business) description and history content
- Determine which properties come up when searching the dealer's name (Google Page One) and focus on polishing those

Sell the people

- Bio pages on the dealer main website
 - One to three paragraphs of content
 - Photo
 - Bio Video
 - Walk around videos of vehicles
- Add employee (salespeople) names to review process if possible
- Identify salespeople candidates for personal website

Sell The Vehicles

Photo quality/quantity

- Good camera
- Back flash
- Fisheye (interior shots)
- Consistent shots per vehicle
- Window Stickers

Syndication to 3rd Party Sites

- What 3rd party sites are being syndicating to?
- What is the cost per 3rd party site?
- What are the results?
 - Leads
 - Site traffic / Goal conversion

Pricing Strategies / What is the pricing strategy?

- Was/Now pricing
- No pricing "call for price" on all vehicles
- Random - gut feeling pricing

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Email marketing

- Is email marketing being done?
- Email collection process
 - Are emails being collected?
 - If they are, find out where/how
 - Is there a .csv export file?
 - If they aren't, workout the best process for them to do so

- Looking at current marketing results and find areas to improve
- YouTube channel
- Citations sites (Yext?)
- Yelp page
- Employment Page/Site to attract better salespeople

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DealerTrend products and services

Vehicle Marketing System (VMS)

DealerTrend's VMS is the core of interactive vehicle marketing management. To learn more about our VMS software, check out our [knowledge base](#).

CarDealerPress

CarDealerPress is our inventory plugin for WordPress: giving digital marketing companies the power to work with car dealers. The plugin has been evolving steadily since 2007. [Learn More Here](#).

Auto-Matic-Marketing Dealer Network

To help digital marketing professionals get a head start on working with car dealers, we created the [Auto-Matic-Marketing Dealer Network](#).

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