

The Social Dealership

August 2011

A Social Media Magazine For Auto Dealers



Breakout Edition!

**Increasing Word-Of-Mouth & Influencing Loyalty
An Auto Dealers Best For Of Advertising**

In This Issue

Real Car Chat

Social -SEO Effect

Embracing Social Media

Location Based Marketing

How Can Social Media Help You Sell Cars?

Letter From The Publisher

We're Dedicated To
Both Auto Dealers And
Social Media, Where We
Marry Both Worlds...
Perfectly!



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Social Dealership Magazine, it is our pleasure to bring you the first automotive publication completely dedicated to social media. As you go through these pages and improve your social media knowledge, please keep in mind one thing: Social media is more than just about sales, it is about your bottom line!

At Next Generation Dealer Services, we have almost 40 years of combined retail automotive sales experience. That being said, we want you to sell a lot more cars but we also want you to be open to a sales cycle that starts in your service department. There are a lot more people in your community in need of having their cars serviced at any given time, than are in the market for a new or used car. Use social media to drive more traffic to your service drives by offering special coupons or things like Facebook only specials.

J.D. Powers say an individual is three times more likely to purchase a car from a dealership where they have a positive service experience. Use this to your advantage! Make your dealership a place where people like to visit and over time, you will see the positive effects it has on your bottom line.

Enjoy the magazine and please feel free to [email us](#) with comments or suggestions for topics or just to be social!

- Rob Hagen

CONTACT **ROB HAGEN** AT 855-70-MEDIA TO
ADVERTISE IN THE SOCIAL DEALERSHIP

In This Issue

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It's A Scary World Out There!

By: [Jim Kristoff](#)

In the movie classic, "The Wizard of Oz", the character Dorothy, upon seeing the impending storm yells out...."Auntie Em, Auntie Em...it's a twister...it's a twister!"



This is how most Automotive Dealers and General Managers feel about social media marketing. The social media storm is coming on fast, and spinning in directions that no one can predict where the future will go!

I have personally been in the retail automotive industry for 30 years, starting in Sales when I was just 20 years old, to being partners in my own store. I have been around long enough to see the enormous transition in marketing and advertising with the advent of technology. Where there used to be but 4 TV stations you could advertise on, now there are literally hundreds of channels to choose from. Where there used to be but a few local radio stations to play commercials, there are now hundreds of channels via satellite radio. The local newspaper will be completely extinct in another few years as more and more newspaper companies go out of business. And direct mail seems to just be thrown in the garbage unopened

Now I am not advocating giving up any or all of these traditional platforms of marketing and advertising. They all have their place in a well thought out and executed marketing plan. But as



the old adage goes, "you have to fish where the fish are".

To be able to "fish where the fish are", you have to have a strategy that will get you "found" on the internet. Let's start with Search Engines. Where did we go to find information before Search Engines? You HAVE to have content on these Search Engines that will show up in the "organic" section on the FIRST page! You need to have a comprehensive Search Engine Marketing and Search Engine Optimization plan. After all, the internet is where nearly EVERYONE begins their purchase information gathering.

Let's do an exercise. Go onto Google and type in these 3 words, "new car prices". On any given day you will see that there is anywhere between 75 million and 100 million websites that have those 3 words in them. You think the information is already out there? You bet it is! Now go back onto Google and type in "used car prices". On any given day there are between 65 million and 90 million sites that can provide the customer used car values for a purchase or a trade-in. So now that you know that the information on new and used car pricing is already out there, you have to give them a reason to purchase from YOU! You have to give a perspective purchaser a compelling reason to buy from you!

Let's face it; everyone wants to have a "friend" in the business. Whether you are purchasing a vehicle, a television or a home, you feel MUCH more comfortable doing business with someone that you know and trust. Now, how do you become that "friend" in the business? Social Media marketing can help you find those "friends" that you have been looking for!

Here are some thought starters on how you can accomplish finding "friends" via social media. Friends will advocate other friends to do business with you!

1. Build a compelling Company Facebook page. Post "fun" things on the page, NOT the latest deals. A Facebook page should be like a social gathering not a place for a hardsell.
2. Build a Company blog and invite your customers AND employees to post reviews and information.
3. Build a YouTube Channel that will have videos of products and services offered at the dealership. It will provide great point of sale information to the consumer. A well scripted video presents that product or service perfectly and every time, something an employee might not be able to do every day.
4. Make short, (not over 60 second) videos of happy customers either purchasing a vehicle or servicing their vehicle. Post it on your company blog, share it on your Facebook page and upload it to YouTube. Encourage your customers to comment on the video and share it with their friends.

To be able to successfully execute a Social Media plan, you have to have ALL employees involved and thoroughly trained in all of your dealership processes. A well executed Social Media plan should implement the "300%" rule. Which is, 100% of the goods, services or products, to 100% of the consumers, 100% of the time.

If ALL of your employees understand the impact of how important Social Media is for the dealership's success as well as theirs, they will execute it flawlessly! We would all like a business that looks like this:

Most towns have one...A legendary local business... that consistently attracts people from miles around...

It's a place that the locals proudly bring visiting relatives and friends to....

The place that's always jumping with turbocharged workers and lines of delighted customers...

Even while nearby competitors are struggling just to stay in business...

It is a highly successful business...where it is difficult to get a job there...all the employees are thoroughly trained...and all the employees wear a smile...and share a laugh...

Does this describe your organization??

The Social Media world is a scary place. For most, it is an unknown entity. I can tell you that you need to be there and attack it with everything you have. Traditional media is being phased out....and faster than you think it is. Today's world is constantly on their "smart phones", texting, tweeting, Facebooking, picture taking, video taking and perusing their way through the internet. They aren't listening to the radio commercials or watching television ads nearly as much as they used to. You had better get on this Social Media wave before the wave crashes over your business and you become extinct!

To view Jim Kristoffs bio or to contact him, go [HERE](#).



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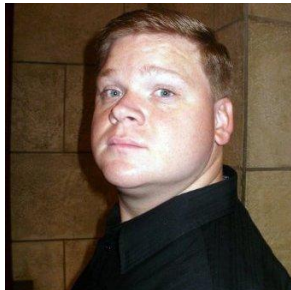
We all know that nothing happens until you make a sale, whether its in service or sales. Finally, we will show you how to monetize social media.

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Embracing The Social World

By: [David Johnson](#)



Life has changed, the way we sell cars has changed, business, in general, has changed. Now, it's time to embrace it, or fall by the way side. We live in an exciting social world where the new economy is more social in nature. Why? Because we are an untrusting lot. We are putting less and less stock in traditional advertising and more and more into what our peers think. Opinions matter. Reviews matter. What our friends think matter. Even the opinions of complete strangers matter. Are you embracing this new philosophy or fighting it tooth and nail? It's time you start embracing it.



Collectively, we've gone back to what I like to refer to as the village mindset. There used to be a time before the internet, a time even before the

phone, when neighbors asked neighbors their opinions on certain things and made purchasing decisions based off of what their neighbors told them. For instance, Farmer Bob needs to buy a new dairy cow, and in a hurry. Instead of jumping on Google (remember this was before the internet), Farmer Bob would ask his neighbor Farmer Frank if he knew who sold the best dairy cows around. Because Farmer Frank just bought a dairy cow himself, he recommended that Farmer Bob buy one from Farmer Dan.

Take a look at what's happening today, it's the same exact thing, more or less. True, we have Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and other social networks to help us connect, but the desire has always been there. In fact, I'd argue that the desire to find out what others think about a particular business is stronger today, than it ever has been. Why is that? First, we are social creatures. Second, we are tired of all the slick advertising who's only aim is to take our hard earned money, not necessarily to aid us in finding the best product for our particular situation. That's where word-of-mouth of mouth comes in, and why it's vitally important to your dealership, that you influence as much chatter as possible.

It shouldn't be an epiphany when I state that the two most powerful forms of advertising are word-of-mouth amongst friends, and word-of-mouth amongst strangers. In fact, you should be shaking your head up and down in agreement. So, how do you influence word-of-mouth anyway? First step is to admit that there has been a fundamental change in the way people are buying cars, most anything for that matter, especially big ticket items.

The second, is to think in terms of engagement. Of course, a new definition of engagement is in order. If you take a look at how traditional engagement was defined, it was defined by us,

the business owners, the dealerships. We defined it by how many people we could get to scratch-off a winning number on a direct mail piece, but as Forrester Research points out, the revised definition of engagement is defined as, "*the level of involvement, interaction, intimacy, and influence an individual has with a brand over time.*"

Of course, I'd like to expand on that definition and say that engagement is not only the level of involvement, interaction, intimacy, and influence an individual has with a brand over time, but also the level of involvement, interaction, intimacy and influence an individual has within the broader community that supports the brand. The idea, as I pointed out a few paragraphs earlier, is to influence as much word-of-mouth as possible, so the addendum makes sense.

Social As A Relationship Tool

Thus far I've been talking about using social media as a way to market your brand, but in reality, it can be used more than just as a marketing tool. Social media should be used to bring both awareness about your dealership and to build relationships with your current client base. For years and years we've heard it over and over again that the best type of customer are referrals, but most dealerships fail miserably in the referral department . In my honest opinion that is a total waste of money.

Think about it, each and every month, 10's of thousands of dollars must be spent to generate new business, when it costs pennies on the dollar to generate referrals from old business. Yes, I understand that you may be sitting there reading this, shaking your head, saying that you can't get your salespeople to follow up. You know what I have to say about that? Stop! Use social networks, Facebook as an example, to engage your customers. Salespeople come and go but if you spend time, on the dealership level, engaging your customers in order to build community, you will go a long way in creating massive amounts of word-of-mouth.

I've seen a lot of dealers fight the idea that the way they market has to change. No, I'm not saying that you should stop advertising on television, radio and print. All I'm saying is that your advertising techniques must evolve if you want to influence word-of-mouth. Try to work in ways to engage your audience in order to create a dialogue. The whole idea with social marketing is to create a conversation surrounding your brand. A conversation that goes on without you, long after the campaign is over. Stop hitting a brick wall with your current advertising, no matter how hard you hit, it won't budge. Instead, grab your social media ladder, climb over it and embrace the new social world, it's not the scary, it's just different.

To view David Johnson's bio or to contact him, do so [HERE](#).



“How can you squander even one more day not taking advantage of the greatest shifts of our generation? How dare you settle for less when the world has made it so easy for you to be remarkable?” – Seth

Godin



Experiential Marketing

How to Harness Location Based Gaming to Engage Your Customer

By: [Alex Rosenblatt](#)

The very fact that you are reading these words



already means you are more engaged with your surroundings than our average consumer is. We've all experienced attempts to fight through the plethora of screaming

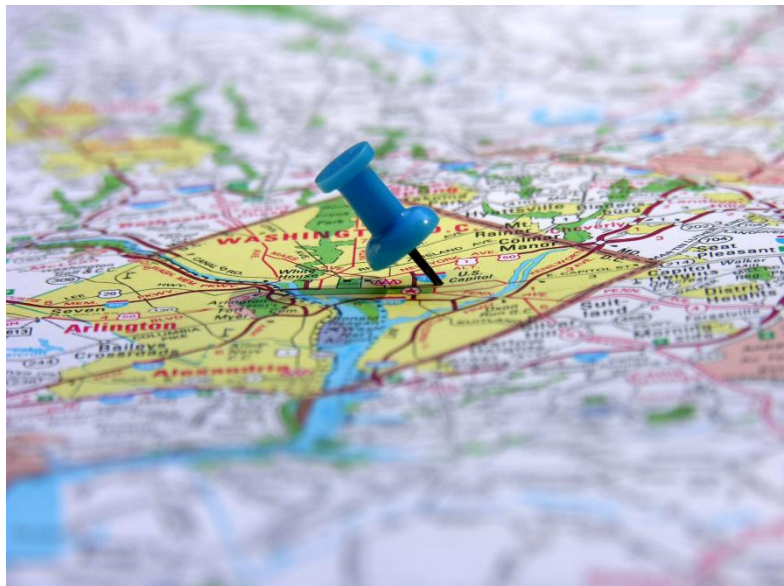
voices, all offering our customer the newest and most exclusive deal. Snake-oil salesman apart, there are still numerous legitimate parties all fighting with one another for the most authentic (and accordingly, most engaging) appeal to the end consumer.

What I'd like to discuss with you here are a few of the different platforms that allow you to not only direct WHOM you are trying to target but also (and arguably more importantly) WHERE you are targeting them.

First, let's take a step back and look at the landscape. At my company, SCVNGR (I'll get to what we do later), we like to look at the world in layers. The first layer is quite obvious – the land, tangible and able to be subdivided into nice little plots for us to build on. It's also finite, which makes it expensive. Accordingly, the second layer is buildings, which are much more interesting than just land as we can build them into offices, restaurants and cafes—personalize them, lease them, rent them etc. These two layers make up the foundation of the social graph, the world as it exists and how we interact with one another. If this all sounds like mumbo-

jumbo to you, I'll be more specific. Facebook. Facebook owns all this land and the way we interact with it and there's not much we can do about that at this point. Google is trying to take some of that land but then again, they're Google and the jury is still out on whether they will become a viable alternative.

So those layers are pretty built up and owned by some pretty big and powerful names. What I would argue is most interesting though is a third layer, the game layer, and that layer is still under construction. The game layer is so important



because much in the way language is a tool of thought, games are a tool of motivation. If we can influence people's (our customer's) motivation, we can much more clearly fight to the top of the Vegas-esque DEALS!!!DEALS!!!DEALS!!! advertising/marketing landscape. Further, if we can influence our customer's motivation as it pertains to WHERE THEY ACTUALLY ARE, well now we're really talking. The game layer can, not only influence our customer's motivation to engage with a product or a brand, but also his/her experience whilst engaging with it. And this is very powerful.

As this layer is still under construction, accordingly, there are still quite a few players in the location-based-game that we should all know about:

There's Gowalla—a gorgeous app—that allows its users to “check-in” to the location they are

currently at, all the time discovering the world around them. There are all sorts of very well designed virtual “rewards” that can be unlocked and sometimes even redeemed in the real world with some of their larger brand partners, e.g. Disney, Levi’s. All this is well and good for the consumer, however, I would argue that for the everyday business that doesn’t necessarily have the budget of a Disney or Levi’s, there isn’t much applicability to leveraging the platform to their benefit.

Of course there is Foursquare, the 500 lb gorilla in the room. Foursquare allows its over 8 million users the ability to virtually “check in” to their physical location— earning them points, badges and even the ability to become the “mayor” if they have checked in more than anyone else. You can also leave tips on that location and with such a large user base, in the larger cities of the



US, get a very nice sense of your surroundings and what might be fun and good around you. Foursquare also has some very large brand partners which allows its user base various benefits when checking in to their locations. Again, all well and good for the user base, notoriously difficult to leverage as a brand—let alone an auto dealer. Also, I would argue that the “check-in” model itself is rather broken and one-dimensional. I don’t see a very linear correlation with checking-in somewhere (clicking a button) and *engaging* with that location.

Which brings me to SCVNGR. Obviously, I have a dog in this fight, so my opinion may be admittedly biased. The SCVNGR platform differs from Gowalla and Foursquare most particularly in our research and implementation of game dynamics on how our users interact with their

surroundings. Instead of the check-in, our system allows users to complete “challenges” that require some level of engagement with their location. These can vary from snapping a picture of something particular, to interacting with a staff member to figure out a specific question that highlight’s that location’s best feature. Further, our challenges are customizable and even scriptable, which upon completion unlock points that can be redeemed for real world prizes/discounts/etc.

Further, we offer the ability to leverage our platform to create a turnkey experiential promotion for our clients. We build a customized, branded real-world scavenger hunt in and around your dealership that participants navigate on their cell phones, earning points in a timed event all trying to win some sort of awesome grand prize (new car lease, etc.). We

create and custom tailor a four week campaign leading up to the event as well as a custom website where we accept and

manage registration. All this is done to create a unique and one-of-a-kind EXPERIENCE for the participant as they interact with your brand, employees, and the dealership itself.

So there’s a brief summary of the world as it pertains to location based platforms. I’m sure I left some players out and admittedly pitched my own wares. My advice to you is to do your research and pick a service that just feels right. We all too often can get stuck in either “analysis-paralysis” or a disingenuous “shotgun spray” type approach to these services. Pick a horse and race it!

To view Alex Rosenblatts bio or to contact him, do so [HERE](#).



Stop Hating, You Haven't Seen What Social Can Really Do!

We've heard it all before. Social marketing is a waste of time. Social media is just a fad. Where is my ROI? I don't have anybody on staff that can do it right. Yadda, yadda, yadda. Stop complaining, give us a call and let us do it right. **Are you looking for incremental business? Then we should be your first call!**



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If You're Gonna Go Social, Go All The Way!

The Power Of Facebook Can Work In Mysterious Ways

By: Chris Walsh

Fifteen months ago, no one had ever heard of Vets-Cars. We had challenged ourselves to create America's only association of premier auto dealers dedicated to serving the military and Veteran community; a fifty million plus consumer demographic. We were painfully aware that serving two masters - the military and the auto industry - was going to require as much public awareness as our resources could handle.

We knew we needed a Facebook presence, but we labored under the misconception promoted by many that it was little more than a playground for drunken bachelors! We were about to be surprised. Our research found many Veteran support pages, military base and MWR (morale, recreation and welfare) sites and hundreds of auto dealers actively embracing social media as a means of enhancing awareness and engaging their market. I was convinced and about to be hooked. It took me two snowy days in February 2010 to complete the laborious task of creating a page, (I'm no Zuckerberg when it comes to this stuff). Now I was ready to let the online community in on Vets-Cars! I began "Friending" folks all over the globe. I reached out to Veteran organizations, bases and dealers...I learned how to upload and link, post and paste. I was having fun. I was also red-eyed and down to five hours of sleep a night, Facebook can do that to you.

One morning last summer the true power of this "social utility" was revealed to me. I haven't looked at Facebook the same since.

I was uploading my daily "This Day In Military History" post when my speakers "binged" and the chat box appeared on screen:

Mark: hello, vetscars, my name is mark

Vets-Cars: Hi, Mark. What's up?

Mark: I'm a vet and need some help

Vets-Cars: Thanks for your service Mark! I'm Chris. How can I help?

Mark: I don't type too good lol! Can I call you?

I gave Mark my number, 10 minutes later he was telling me his story. 30 minutes later all of the problems and "To-Dos" in my life seemed petty and far away.

Mark was a 23 year old former Marine living in Texas. He was unemployed, had no money, family or friends to speak of. He wanted to know where he could go to buy a car so he could look for a job.

I cautioned him that he was asking for a lot given his circumstances and asked him to give me a little history of what led to him to this predicament.

While on patrol in Ramadi, Iraq, in the winter of 2007 Mark took a sniper round to his neck. Mark lost a lung and suffered spinal damage and traumatic brain injury. He was awarded a Purple Heart, was discharged and sent home. The Veteran's Administration saw fit to classify Mark with a 20% disability.

Mark still suffers from blood clotting, PTSD and nerve damage so severe that the simple act of taking a shower or even wearing clothing causes him excruciating pain.

"But I got to find work, Sir."

(Mark, like many young service men and women, has the habit of calling you "Sir" no matter how many times you ask them to stop it.)

I was blown away by what I was hearing.

"Mark, have you looked into getting a re-evaluation from the VA for your disability percentage?"

"Nobody told me I could do that, Sir."

I told Mark I'd get back to him. When I hung up the phone all I could do was shake my head in frustration. What the hell could I do for this young warrior?

Enter Jay Agg, National Communications Director for AMVETS. Jay had friended me on Facebook a week before and had called me to wish me luck with Vets-Cars.

"Jay, I'm not sure if you're the right person but you're the first one I thought of. I've got a story you need to hear."

Jay listened attentively and responded,

"Unfortunately, Chris, this happens all the time."

Jay got involved and set in motion the events which led to Mark being reevaluated at the VA and eventually having his disability classification raised to full status.

A lesser man may have considered the plight of one Vet to not be as important as his daily big picture. But Jay Agg, AMVETS and their incredible National Service Foundation *will not* leave their wounded brothers on the battlefield, wherever that battlefield may be.

What Facebook provided in this instance was the humanizing element not readily apparent in the term "Social Utility."

The motivation to help was a natural outgrowth of what Vets-Cars Group and Vets-Shield are committed to each day. Facebook was the platform that put Mark and Jay together.

Inspiring story, you say...all Veteran outcomes should be so satisfying. However, how can your business profit by this experience? The most successful Vets-Cars dealers have integrated the power and reach of the Facebook model into virtually all aspects of their advertising, branding and awareness efforts. Full time social media positions distinguish themselves at the better, savvier stores. The privilege of helping one young, at-risk Marine, may never present itself to you. Helping others, however, is defined in many ways.

Are you one of the "Good Guys?" If so, trumpet this to your market area and help folks with a fair and square dealership experience. Social media is the vehicle. Jump in and drive your reputation around town!

P.S. Mark is doing well, getting the treatment he needs, still in his apartment and he got himself a car.

How do we know? We found out on Facebook!

To view Chris's bio or to contact him, do so [HERE](#).



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How Can Social Media Help You Sell More Cars?

By: [Rob Hagen](#)

Before we get straight to the question most dealers want to know, it's important to first



understand what social media is. Social media is branding in its purest form. All advertising budgets should include this but all too often is neglected to

purchase more leads or run more TV ads. Social media is about getting people to talk about you, so you don't have to!

Let's face it, the statistics are overwhelming.

People trust a peer recommendation 78% of the time as opposed to trusting traditional ads only 14% of the time.

One peer recommendation is worth 200 traditional advertisements (Relationship-Economy.com).

I could continue but these two stats alone summarize why dealers need to figure out the social media puzzle.

What are we trying to do with social media? Stand apart from your competition! People are tired of car dealers screaming at them through the TV, they either walk away or change the channel. Go look at the last ad you created and does it say anywhere in it "Now is the best time to buy?" People are tired of hearing this; they know you said it last month and the month before. They know you are lying either then or now.

Having been in the auto industry 20 years, I have the luxury of being able to speak firsthand about the affects the internet has had on dealers. At first, dealers fought the internet because it hurt their profit margins. Now and this is very exciting, social media will have the opposite effect. People will pay more, no not sticker, but \$300 to \$500 more to do business with a dealer that is committed to high level of customer service. What would an extra \$300 per retail do to your bottom line?

From the very first day I walked into my first training session as a "greenpea", I was told referral and repeat customers are the best customers! They sell easier and you usually make a little more. Why? Because trust is already built up in the relationship. Eureka!

Enter social media; do you know why social platforms have become so popular? We are social creatures, tools like Facebook allow us to make friends and interact with people that we would normally never meet.

Social media allows us to build relationships and create brand ambassadors that will go out and tell all their friends about you. Don't get me wrong, car dealers have done a lot to hurt our image in the eyes of the buying public and it is not a normal thing that people want to be friends with a car dealer, but it is possible!

Here is a statement that was said about one of our clients by a Facebook friend:

"I became a fan when you had less than 200 friends... your page is "alive" and I check it daily!! You are doing an amazing job, and for the first time in my 38 years...I HAVE chosen..and will be LOYAL to Metro Honda, why? Because your Facebook is fun..interactive..and I feel like we ARE "friends"!!! And you have GREAT cars!! I will tell anyone who will listen...Metro Honda IS the only place I will buy a car in NC..and I love my Odyssey with 130k thousand miles that looks and rides like brand new!!! Rock on MH."

Two Lessons From This Quote

Facebook, especially, is purely a social tool; people are not very receptive to any types of advertising on Facebook, so concentrate on building relationships. Instead of selling cars on Facebook, sell your dealership, sell the people who work at the dealership, sell your place in the community, but do all of this in a non bragging way.

Share information about things happening in your community, show people that you are one of them! Share information about the people that work at your dealership, that they live and interact in the same neighborhoods and they don't all of sudden become these mean people when they walk through the doors of the dealership.

The second thing I want you to take from this quote is to keep your Facebook efforts personal. More and more tools are popping up that advertise they will help you automate your social media efforts. Run!!!! People want to interact with people, not computers. You will come across as fake and could literally do more harm than good.

Don't Get Wrapped Up In Your Number of "Likes"!

This is an often misunderstood metric for a lot of dealers. Don't get me wrong, it is great to have a lot of "likes" on your Facebook page but it is more important to have quality "likes"! Car dealers are local businesses, think locally with your growth. If all you want is people to like your page, there are services that will get you thousands of people in third world countries to like your page. Is that going to help you sell more cars?

Here are six quick ways to grow your local Facebook following:

1. Make sure your existing database of customers know about your Facebook page. Email them; it helps to entice them with coupons or a giveaway.

2. Include your Facebook URL in all of your other forms of advertising.
3. Make sure your business cards have your Facebook URL on them.
4. Put signage in your dealership displaying your Facebook URL.
5. Get your website provider to put a feed from your Facebook.
6. Make sure there is a link in every email to your Facebook page, just put it in the signature.

Old School Meets New School

I've coached little league baseball for years and I've noticed over all that time that dealerships love to sponsor youth sporting teams. Awesome thing to do!

What typically happens though? You write a check, they put a logo on their uniforms and then at the end of the season you get a team picture and you hang it in the dealership. Very nice, but who is going to see this? Your existing customers, that's who, the people who already know and like you.

Imagine this scenario with social media. You write the check and then you ask the coach for team updates and game pictures. You post this information on your Facebook page and give credit to little Johnny for hitting a homerun. Little Johnny's proud parents are going to be sending their friends and family to your page to check out your kind words and share the pictures from the games on their pages.

And How Will All This Help Me Sell More Cars?

Top of mind awareness, when people think of car dealerships, you want yours to be the first that come to mind. Use social media to build quality relationships. Everybody likes to do business with a friend, a person they know, like and trust.

You Can View Robs Bio [HERE](#).

So, You Wanna Go Social?

By: [Jay Schroeck](#)

A few years ago, there were countless dealerships and automotive people saying "Social media is just a 'fad' and won't last." Well, it's still here and it's lasted. The dealerships that thought out of the box and jumped on board are reaping the benefits of it while the



others are now scrambling and trying to create a social media presence. Sure, not every dealership did it well. Some made mistakes and had to learn from them. Some are better at it than others. The more willing and creative these dealerships and their Social Media Managers are, the more chance at success they have.

What are you talking about Jay? I created my Facebook page years ago. - Creating a social media presence is more than just creating the profiles and occasionally making some posts. Being social is about engaging and interacting with your audience on a regular basis: your customers, your potential customers, your fans and friends. You are creating online relationships. The best way for you to establish this is to have a person or team in charge of this responsibility. Hire a Social Media Manager (aka Community Manager), add it as a responsibility to your Internet Department or hire an outside company that specializes in Social Media.

Social Media has become a part of our everyday life for most and with the ease of access through smart phones & tablets, more people are on it and more frequently. Creating and maintaining a social media presence is about getting your name

out there (brand awareness) and connecting with people. Use it to create and establish relationships with customers and potential customers. Use it as a customer relations tool. Manage your online reputation with it. Many use Twitter and Facebook to voice their opinion about an experience at a dealership, wouldn't it be nice to show some feedback? Thank them for their business and positive feedback. Answer back quickly and try to resolve complaints. Use it to showcase your staff and vehicles (in a social & fun way). Run contests and be active in the community.

If you are not currently utilizing social media to its advantage, I would suggest starting off with the "Big 3" as I like to call them. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Facebook is currently the largest and most popular social media website. If Facebook were a country, it would be the third largest country in the World. I would strongly suggest starting here. Create and maintain a profile and/or fan page. Here you can share status messages, links, photos & videos. This is where you can most easily interact with customers and find potential customers.

Twitter is a "micro-blog" social media website where you post status updates within 140 characters or less. It may take some getting used to with the character limit, but if done right, it is a very effective way of getting your message out there. Communication and conversation is key.

YouTube is a video sharing website that is highly searchable and is owned by Google. You are going to want to create fun, short, quality videos with a great title containing a few important, relevant keywords and relevant "tags". Viral content can spread fast, so make sure your video is portraying the message you want it to in a fun and/or educational way.

Just please remember, Social Media is "social" ... A one-sided conversation will have people tuning you out. Converse, interact and engage.

Why Social Media Is Important And The "Social-SEO" Effect"

By: Sara Hassler

There are hundreds of good reasons to list as to



why social media has become an important piece of the puzzle in today's business world. For automobile

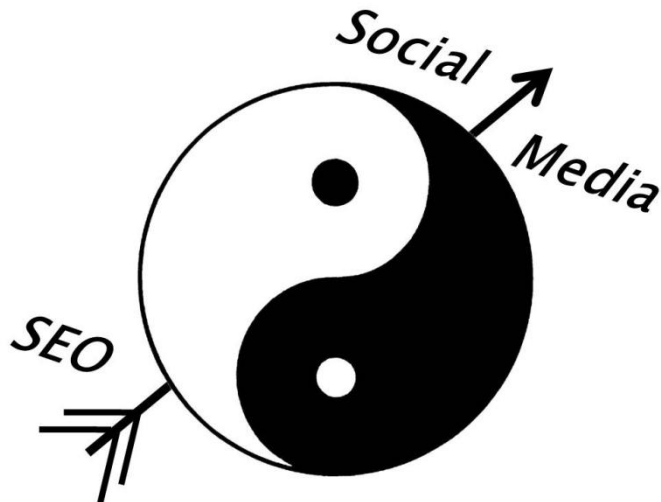
dealerships, social media is an incredibly powerful tool that can be used to connect to consumers, generate leads and drive sales. Creative content that is stylized to be in-line with social media has the ability to turn an ordinary automotive website into a sensational social and engaging cyber-lot.

Social Media Marketing – Crafting Ad Copy Content That Reaches Out To Auto Buyers

By using social media to market vehicles to consumers, automotive dealers can display the value of each of their vehicles in a descriptive

way that steps outside the traditional window sticker detail. This type of social media marketing paints a picture for the consumer of what it's like to own, drive, and enjoy a specific automobile. One of the advantages to pulling away from the dry OEM verbiage in automotive advertising copy is that social and descriptive copy touches consumers on an emotional level.

The main tool to gain leverage in social media marketing is the written word. High quality, innovative and creative ad copy can set an automotive dealership up for success. To increase page views on a dealership's website, advertising professionals will often combine Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) methods to craft their creative ad copy. Once SEO and SEM is used, it's hard to go back to the plain and placid style of out-dated vehicle ad copy. Dealers who get a taste of this style of social advertising, often reap the benefits of higher search engine page ranks and become addicted to watching their website rise on the web above their competitors. It's also



common for a social auto dealer that has seen these online benefits, to find additional avenues that consistently reach out to buyers on a social, personal and emotional level.

Reasons Why Auto Dealers Go Social

Consider this, in the past, vehicles were primarily a functional purchase. Automobiles were bought by most consumers out of necessity. If the

vehicle met their initial needs of getting to work or to the market, the deal was made and a car was driven off the lot and into someone's garage. Today, as the industry has changed, so has our view of how consumers perceive their needs. Automobiles are now found to be an emotional purchase and often are thought to define who we are and where we are seated in society. With that, comes the need to market an auto as an emotional purchase; and that requires, social media marketing methodologies.

Word Play – How To Make It Social

When standard options are listed in advertising copy, that offers the buyer little to connect with besides, power windows, heated seats or a leather-wrapped steering wheel. However, a dealership can take these same standard vehicle options and highlight the benefits in a social way that makes them more appealing to the emotions of the consumer. By changing to a social style of content, all of a sudden, the power windows "are convenient when you want to offer a breath of fresh air to your passengers" and heated seats "put the warmth back into a cold dreary night" and a leather-wrapped steering wheel "feels so sporty as you are cruising down the highway at daybreak". This new, creative social content has the ability to turn standard options into luxury specialties—because they are being presented to the buyer on an emotional level.

Once connected to a buyer's emotions, dealers can add feature benefits like warranties, service packages and value discounts into their ad copy in order to make a WOW impression. What matters in social media is that the context swings to the conversational, mood-enhancing and emotionally-stimulating style. Accomplished copywriters and editors make that possible through their verse and use of prose every day with every word that they commit to the keyboard. Weaving additional keyword phrases enhance the value the copy has on the internet's search engine algorithms; and all combined, a

dealer has copy that places their vehicle one step above another similar make and model.

The entire landscape of marketing has changed based on the advantages that the Internet provides businesses. Online social networks have increased how people view communication; and most are used to having social conversations now. In general, buyers expect more than flat, uninteresting and bullet-pointed copy when they search online for a product they want to purchase. Savvy marketing professionals will use their main social media tool, their brand's voice, to communicate their products and services in order to rev up their marketing engines!

Sara Hassler is the Resource Development Manager for GenerateMyAds and CreateYourSEO and specializes in strategic social media content marketing. Her talent for catching current trends and vast knowledge of the cyber-marketplace help drive sales and rev-up website performance in search engine ranks. Hassler's success in the online publishing and social media arenas are testimony to her unparalleled dedication to creating quality social content that works across a variety of media channels. Learn more about Sara by visiting <http://www.linkedin.com/in/sarahassler> and explore the benefits of working with her team of auto-dealer marketing professionals at www.GenerateMyAds.com and www.CreateYourSEO.com.

Real Car Chat Over A Virtual Cup Of Joe

By: Nancy Simmons

What do you get when you build a virtual coffee



house, which serves virtual coffee beverages, and the virtual mugs are washed (licked) by a virtual dog named “Grinder”? Well, you get **“Carbucks...A Coffee House for Car Guys and Car Gals”**. Let me tell

you how Carbucks got its start!

A little less than two years ago, when my circle of facebook friends began to expand outside the parameters of folks I personally knew and into the automotive community, I recognized the need to create a meeting place where car folks could go. This would be a venue where ideas would be networked and best practices discussed, just a relaxed casual setting where we could have some fun! Prior to the opening of Carbucks, we found ourselves bouncing around on each other’s walls, striking up random conversations, some business related, while others not, and our friends outside of the business must have thought we were crazy! One Saturday morning I was discussing with a facebook buddy, Joe Brunner, my idea to start a facebook group, a virtual coffee house for car folks. Without hesitation, he concurred

and exclaimed, “Name it Carbucks...It’s got to be Carbucks!” Within hours we had 100 members, which we refer to as “guests” and at the end of the first week, 400 Carbucks guests were engaging in car chat, sharing links to informational and motivational material, exchanging events of the day, and formulating new friendships, all while partaking in a freshly brewed mug of virtual coffee, espresso, latte, or Grinder’s special “Car-paccino”!

You are probably asking yourself why this group is different than any other automotive social media platform, group, or forum. The answer is simple: Carbucks, an open group, is labeled a “No Pitch Zone”. This, meaning we do not welcome or allow soliciting or self-promoting posts; however, we do open our doors to anyone, from the car enthusiast to the CEO of a major manufacturing corporation. If you are in the business, you are familiar with the barrier built over the years between the dealer body and the automotive products and services suppliers, otherwise known as vendors. This virtual coffee house, for its guests, has broken down the wall between these two groups, while also bridging the gap between like-businesses. The relaxed setting of the coffee house affords an opportunity for the personalities behind the business names to come alive, allowing the



integrity and character of the people employed by the businesses and their owners to precede the shingle alone. As a result of this new-found

synergy, friendships are forged, strategic alliances are formed, business relationships are developed, all while avoiding aggressive self-promoting methods.

I must state I will not take credit for inventing the concept of a coffee house used as a meeting space to conduct business. During the turn of the 18th century, there existed about 600 coffee houses in London. These establishments were used to not only discuss business, but to read and engage in casual conversation....Sound familiar? Coffee houses became even more popular as folks realized the benefits of caffeine, helping them to concentrate; hence with a sharp mind, making better business decisions. It was in an English coffee house where the word "tips" was first used referring to gratuities. At Carbucks, "tips" are encouraged but in the form of the sharing of best practices and ways to operate more effectively within the automotive world.

One may travel half way around the world and find wherever they go, most car folks are witty, creative and possess a keen sense of humor. Why is this so? I don't know; but, it is why amongst the serious business-related topics we discuss, we find time for plain old just having fun! Jokes, trivia, games, humorous dealership stories grace the walls of Carbucks, while theme-style designated days also provide for some stress-free activities in which Car Guys and Car Gals partake! Some of our past themes have included: "Casual Friday", where all guest change their profile picture to a relaxed shot, "Og Mandino Week", where Og's writing and principles were shared and discussed, "Showcase your Automotive Wisdom Week", where guests were invited to share their area of expertise, "DISC Personality Week", where each day a personality type was described and broken down by expert Joe Brunner, "Flaunt your Football Team Friday", "Social Media Saturday", "Heritage Week" and more. These activities spawn comradeship in the group while broadening folks knowledge on various subjects.

With her sometimes sarcastic posts and canine-style comments, Grinder Carbucks speaks in a language of her own. Some of Grinder's own social networking acronyms are BOL (Bark Out Loud), WMTO (Wagging My Tail Off), MMT (Marking My Territory), ROTFB (Rolling on the Floor Barking), to name a few and if she "likes" a guest's post, she "licks" it. She finds many human's tactics odd and often comments, "Silly Humans", changing her t-shirts to reflect her mood of the day. Grinder has built her own community of friends, (some from the animal kingdom) and she is often tagged in posts and folks flock to her wall posting funny animal pics and videos! Our mascot, Grinder, definitely adds color and character to the group!

Now serving almost 1200 guests, Carbucks, like most coffee houses maintains its "regulars" or frequent visitors who have collectively provided for its quirky image and are greatly responsible for its evolution into this fine virtual establishment. I polled some of the guests one day asking them why they were such loyal patrons of Carbucks, (by the way, the coffee is always on the house). This is what some of them had to say:

Steven Paul: "I have met many people and have seen several different ways of doing business since joining this group. Although most members here have worked in a dealership role at some point and I have not it is always nice to meet others that understand the industry."

John Skelton: "Developed relationships that would never have happened otherwise."

Craig Darling: "Of all the groups I am a member of, Carbucks is the finest. I have "met" people, found opportunity, discovered insights and learned a great deal about the movement of social media. Another result of this group is finding other social media outlets such as BDC and DE among others. Thanks Nancy, Carbucks and Grinder.... even if I did think the dog treat was my biscotti."

Jimmy Battista: "I think carbucks people are pretty awesome."

Brad Alexander: "Always good to chill with fellow car-guys and gals, get some great laughs and good insight. It's kinda like a car salesperson anti-defamation league (we're people too!). Love sharing stuff here (I didn't get enough attention as a kid so I ...get it here). Coffee rocks, Grinder licks the cups good-n-clean and has only lifted his leg on me once. We share common goals, frustrations... you know, sometimes you just wanna go someplace "where everybody knows your name; and their always glad you came"

Ryan Gerardi: "Nancy, Carbucks is one of the few FB groups I frequent. Most groups of this size don't do it for me, but you keep it fun and fresh and the people you have assembled have a good sense of humor. And yes I have established a few good connections here as well. Keep up the great work! Thank you."

One major benefit which resulted from this collaboration of car folks in this virtual coffee house is this: As like-minded individuals, somewhere along the line, we discovered we all stand on the same platform; that which to alter and enhance the public's perception of the auto industry to the esteemed profession it deserves, by highlighting the positives, omitting the negatives, one automotive professional at a time! Exercising honesty, integrity and strong business ethics is vital to its guests, and we feel, together we can make a difference! So, next time you are in facebook land, stop by **Carbucks...A Coffee House for Car Guys and Car Gals**, and be our guest...where the car chat is always brewing, and the coffee is good to the last post!

With over thirty years of automotive experience, the majority as a Comptroller in the retail operations arena, Nancy is committed to assisting automotive professionals, dealers and vendors alike, to obtain their goals leading to

their own personal successes. Ms. Simmons enjoys a strong web-presence on sites such as facebook and Dealer Elite, writing blogs and opening discussions covering topics considered to be of vital importance in today's market.



"Human beings are far more likely to communicate ideas and information with others when they are emotionally engaged. Find the key issues that concern your audience and then inculcate them within your marketing plan to get an emotional response." Maki



The Vets-Cars Group

Providing Premier Auto Dealers With
An Effective Consultancy For Attracting
And Serving The Military And Veteran Community.



A Loyal And Deserving
Fifty Million Strong
Consumer Demographic

"Where Dealers Meet Heros."

Wrestling For The Social Media Audience

By: Keith Shetterly



Social media is “opt-in interest advertising”—the final control of the advertising impact is completely in the customer’s hands, and the effectiveness is completely a function of the customer’s interest. In that aspect, it’s much like modern television has now become, only far more consumer-choice enabled than ever before in history.

Decades ago after it first began as a hobbyist medium, television chased expansion to a larger advertising market with more and more content of interest. Televised events, shows, and news were what TV station and network owners found, created, and bought in order to compete for that interest. Wrestling. Boxing. Comedy. Drama. Ets. And this is still the model of TV advertising today, but we have seen the power of the “big three” networks erode greatly from the proliferation of channels and options via cable and satellite. Whole channels are dedicated to compulsive shoppers, while other whole channels are dedicated to specific content. Even Oprah has now moved

to her own channel on cable/satellite rather than a syndicated TV show.

And social media has not had that drawn-out evolution, but has instead been “interest-driven” from birth, with the earliest content being pictures of friends and family, and then music. And, to be even clearer, there is NO channel limit on Facebook, for example—it’s already several hundred million people (channels) strong. Each is a channel in a social setting; each is a choice to watch or not watch.

So, how do we advertise on this new media? A dealership with 15,000 “followers” or “friends” seems powerful, but who watches it? Is that even important? Or if it is important then how important is it?

Simply put, we must advertise smartly and adapt to this media. “Followers” is not the right measure, at least not alone. And we must understand that long-cycle purchases like car sales are a market enabler to the real fruit of short-cycle fixed ops. Social media advertising for consumables and short-cycle purchases is far easier than aiming to keep interest to your dealership to the 3-5% of “in-market” vehicle shoppers: EVERYONE who owns a vehicle must spend some money to maintain it, and those that work inside that maintenance need are the ones at the top of the “interest chain” when the owner moves from maintenance to new vehicle purchase.

We watch TV for the content and put up with commercials. Shoppers on social media today have the strongest remote control, DVR, and selection power they’ve ever had. Social media is about making ourselves interesting with interesting content, and then applying that interest towards a real relationship with our customers. People will

“watch” us on social media and put up with our commercials, just as they have for years on TV.

So, the formula for social media advertising is to beguile the consumer with content they will find continually interesting, all while weaving in short-cycle purchase advertising that seeds a relationship that can cultivate the long-cycle purchases. Essentially, we must plan to gain and maintain interest over years or we will not successfully sell to the most people. Just remember, if shoppers don’t “opt-in” (or they do opt-in and then ignore you—and you won’t even know!), you can’t reach them, regardless.

Just don’t start thinking that your social media audience will think your inventory or your vehicle sales are the content and your commercials are your community involvement or the cute dog your mechanics adopted in the back. It’s just the opposite, and TV teaches us that. Really, if we think about it, it taught us this lesson long, long ago. Just don’t forget it in social media.

Now, do you have that cool wrestling video to pass on to your Facebook news feed? It’s time for that, and maybe for an oil change, too. And, one day, a new car . . .

Keith Shetterly is currently an independent automotive consultant on assignment with a large dealer group in Houston, Texas. Keith has been eCommerce Director for a 14-franchise three-location dealership group, was before that a very successful BDC Director and Internet Sales Manager, and he is now also the Editor of Coordinated Marketing for the largest dealer, vendor, and automotive professionals website <http://www.AutomotiveDigitalMarketing.co>

m/. Keith also held a session "Internet Alchemy: Turning LEADS into Gold" at Brian Pasch's Automotive Marketing Bootcamp in Orlando, Florida, in April 2011 and is participating in the current PCG Pitstop Bootcamp Roadshow this summer. He can be reached at keithshetterly@gmail.com. Also, follow Keith on Twitter @keithshetterly.



"Search is about figuring out what people are looking for when they enter keywords into their favorite search engine. Social media is what people are actually saying to each other; they're telling us what they're looking for. We, as marketers, should be able to fit it all together pretty nicely." Norm

Elrod



Socially Unacceptable

Why You Don't Want To Sell Your Friends, Family and Followers

By: AJ Maida

It's known in the industry that I believe that in a



short time, 5 years are so, we will not have dealership websites/Dealer.com, Tk and Dealerskins just left. My belief is that we will have social media,

an inventory listing page and the OEMS website. So we better get this Social media thing right. And the gorilla in the room is Facebook so I am going to mostly write about that site and in particular your wall. So what does it mean to be Socially Unacceptable? Being socially unacceptable is when the majority of the things you post on your walls are trying to sell cars. Now I'm not saying that we aren't on Social media to sell more cars, parts and service. I'm saying **the way** to sell more cars parts and service is by not trying to. I look at Facebook and twitter and most social marketing platforms as giant cocktail parties. It's "I know a guy who knows a guy" (or girl). When you go to a party do you stand there passing out your cards. Hi I'm A.J. and I sell Dodges and Jeeps. Want to buy one. No you hope that Mary tells Joe that she's looking to buy a new car and Joe says the host knows someone and introduces Mary to you. That is what your Facebook wall is. It is a place to entertain people. A place to meet people and let them know what you do. According to a survey conducted by Exact Target when people think of Facebook they think about

me not about marketing. Remember that Facebook is a two way conversation.

Do you think someone says to themselves "I need a car, I think I'll check out Facebook and Twitter to find links to inventory pages? Just because the app is free doesn't mean it belongs on your page. Measure and pick the ones that work, these are the ones you want.

Then there is posting the same thing over and over again. It doesn't have to be consecutive, though let me take a second here for our vendor friends who are rightfully promoting themselves across multiple social media sites. Do a little copy and paste. When you share from one space and push it to another, it comes up multiple times in that space ie: your Facebook page. It looks like your Mel Tillis, the stuttering country singer. Let me ask you this. You know that friend, the one you've known for twenty years and you know each other's, stories. He's brilliant; but when you meet new people he tells the same stories. Do you listen? What makes you think repeating the same thing over and over again is going to make someone listen? And don't get me wrong, I mean don't tell me the same thing tomorrow. I don't care enough for you to tell me on Monday that you just took in a beautiful BMW 5 series anyway and telling me Tuesday that you took in a like new 535 isn't going to fool me!!!

More people unlike a page because they feel they are being sold. Post something funny and humorous. Something that people will find interesting. Ask questions, throw up a riddle. Play a game. Talk about a community event or a new restaurant. We are trying to get people to, to use the new popular word, engage with us. What it means folks is try to get them into a conversation. And for the doorknobs sake in case god offends you, when you get the email that someone responded to your post or tweet hurry up and answer them back. Dress up your welcome page a little bit so people will want to like you. If you are technologically challenged like me then there are plenty of people out there that can help you, TK Carsites social, Tim Martells

Wikimotoive. I had Rob Hagan and David Johnson from next Gen Dealer help me. You can find them all on ADM, Driving Sales and Dealer Elite. Make sure you get your inventory onto one of your tabs. Again there are plenty of people doing this. Find someone to put your reviews on there, whether it be through an RSS feed or manually. Reviews I would say you can post onto your wall. 'Hey check out the kind words someone said about so and so!' Pictures or video testimonials of customers at delivery, yes post on your wall. I know it's hard to get the salesmen to ask, we have that problem, but it's important. Every survey, report, blog that I read says that you increase your engagement multiple fold when you use one of them in a post. Think about it we are a visual society.

Put up a service tip once a week. See if you can get someone from service to write something you can put into your notes or discussion pages and then **link** it to the wall. Do not put it directly on the wall, give people a choice. Charity events, whether in the community, by your dealership or that your employees are involved in, post them!!! Get the birthday list out of your CRM and post birthdays. When you are putting up people's names use the @sign and see if it links to their page.

BuddyMedia put together a comprehensive guide around Wall posting. Their data was taken from a sample size of 200 clients that they analyzed for a two week period in February of this year. They included the largest brands across a variety of niche topics, and paid close attention to the comment rate, 'Like' rate, and engagement rate. Here is some of the info they have to share.

When Should You Post:

Brands that posted outside of normal business hours had 20% higher engagement rates on their posts. As for the day of the week, Thursday and Friday seemed to garner the most engagement – but varied a lot depending on the industry.

What is the Best Post Length?

Posts 80 characters or LESS had, on average, a 27% higher engagement rate than posts with over 80 characters, yet accounted for only 19% of all posts.

Should You Shorten Your URL?

Engagement rates are three times higher for posts that used a full-length URL, as opposed to a URL shortener. The guess is that the brand indicators a user normally looks for are no longer apparent in these shortened URLs.

What are the Best Keywords?

When it comes to promotions – your best off using Event, Winner, Offer, New, and Win – not things like promotion, sweepstake, or coupon.








Should I ask a Question?

Wall posts with a question at the end had a 15% higher engagement rate than questions asked elsewhere in the post!

Where can I find stuff to post if I'm not posting about my cars you might ask. Go to events pages on your local chamber of commerce, newspaper site or a site like find local. Search through Digg or Technorati. I know this is going to sound funny but search the internet instead of just worrying about being found on it. It's a great tool you know?

A.J. Maida has been the director of digital marketing for Papa's Chrysler Dodge Jeep in New Britain, CT, since April, 2008. After 14 years at another Dodge dealership that has since gone out of business, A. J. started a flower delivery service that he kept for 12 years before selling it. A. J. stopped taking up's at that store after 4 years because of his repeat business. He got back into the business after jumping into a conversation about cars with strangers at a restaurant. Two days later he was on a plane going to the Nashville auction to buy used cars. He very quickly realized that the internet side was where to be. A. J. is constantly reading and learning about the business. He has been on the Internet

side for the past six years. He was the cover story in the December 2010 Digital Dealer magazine where Cliff Banks said "Maida has become one of those Internet guys who is a leader in the business whose perspective is a step or two ahead." He has presented at conferences and is a frequent contributor to many of the blog sites. A. J. is also a partner in Koji restaurant in New Haven, Ct.

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|---|--|---|--|
|  <p>www.info.it</p> |  |  |  |
|  <p>Relationship</p> | <p>Followers & Followings People who follow me and people I follow</p> | <p>Friends People with whom I'm in a one-to-one relationship</p> | <p>People People who follow contents I share with groups of them</p> |
|  <p>Sharing with specific groups of people</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>Lists Lists allow sharing contents with groups of friends</p> | <p>Circles Circles allow to set contents visible to groups of contacts</p> |
|  <p>Sharing tenet</p> | <p>My contents appear in the stream/news feed of people who follow me</p> | <p>My contents appear in the stream/news feed of my friends</p> | <p>My contents appear in the stream/news feed of those people who put me in their circles (or in the incoming group)</p> |
|  <p>Shared contents visibility</p> | <p>Open profile Everyone sees contents I share</p> <p>Private profile Only those people who follow me can see the contents I share</p> | <p>Contents can be shared with: Everyone, All my friends and their friends, All my friends, Lists of friends, Selected friends</p> | <p>Contents can be set visible to: Everyone, People in my circles and people in circles of those who are in mine ones, All my circles, Selected circles, Selected contacts</p> |
|  <p>Social graph</p> |  <p>1) A and C follow B, B only follows A 2) B only follows A</p> |  <p>1) A and B are friends 2) C and B are friends</p> |  <p>1) A sees contents that B shares with those in circle 1 2) C sees contents that B shares with those in circle 2 3) B sees contents that A shares with those in circle 3</p> |
|  <p>Contents I publish...</p> | <p>...will be visible to my followers!</p> | <p>...will be visible to my friends!</p> | <p>...will be set visible to recipients only if I'm in their circles!</p> |
|  <p>I will see...</p> | <p>...what the people I follow are publishing!</p> | <p>...what my friends are publishing!</p> | <p>...what those people who put me in a circle are publishing for that circle!</p> |
| <p>Created by Stefano Epifani (blog.stefanoepifani.it - twitter.com/stefanoepifani), Graphics by Claudia Mennini</p> | | | |

David's Top 5

5 Things An Auto Dealer Can Do Now To Succeed In Social Media Today

By: David Johnson

Each month I will be writing a top 5. To better



understand how I will be choosing the top 5 things an auto dealer can do now to succeed in social media today, I'd like to share with you my criteria for picking them:

- First, they have to be easily implemented, nothing too techy.
- Second, they must get results!

Let's get right into it then...

#1 Ask Your Customers To Leave Reviews

It should be a non-negotiable that every customer, both in service and sales, should be asked to leave a positive review on your Google Places page. Then, follow that up with an email that includes a link. Another idea would be to use the Google Places app on the iPhone or iPad to get your customers to leave a review before they leave the dealership. You can even incentivize it by telling your customers you will give them a free oil change for their next visit.

#2 Connect With Your Customers On Facebook

In his book *Endless Referrals*, Bob Burg states, "All things being equal, people will do business with, and refer business to, people they know, like, and trust."

If that's true, and I believe that it is, then we must continually strive to ensure that our customers, both in service and in sales, knows, likes and trust us. How do you do that though? I'll tell you this, it usually doesn't happen during the sale, it's what you do after that makes all the

difference. That's where Facebook comes in handy and the fact that over half of all the people in the US are a member. What that means is that over half of your customers will have one as well, and what that really means is that you have a way to become part of your customers online social graph. Bellow you will learn a simple, yet powerful way to connect with your customers on Facebook and at the same time, through the Law of Reciprocation, earn a testimonial and a recommendation.

1. First, have somebody take a picture of you, next to your customer, with both of you in front of their new ride. Ask your customer if it's okay if you tag them in it on Facebook. You're playing the odds here and the odds are pretty good that they have a Facebook page and the odds are even better that they will say yes to tagging them. For those of you that aren't familiar with tagging, what that means is you are putting a label on the picture you're uploading to Facebook, it will then link to your customers profile page and place the picture on their wall (their profile page).
2. If you can, connect with your customer while they are in the store, that way you can ensure that you have found their profile and not somebody else with the same name.
3. Tag them in the picture.
4. Go to the picture sitting on their wall and say something along the lines of, *"It was really great working with you. I really enjoyed the time we spent together buying your new Mustang, you are the reason why I enjoy what I do. Thank you for being one of my favorites!"*

Because of the Law Of Reciprocation, which states that we, as human beings, feel an obligation to repay an action with

a like action, your customer will return the favor and say something like, *"It was great working with you as well! We've never had such a positive buying experience in our entire lives!"*

Now take a look at what you have. There is a picture of you, your customer and their new car sitting on their Facebook wall for all of their friends to see. On top of their friends asking them questions about it they see the kind words that the said about you. Think about how powerful that is and the fact that one peer testimonial is worth two hundred traditional media impressions... that's one awesome testimonial!

5. Don't stop there. Go back to their page, thank them and say something along the lines of, *"As you know it's important to me that my customers feel comfortable enough with the way I treated them to send referrals my way. Let me ask you, do you feel comfortable enough, should the need ever arise, to refer somebody you know to come see me?"*

Of course their going to say yes and now you have both a testimonial and a recommendation AND all of their Facebook connections can see it! That's powerful stuff and 80% of the time it works just like that.

#3 Create Introduction Videos

Instead of just a picture and a quick bio about you and/or your staff on your website, consider video creation instead. It's a great way for people to see the real you. Don't be afraid to make it fun and exciting, talk about your likes and dislikes, how long you've been at the dealership and why you chose to work there over all the other dealerships in town. Also, a link to these videos should be in the signature line of all outbound emails, you will be surprised how often they will

be clicked on and they could be the reason why you are chosen over a competitor.

#4 Create A Social Media Policy

As the saying goes, an elephant never forgets, neither does the internet. Everything said, everything posted, every video created and image uploaded is there for the world to see. People are forming opinions about your dealership without ever having to be a customer, of course this could be good or bad, it just depends on the opinions being formed.

It's becoming increasingly more important to monitor your employees and how they interact on the internet. In a transparent world it's easy to connect what a person says to where they work, that can be a problem if one of your employees lacks integrity, and is posting defamatory, pornographic, proprietary or libelous material about the dealership, employees, customers or even the competitors. In fact, they don't even have to mention anything that relates to the car business, but through association can have an impact on the public opinion about your dealership.

After careful research I put together the following policy to get you started creating your own social media policy. Keep in mind that I am not a lawyer and the following policy should only be used as guide and is not a stand-in for legal advice. I encourage you to take a look at it and draft your own policy.

Social media can be a powerful supplement to any marketing campaign, but it can be a double edge sword, use it wisely and make sure that you know what your employees are saying, it could be the different between positive word of mouth and negative word of mouth. As we all know, negative word of mouth can spread like wildfire and before you know it , it can engulf the whole dealership. Be vigilant.

[Download The Policy Here](#)

#5 Listen To What Is Being Said About You Online

Reputation management is the process of tracking a dealership's actions and the opinions of others about those actions. Why is that important though, what does it matter what others are saying?

In a recent study it was found that 1 peer recommendation, that is 1 person saying something about your dealership, is worth 200 traditional media impressions. That's 200 TV spots, 200 print ads, 200 radio commercials or a combination thereof. Think about that for a moment and how powerful one recommendation can be. In another study done by Nielson, they found that of all the thousands and thousands of ads we are bombarded with on a typical day, we only trust about 14% of them. The reason is simple, the ads that we are seeing, whether they are on a billboard or in a magazine are self-serving, that is they are created by the company themselves and as such we find it hard to believe the claims made therein. But if a review is seen about your dealership we automatically apply more weight to it because it was created by an impartial third party.

In fact, another study suggests that 70% of people trust the recommendations of people they don't know and 90% of those they do know. That's why it's so very important that you know what people are saying about you, so that you can influence more of the positive, while at the same time fixing the negative. While there are a few free alternatives, here are a few paid listening services that I recommend you look in to:

- UberVu.com
- BrandsEye.com
- Trakur.com

While there are others, these three give you a wide spectrum of features, and pricing, for you to choose from. From there, make sure that you

have a plan in place to react to what is being said about you online, both positive and negative.



"Social Media, it turns out, isn't about aggregating audiences so you can yell at them about the junk you want to sell. Social Media, in fact, is a basic human need, revealed digitally online. We want to be connected, to make a difference, to matter, to be missed. We want to belong, and yes, we want to be led."

Seth Godin



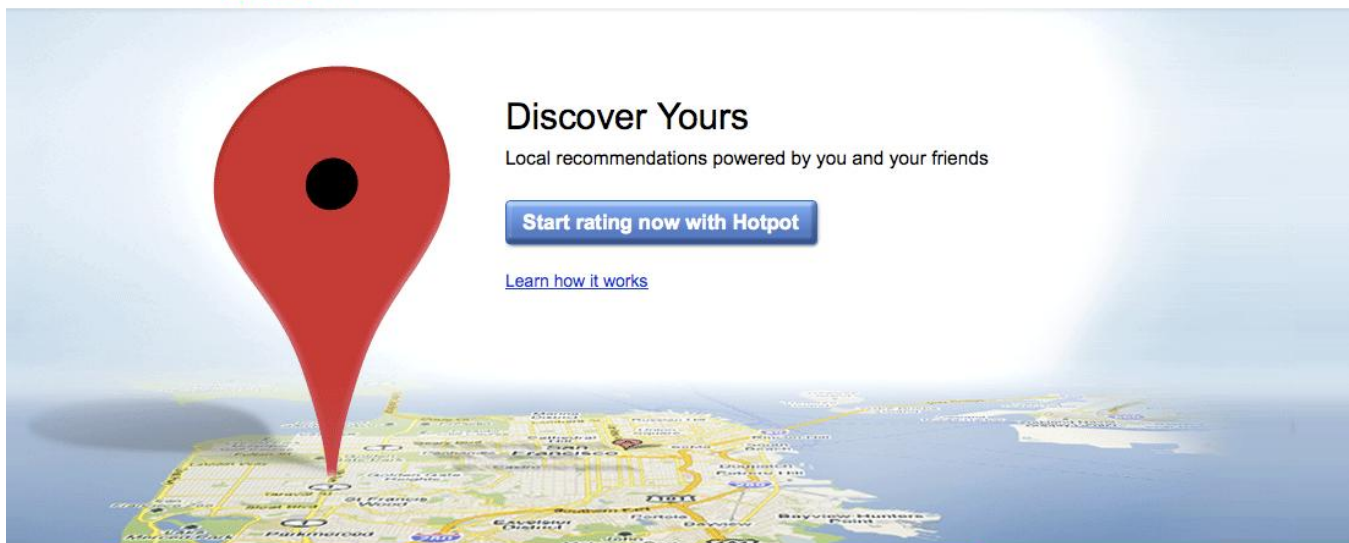
Have Your Google Reviews Been Decimated?

We have a way, without your customers needing a gmail account, to feed Google LEGIT customer testimonials. These reviews still have a star rating and will be included in the overall review account.

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