

Is There Any Gross in an Internet Deal?

Lasting Perceptions

One of the fundamental challenges in convincing dealers to pursue an aggressive Internet strategy is addressing the old perception that Internet deals are low gross or no gross deals. Some of this belief is perpetuated by the fact that early on dealers were serving customers who were early adopters to the Internet and sought out the best possible deals online. In addition, to some dealers this meant at or below invoice deals on some of their best merchandise that put a bad taste in their mouth for the Internet. Unfortunately, the training events where this information was communicated may have been the last ones attended by the dealer or their management team. As a result, that lasting perception in the dealers mind is not accurate in today's Internet marketplace.

Today's Internet Marketplace

Today nearly everyone who is interested in a vehicle uses the Internet to do research and an increasing amount is submitting requests for quotes. This broader demographic means we are working with customers who still have low price as an objective but more and more of the online requests are focused on ease and convenience. Shopping online is a big time saver and they can filter out dealerships much easier than having to call or visit just by the dealer information online. As a result, when they finally get brave enough to submit a request for a quote or other information they are increasingly focused on the experience more than the price. No doubt price is still an important criterion but when the customer is handled in a professional manner it becomes less critical when compared to the level of service they receive.

Leading Internet Dealers Experience

Because of the changing marketplace leading Internet dealers have adopted an "experienced focused process" that motivates online prospects to consider their dealership based on the level of service instead of the price. This new focus concentrates the effort on selling the appointment with the early telephone and email interaction and less on offering an immediate price to persuade the prospect to visit the dealership. By concentrating the efforts on the appointment dealers are bringing in higher volumes of prospects who have never even received a price prior to the visit. They do this by strict utilization of scripting and effective email templates. This is the reason why call centers and BDC's are so effective in bringing in showroom visitors. For the price aggressive customers that are outside the handling skills of the call center person or Internet specialist they typically implement an escalation process that gets the manager involved to talk to those customers. This allows an experienced person to work with the customer and address the price, trade or financing concern while still focusing the outcome of the call on the setting an appointment.

The Keys to Achieving Gross on Internet Deals



In working with dealers across the country that utilize an effective Internet sales process it turns out there are a few key methods to achieving a gross near or equal to offline.

- An auto response with a description of your Internet Sales Process
- A quick phone call to review the request, discuss options and set an appointment
 - Use the initial contact call to explain your process and how the visit to the dealership will allow them to test drive, get their trade appraised and to gather all the price, trade value and financing details
- Escalate the price, trade and financing aggressive customers to a manager if the call specialist is unable to address the issue and still gain an appointment
- Focus on selling the appointment and save the vehicle selling for the showroom

Normalizing the Process

By following the advice of leading dealers and focusing on creating an in-dealership experience worth bragging about you will bring Internet visitors to your showroom. Once they are in the showroom your normal selling process will allow you to make a good gross and gain a satisfied customer.

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