



Dealer Controlled Marketing Services

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DEALER SPOTLIGHT



How do you structure your Internet department to maximize resources?

With the way the economy is we've recently changed our setup. We had a BDC but now pass all the Internet leads out to our top salespeople. With the Internet becoming such a big part of our business we've also started paying for digital advertising and stopped paying for third party leads. Of course, we still get our FordDirect leads. That's our best source of leads and I'd say we close about 65% of FordDirect leads. We'd be dead in the water without those. But it doesn't matter where the leads come from it's the time from first contact that's important. You've got to get back to them within 30 minutes. I was always a big supporter of using templates, complete sentences and such, but I have to tell you, with the new mobile phones and messaging, a short quick text gets the highest response. And whoever gets to the customer first usually gets the business.

– Daniel Maselli, Internet Manager
Will Tiesiera Ford Mercury, Tulare, CA

I handle all of the Internet leads and use a database program that automatically sets up when to make the next call and when to send the next email, to help you keep track of your customers. I'll work with my manager on any leads that require a price. I try to get back with customers within five minutes and will keep them in my database for 90 days. After that leads go into what we call our Internet department database where they will get a newsletter every month. It's designed to be more helpful information tips than selling. Like last month we had articles about how to get your vehicle ready for spring. Sometimes we'll attach a service coupon or tell a customer about a new model when one comes out. It's basically designed to keep the Kindle name out there in front of our customers.

– Bonnie Vitola, Internet Director
Kindle Ford Lincoln Mercury, Cape May Court House, NJ

We've actually started something new and it has worked great for us the last two months. I have been a one-person operation, but now I've started funneling leads to our various salespeople so everyone can help and start getting a piece of the pie. I make sure that everything is there for the customer, that the bottom line price is right the first time. We're not doing any negotiation at all. As a result we've actually doubled our sales in the Internet department in the last two months. I think it's important to maximize what you have and do as much as you can in-house and let everybody help. I'm making sure we have a consistent follow-up system and are following up with all our customers. And that's a huge thing because a customer might not be looking right now, but how you treat them now will determine if they come back to you or not when they are ready.

– Pam Kenney, Internet Sales Manager
Greene Ford, Gainesville, GA

We are a two-person staff and we handle all of the Internet leads that come in for both new and used vehicles. When we get a lead that asks for price we will go to the new or used vehicle sales manager and work with them. We try to call individuals that contact us immediately and we will continue to keep contacting them until they tell us they bought someplace else or ask us to stop contacting them. Really, we'll follow our leads for years. We do bulk emails for follow-up and some of the time we'll do real direct emails per customer and ask what they are looking for. We'll also do phone calls, sometime just to see how they are doing and if they are ready to trade or purchase.

– Donna Skaggs, Internet Sales Manager
Sellers-Sexton Ford Lincoln Mercury, St. Robert, MO

WHAT'S NEW AT FORDDIRECT

New Build & Price drives more leads

Enhancements to FordDirect's Build & Price application have doubled leads and inventory search volume. Build & Price 2.0 is driving 20,000 leads per month and 3,000 sales!



Build & Price delivers a state-of-the-art shopping experience that has consumers engaged and staying on the site longer. Processes have been simplified and streamlined to reduce customer drop-off to help generate incremental sales opportunities for you.

In its semi-annual Manufacturer Web Site Evaluation StudySM, J.D. Power and Associates cited our Build & Price 2.0 application as a best practice and example of innovation and creativity in meeting consumer's shopping needs on the web. J.D. Power cited ease of use of the payment calculator, integration of monthly payments on option features, and display of inventory on all pages as leading practices that differentiated Ford from the competition. It appears shoppers are happy with it too!

SEM Enrollments accelerate

From 0 to pushing 100, in just three months! Dealers are taking advantage of FordDirect's Search Engine Marketing Service to drive incremental traffic and leads to their dealership from search engines like Google. FordDirect's Search Engine Marketing Service buys key words that in-market customers are searching and coordinates with Tier I and Tier II search engine marketing efforts so your money isn't wasted on words that already drive leads to you. This service is proven to increase traffic and the number of phone and email leads you receive.

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(What's New at FordDirect continued...)

All FordDirect Search Engine Marketing services run on a month-to-month basis, with a total package price starting at just \$499.

For more information contact the FordDirect Dealer Assistance Center at 877-99-F-DIRECT.

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Ford Top Media Auto Brand

Vitruve, a social-media company, released its rankings of the most "social" automotive brands – the nameplates that generate the most buzz across social media channels. And the number 1 and 2 spots were Ford and Lincoln. "Brands like Ford are very much in the mainstream in terms of consumers wanting to see them thrive in this marketplace. They are very much Americana," said a Vitruve spokesperson. "They are well-positioned to continue to grow their social presence to reach, communicate and engage consumers to better understand their needs." Vitruve's Social Media Index tracked and measured brands' "chatter" across photo and video sharing sites, social networks like Facebook and MySpace, micro-blogs like Twitter, as well as the general blogosphere during the first quarter of 2009 to determine the rankings. Vitruve says the Social Media Index was designed to help companies understand where they rank in relation to competitive companies as well as determine how well they are using social media.

Your two showrooms work together

According to *WARD'S Dealer Business*, your electronic dealership is the key to getting customers into your real showroom. They say it's important to showcase your online inventory with detailed information, photos and even videos. Showcase all the vehicles in your inventory. Look at the information on your website as a customer, not as a dealer.

Common mistakes with Internet customers

Another story on *WARD'S Dealer Business*, says Dealers make four common mistakes with Internet customers: 1) Not tracking lead provider results to know the cost per sale, 2) Not reaching the customer by phone, 3) Selling on the phone instead of in the showroom, 4) Not updating website offers quickly. You can read the article at http://wardsdealer.com/interneteletter/auto_four_mistakes_dealers/.

Know what your traffic is doing

According to Mintel's 2008 Automotive Purchase Process Report, dealership websites rank just after manufacturer sites as the most important places to visit for automotive shoppers. But for effective marketing, it's important to know where customers are coming from when they visit you. Other things you should know: which web pages on your site are visited most frequently and what a shopper who has submitted a lead has done on your site.

COMMENT ON SUCCESS

A. C. Collins Ford, Pasadena, TX

What can a good Internet Sales Manager who understands the Business Development Center do for you? Well in the case of A. C. Collins Ford, they saw their ranking on the Ford E-Commerce Elite listing go from 179th place in January, to 123rd in mid-February, to 49th in March, and all the way up to 13th in April.



Shown left to right: Shari Evans, Jennifer Moreno and Amy Howard from the BDC department.

Marketing Director Shari Evans said, "Our ranking had plummeted for about eight months. So we brought in a new Internet Sales Manager, Jennifer Moreno in February because she understood the entire process – not just working leads. Along with some new salespeople she really started crunching down on 30-plus day old leads." Jennifer was quick to add, "If you want to have a successful Internet and BDC and increase sales, it's important to

have buy-in from everyone – salespeople, general manager and owner."

"There are a lot of old-school salespeople out there that are still trying to do it the old-fashioned way and it simply doesn't work with Internet leads. Our people understand the process and that's why we've seen an increase not only in our 30- and 60-day-old leads but current leads as well," said Shari. "You can't give up on a lead that's two weeks old. 30% of our sales last month were from leads 30 to 190 days old."

When it comes to leads, "FordDirect is our top and best quality lead provider," said Jennifer. "We've cut back on a lot of advertising and are focusing on the Internet," said Shari. "We also get leads from other 3rd party providers and our own site. But if you're going to pick any leads to follow 30 to 180 days, stay on top of the FordDirect leads because Jennifer and her team have proven you can bring them in."

A. C. Collins Ford also uses the Premier Customization Service to maintain their DealerConnection website. "It's really nominal the amount of money it cost to maintain that," said Shari. "There's really a lot you can take advantage of through that and it makes a big difference in the way your site looks."

"A positive attitude and everyone working together on the same page," is the advice from Jennifer. "It's also an education process,"

said Shari. "Salespeople have to be educated on the new way of doing things. We're also doing call reports to know who's doing follow-up and who's not so we know who to give leads to. Salespeople have to understand that BDC leads are the new 'up'."

A. C. COLLINS FORD INTERNET METRICS

Average Monthly FordDirect Leads 200 - 280

Average Closing Ratio 8 - 9%

Enrolled in FordDirect:

- New Vehicle Marketing Services
- Pre-Owned Vehicle Marketing Services
- Call Tracking
- Call Track-10
- DealerConnection Premier Customization Service

CONTACT US!

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