



# Dealer Controlled Marketing Services

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FordDirect • DealerDirect **Dealer**news

## DEALER SPOTLIGHT



What are you doing to target your existing customer database on an ongoing basis?

I'm putting together some of the social sites that are available and sending out broadcast emails to let our current database know that we're there, that we have current updates daily. We're trying to take advantage of all the free web marketing that is out there. We're also incorporating parts and service and finance specials as well. We've been doing it about two months and have seen pretty good returns.

– **CJ Heitz, Internet Sales Manager**  
Ramsey Ford Lincoln Mercury, Rising Sun, MD  
Ramsey Ford of Elkton, Elkton MD

Our CRM tool allows us to do equity pulls on our current database. So we can go in and select actual equity positions, say anywhere from \$1,000 to \$3,000 dollars worth of equity, and it will give us a list of calculated estimates of where customers may be in their current vehicle. From there we send out automated calls and mail pieces and do direct calls with our BDC to try and bring those people back in to upgrade them. We do it weekly and it seems to be paying off pretty well.

– **Walter Hill, General Sales Manager**  
Tipton Motors, Brownsville, TX

I suggest starting with what I call the "back bone" of the dealership. Most people in sales refer to it as the back end or service. 1) Link the Multi-Point Inspection Report Card to the sales department automatically. 2) Then, input customers onto the syncmyride.com site. If the car does not have SYNC put them on some sort of Internet based program ASAP. 3) Send them a valuable mail offer. 4) Reward them for every purchase. For existing customers you are trying to data mine: 1) If you have an email, use a call-to-action message. Nobody likes to read emails that don't do something for them. 2) If you don't have the email, call and get it. During your call update where they are in the trade cycle. Start the sales process. 3) If you don't have the phone number, mail a letter. The post office can run a CASS report on your data. Then update your data after you get the report.

– **John Zarlino, Internet Sales Manager**  
Bob-Boyd Lincoln-Mercury, Columbus, OH

What I'll do is make up a general flyer once a month or every two with specials and do a bulk email to everyone on our list. We're not doing anything heavily. We'll run a few ads every now and then in the local paper and on the radio. We don't usually do it all the time. What we usually do is let other dealerships advertise and when someone comes in asking about the advertisements they're putting out then we'll sell them from there. Basically we let the other dealerships advertise for us.

– **Deon Williams, Internet Sales Manager**  
Rayburn Ford Lincoln Mercury, Monticello, AR

We filter our leads to each salesman and I keep a tally of what customers they have for the week. I'll do a weekly email follow-up with specific details about the vehicle like the current rate or if there's a special. I also do a 30- and 90-day follow-up but not a 60 because I don't want to overload them with stuff. Being in a small town I want to keep my name in front of them but a lot of local people know us. I will go over and beyond with out-of-state leads where they don't know us. I send emails to service customers to get them back for service and every customer vehicle that has SYNC, I register them for us as their service Dealer instead of another local Dealer if they are from out of the area.

– **Brandon Small, Internet/BDC Manager**  
George Coleman Ford, Travelers Rest, SC

## WHAT'S NEW AT FORDDIRECT

### Let FordDirect help your 20 Group drive more sales

Is your 20 Group looking for ways to maximize profitability in these challenging times? Then join the growing number of 20 Groups that are inviting FordDirect to present at their meetings.

FordDirect will come and provide detailed metrics and specific actions that each dealership could take to increase their ROI for their FordDirect services. And there's absolutely no charge to you or your 20 Group for this service.

Currently, sales from FordDirect referrals represent 19.8 percent of total Ford and 16 percent of total Lincoln Mercury retail sales. And as our products and services continue to grow and represent a larger portion of your overall business, it just makes sense to make the most out of the tools that you are already using. (FordDirect New Vehicle Marketing Service has helped Dealers sell more than 1.64 million new vehicles. And your FordDirect managed DealerConnection websites average 2 million unique customer visitors every month to help you move the metal.)

If you have any question about FordDirect attending your next 20 Group meeting call 313-845-3269. But we suggest you do so quickly as spots for FordDirect's availability are filling up fast.

To put us on your meeting agenda, please contact your NADA or NCM moderator, or Kate Bullach, FordDirect Director of Communications, at 313-845-3269.

### Leverage video on your Premier Customization Website

For those Dealers enrolled in the DealerConnection Premier Customization Service, make sure you are fully utilizing the enhanced multimedia capabilities that will differentiate your website, engage the customer and drive more traffic to your dealership.

FordDirect continues to add new features to the Premier Customization Service and is currently updating the video gallery page. You can frame in video from YouTube, take advantage of our extensive video library of all makes and models, or post your own advertisements and videos.

For Dealers enrolled in FordDirect's Premier Customization Service, contact your account specialist now to activate your video gallery page! Also be sure to ask about are other recent enhancements, such as the new widescreen layouts and avatars. All these enhancements are included at no additional charge.

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

For Dealers not enrolled, FordDirect's Premier Customization Service updates and customizes your DealerConnection website to provide a distinct look and enhanced functionality that will drive additional traffic to your dealership. At just \$399 per month, you will be provided an account specialist who will create a custom website at a fraction of the cost of most third-party providers. For a free trial of FordDirect's Premier Customization Service, call the FordDirect Dealer Assistance Center at 866-550-7812.

## INDUSTRY UPDATE

### Ford goes online with Fiesta

Print media such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Dealer Sales & Marketing* and *DMNews* have been covering Ford's use of social media to pre-launch the new Ford Fiesta. Under the plan 100 young, Web-savvy drivers will use the new Ford Fiesta for six months and post their impressions online on social media sites such as YouTube, Flickr and Twitter. For more information, go to [fiestamovement.com](http://fiestamovement.com).

### Do you Twitter? Here are some tips for using it as an online marketing tool

The *internet.com* ran an interesting article in March on how to use Twitter as a tool for online marketing. The article provides a nice primer on terms and setting up and using an account. The article will also direct you to resources so that you can learn and use the lingo correctly. Social media sites are a new way to market your products, promote your sales and boost your revenue. However, they also note that it should be done correctly and once you make the commitment, it should be for the long-term. You can read the entire article for yourself at <http://www.ecommerce-guide.com/solutions/advertising/article.php/3810796>

### Online ad spending making news

It's up, it's down, it's slowing, but it's all good. Internet advertising grew at a much slower pace than in previous years, but it was up 11% in 2008 to \$23.4 billion according to the Interactive Advertising Bureau and PricewaterhouseCoopers. According to the ZenithOptimedia Group, it is the only medium expected to grow in 2009. eMarketer predicts that the 2009 growth nearly 10% and continue to just over 15% by 2013. The reason for this eMarketer says, "Digital marketing offers compelling benefits; whether you're a cash-conscious company or not!"

### Online auto ads

According to the latest Ad Metrix from comScore, the auto industry had fewer online ad placements in January compared to the previous year. The provider of digital marketing intelligence also noted that auto manufacturers are devoting six times the amount of ad space they are buying to SUVs as opposed to hybrids or more fuel-efficient models. The report also noted that Ford was the top auto advertiser with the number of impressions, with almost 481 million.

## COMMENT ON SUCCESS

### Germain Ford, Columbus, OH

We've noted in this newsletter that some dealers are canceling their print ad budgets and putting that money in the Internet. One Ford dealership that has done just that is Germain Ford, as have all nine dealerships that are part of Germain Motor Company. Their network placed 6th on Ward's e-Dealer 100 list this year.



Internet Director Shaun Kniffin (l.) and General Manager Mitchell Gadd (r.).

Shaun Kniffin, Internet Director for Germain Motors said, "It's really a group effort that drives our success, starting at the top with the general manager down to the sales force and BDC reps."

In the 2008 listing, Germain Motors was 15th on the e-Dealer 100 list. Germain Ford General Manager Mitchell Gadd said, "We have a different philosophy than most Dealers who look at the Internet as a separate business. We send every bit of business to

our website. As a result, all our information is in our CRM tool for follow-up."

Shaun said, "Mitchell is a proponent of using technology. He made Germain Ford one of the first stores to use a digital marketing package that incorporates electronic postcards and video in our CRM process. He embraces new ideas like, 'Do we really need to advertise in the paper?' So in November, Germain Motor Company made a decision not to advertise in the paper any more."

"Proven results are probably the easiest reason to say why I did it," said Mitchell. "After we killed print our sales went up in all our stores in December." Shaun added, "As a result of the media shift we made more profit in Q1 this year than Q1 last year."

"When you look at our numbers you can tell we're driving traffic to our website and getting customers into our inventory," said Shaun.

One of the things that Germain Ford does to drive customers to the dealership is keeping their website up-to-date with FordDirect's DealerConnection Premier Customization Service. Shaun said, "Mitchell sent me something yesterday and within 30 minutes of receiving the information it was up on the website. That turnaround is phenomenal and means we can focus on marketing and selling. They work on the website so we don't have to mess with it."

As for advice, Mitchell said, "I'm surprised at the number of dealerships that still haven't embraced the Internet and all that it has to offer. Don't make your Internet department separate from the dealership. A customer shouldn't feel that they've been drop-kicked over to someone else when they come to the dealership."

#### GERMAIN FORD METRICS

DealerConnection Website Metrics	
Monthly Site Visitors	5,039
Average Time on Site	5:01
Enrolled in FordDirect:	
• New Vehicle Marketing Services	
• Pre-Owned Vehicle Marketing Services	
• Call Tracking	
• DealerConnection Premier Customization Service	

## CONTACT US!

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