Managing Your Online Reputation

QUICK AND EASY TIPS FOR SUCCESS WITH DEALER REVIEWS.
When Shoppers Speak, You Win.

Now that shoppers are actively turning to online reviews as part of their shopping process, it’s essential to provide them with this information while they are shopping. Sharing reviews of your dealership with a shopper who is actively engaged with your inventory will give them the confidence to take the next step with your store. Dealer Reviews gives them that opportunity.

Dealer Reviews are an important way to distinguish your store and set yourself apart from the competition.

The numbers are on your side. In a recent survey, 73% said they consulted online dealership reviews\(^1\), while 91% of consumers admit that they would use service department ratings and reviews when deciding from which dealership to buy a new car\(^2\).

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\(^1\)Yahoo!/Cobalt Dealer E-Business Study

\(^2\)DriverSide/Kelton Research study, April, 2011
Reviews Are Mostly Positive. Surprised?

Despite conventional wisdom that people will only take time out to write a bad review, the opposite is actually true. In our analysis of online dealership reviews across a number of sites, more than 80% were positive¹. Moreover, if customers have mostly negative things to say about your store, chances are good that it’s already hurting your business. With Dealer Reviews, you can identify problem areas and fix them.

¹Internal Reporting
Customers are Relying on Search Engines

When doing a search of dealerships in a given market, car shoppers will be more likely to visit a dealer who has reviews than one who doesn’t.

Drive Reviews Across Multiple Sites

Especially those that are indexed by Google, such as Cars.com.
Soliciting Reviews:

Getting Shoppers to Speak Up.

Tips for the best ways to seek out and encourage shoppers to provide reviews.
SOLICITING REVIEWS:

Getting Shoppers to Speak Up.

Launch a Kick-Off Campaign

• Perfect if you are just getting started, and don’t yet have many reviews of your store online.
• Use your CRM system to identify loyal customers and ask for their help.
• A simple email outreach program with a link to review sites can be a powerful tool.
SOLICITING REVIEWS:
Getting Shoppers to Speak Up.

Want Reviews? Just Ask

- The simple act of asking is the most important factor in driving review volume.
- Make it part of your closing process and your service experience.
- Telling shoppers that their feedback is important to you increases the positive nature of the experience.

Go Out of Your Way to Encourage Positive Reviews

- Always ask customers about their experience.
- For customers who haven’t been pleased, don’t let problems leave your store.
- Work to correct any issues before customers walk out the door.
Use Customer Experience Surveys

- Following any transaction, send a follow-up survey asking them to rate their experiences.
- Employ a simple rating scale about their experiences.
- Ask whether or not they would recommend your dealership to a friend.
- For positive reviews, be sure to include a direct call to action to review your store online.
SOLICITING REVIEWS:
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Make Dealer Reviews Part of Your Follow-up Process

- It’s simple to add a mention of Cars.com reviews into your current follow-up process.
- Whether by mail, email or phone, remind customers that their feedback is important to you.
- Provide links to review sites like Cars.com where they can submit a review.
- Cars.com offers email templates to use as a guide, with an electronic widget you can embed in emails to drive shoppers directly to your review submission page. (See page 24 for details.)
Emphasize Dealer Reviews Internally

- Start emphasizing Dealer Reviews during your daily or weekly meetings.
- Read the good ones and the bad ones. Make it a learning experience.
- Showcase the number of reviews your store has, and emphasize the need for more.
- Motivate staff. Praise positive review-getters.
- Some stores implement awards for incentive programs for top review-getters.
Put the Entire Team to Work

• Hold all employees accountable for delivering a positive experience and driving review volume.
• Engage your internet department, front desk, sales managers, F&I, service — everyone.
• The most successful stores make getting positive Dealer Reviews part of their culture.

Service Department Reviews Drive Sales, Too

• Make sure to ask service customers for feedback — they may become some of your most avid fans.
• Reviews will boost visits to your service department, and drives vehicle sales.
• 91% of new car shoppers want to see service reviews before purchasing a car¹.

¹DriverSide/Kelton Research study, April, 2011
Use Cars.com Campaign Materials

- Cars.com offers a variety of electronic materials to help you drive review volume.
- Use banners, buttons and emails to ask a simple question: “How did we do today?”
- Postcard templates that you can print, and electronic widgets that can be placed in email follow-ups or on your website, will help you build volume.

What These Materials Do

- Build consumer confidence in your store as you work to close the sale.
- Says to customers that you are committed to providing great customer service.
- Says that you are interested in their feedback for continual improvement.
- Says that you are transparent in your processes.
Display Reviews Prominently

- Shoppers who read reviews are more likely to go back and leave a review of their own.
- Display reviews at multiple points throughout the sales and service processes.
- Print out reviews, make them part of a “why-buy” book that customers can read in the store.

Talk Up Reviews in all Communications

- Look for any opportunity to get shoppers to read your reviews.
- Include links to reviews of your store in any email communications with potential buyers.
-Expose reviews on your website and in your advertising, both online and offline.
Managing Dealer Reviews.

After getting management buy-in and preparing your staff, establish a storewide process for monitoring, sharing and responding to reviews. Here are a few suggestions to use in your store.
Managing Dealer Reviews.

It’s Your Reputation. Monitor and Respond!

• Use automated tools, such as Cars.com’s MyDealerCenter™, to monitor what’s being said about your brand online.
• Dealer Reviews automatically alerts you every time a review is published.
• Respond to all online feedback about your store in a timely fashion.
Managing Dealer Reviews.

Responding to Negative Reviews
- Directly address the customer’s problem with an apology, and what you are doing to make it right.
- These acts of resolution can create loyal fans who often share their experiences with others.
- Use negative responses to fix potential problems before they can have a damaging impact on your reputation.

Overcome Negatives with More Positives
- Shoppers who read reviews look for trends.
- A host of new reviews that show improvement can quickly negate the impact of a few negatives.
Managing Dealer Reviews.

Don’t Fake It

• Tempting as this might be, resist the urge to fabricate reviews. Chances are your efforts will backfire.
• Consumers today are generally quite adept at sniffing out fake reviews.
Managing Dealer Reviews.

Don’t Offer Direct Incentives to Customers

- Diminishes the credibility of the review process.
- Makes customers feel they “owe” you a good review in exchange for the service provided.
Managing Dealer Reviews.

Let Shoppers Do Their Reviewing at Home

- Reviews submitted from your dealership location will trigger fraud suspicions and reviews will be blocked from publication on the site.
Moderation Tips.

An overview of what is and isn’t acceptable in reviews.
Moderation Tips.

Explanation of Program

- Dealer Reviews is a program by which consumers can rate and review and consequently share their recent dealership experience with other car shoppers.
- Reviews that contain personal insults, profanity, pricing details, or any other inappropriate or unlawful content will not be published. Reviews will not be rejected just because they are negative or strongly negative about the consumer’s experience at a dealership.
Price Reference

- If content in any way references a specific price of an automobile, or surrounding fees (destination fee, etc.); the review will likely be rejected.

- General references to a product being, for example, a “good value” or having a “great price” will be approved.
The Competition

- If a review contains the name of another dealership, the review will likely be rejected.
Foreign Languages

- If the content of the review doesn’t match expected language, the review will likely be rejected.
Put Shoppers’ Opinions to Work.

Get More Tools and Tips from Cars.com

You can learn more about amplifying your online reputation by accessing our complete reputation management toolkit for more tips and advice. Just visit dealers.cars.com/reviews to find:

- Tools and templates to engage customers
- Free online workshops
- Case studies
- FAQs
- Video trainings
- How-to articles