



# Selling Cars: Harnessing the Power of Social Media for Automotive Dealerships



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## ABSTRACT

Social media has continued to evolve since Facebook was made available to the public in 2006. Since that time platforms like Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram have continued to change the way in which we communicate with the world. Social media platforms have also changed in the way businesses communicate with their customers. Its also provided an opportunity for the voice of the customer to be heard by businesses and the rest of the world. Gone are the days where transactions between a business and customer happen in isolation. Social media platforms haver forever altered the way businesses market themselves and effectively created a 24/7/365 marketing cycle. It's imperative that automotive dealerships understand how to take advantage of social media, the importance of online reputation management, and the most effective and efficient ways to harness the power of social media to drive traffic to their dealerships.

## Introduction

The Automotive Advertising Agency is a multi-cultural, full-service, creative advertising agency that fully understands the importance of moving metal. Let us identify market growth opportunities for your dealership or LMA. We'll develop a comprehensive strategic marketing plan that is designed to help you sell your inventory. We've helped over over 133 tier 3 and tier 2 clients win big and can do the same for you. We bring to the table decades of combined experience in broadcast television, cable, radio, Spanish language media, internet marketing, brand development, public relations, digital media, SEO and advertising. Our creative team will craft a customized message that will enhance your market positioning and increase your profitability.





## Facebook

Facebook is the largest social network in the world with over 2 billion active users. It's too big for your auto dealership to ignore if for no other reason than your competition isn't. Facebook has three distinct tools that auto dealerships can utilize to drive traffic to their dealership and sell more cars.

### Pages

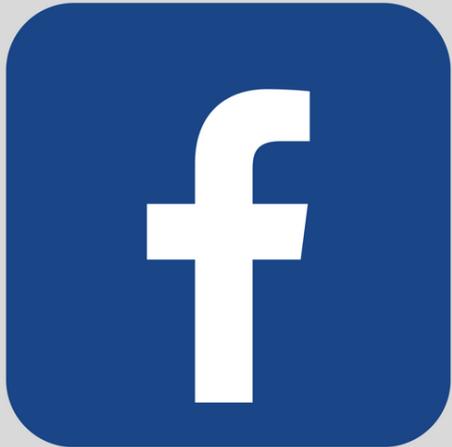
A Facebook page for a business is very similar to a profile page for an individual. Other users can "Like" a page, message a business through the Facebook page, and a customer can leave a review on a dealership's Facebook page.

Setting up a Facebook page for your dealership is the first step in taking advantage of this online marketing resource. It's free and simple to set up a page. There are even free tools like Canva that can size images and logos to the appropriate size for different graphics on a Facebook page. Canva can even be used to create eye-catching graphics for posting to Facebook.

The difficult part of having an effective Facebook page for your dealership is gaining traction. It's essential that the Facebook page get as many likes as possible. This increases the chances of users seeing and interacting with your posts.

### Ads

Facebook has turned into a pay for play ad platform. While it offers the ability to highly target a specific audience based on geographic area, age, education levels, and even the device being used to browse Facebook, this ability comes at a price. Targeted ads can be expensive and if not done properly can be ineffective.



**Accounts for  
1 in 5  
page views in the  
United States**



## Groups

A Facebook group is essentially an improved discussion forum of likeminded individuals. Groups can be created for individual industries, interests, and product offerings. These can be a great way for dealerships to contact potential customers. A Facebook group is free to set up but can be time consuming to maintain.

Now that you have good idea of the different types of opportunities available on Facebook let's go into more detail on how your auto dealership can make the most out of each opportunity.

## Make the Most of Your Facebook Page

The profile photo and cover image are essential visuals to a dealership's Facebook page. The profile photo should be your logo. The cover image offers a little more flexibility. It could be a photo of your dealership, employees, or professionally created artwork. Whatever you decide it's imperative to use a visual that will catch the users attention. The other element of a Facebook page is the "About" section. This is where you tell users exactly what you do and what you are all about as a dealership. Include your address, phone number, website address, and hours.

Your Facebook page is the place to host cool photos and videos that evoke emotions and give users a reason to follow your page. Great photos of your inventory can help consumers visualize what a vehicle is really like, imagine themselves driving that vehicle, and compel them to want to take a test drive. If done well, photos on your Facebook page can help sell vehicles. If done poorly, you could actually drive traffic away from your dealership.

New models make for great Facebook content. Tease the latest model and create buzz surrounding the its release. Make sure to collect emails from customers who want more information and stay updated on the actual release of the vehicle. A Google Alert can be set up for a particular make and model. When you receive new information that potential customers would find interesting make sure to share it on Facebook.

If your dealership's website doesn't currently have blog you strongly consider adding one. A blog that provides advice on the car buying experience, tips on vehicle maintenance, and hyper local content is a great way to provide useful information for potential customers. It's also a great way to enter these potential customers into the sales funnel.

Think about what information you can provide and issues drivers and members of your local community are facing. Write content that specifically addresses these issues and concerns. These blog posts make for engaging Facebook posts and can be used to drive traffic directly to your website.

Your Facebook page is also a place to make announcements specific to your dealership. This means employee recognition, dealership awards, community involvement, and customers with their new vehicles. This type of content makes your dealership more personable and a valued member of the community.

The news posted on your Facebook page doesn't always have to be specific to your dealership General auto industry news can sometimes be engaging and shows that your dealership has an interest and understanding of the auto industry. Auto enthusiasts are everywhere and can be some of your most avid fans. Own a Ford dealership? Mustang fans are passionate and well-connected. Same goes for Corvettes, Subarus, and Nissan Z cars. Chances are your make has a loyal following that you can mobilize using Facebook posts.

Facebook posts can be an appropriate medium for giving recommendations like "The Top 5 Vehicles for Family Road Trips" or "Most Fuel-Efficient Sedans." Differentiate your vehicles from others and recommend vehicles that potential customers may not have considered. Many times the vehicle shoppers start out wanting isn't the vehicle they end up purchasing.



## Facebook Ads

There are three different types of ads your dealership should be using on Facebook. When used in unison with the other types of ads, paid ads offer dealership a powerful tool in their marketing efforts. It does take some experience in optimizing each type of ad. Mistakes can provide a costly learning experience with limited traffic to your website and dealership.

### Local Awareness Ads

These types of ads effectively and efficiently reach a local audience within a set geographic area. A local awareness ad will only reach people within that geographic area. In-Market Targeting allows dealerships to serve ads to people based on their recent browsing history and ads they've clicked on. Interest Targeting is beneficial in that users can be targeted based on their likes and shares on Facebook, ads that they've clicked on, and pages they like.

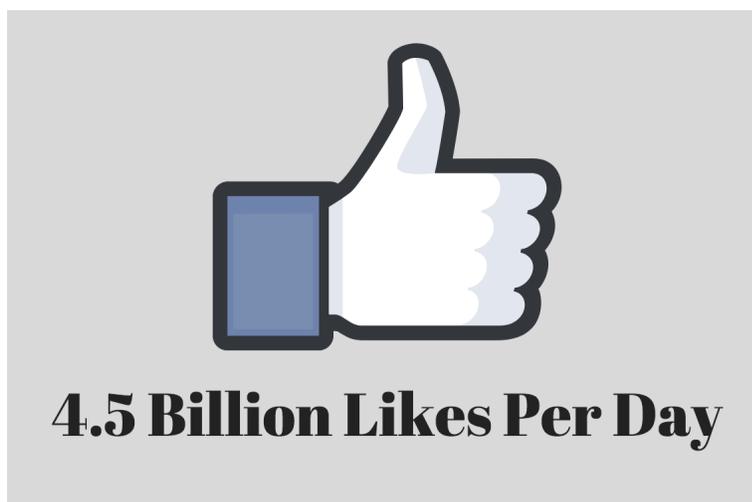
Imagine being able to communicate with potential customers that are currently at competitive dealerships or recently visited these dealerships. That's essentially what local awareness ads allow dealerships to do. Think about those people that are at a dealership to walk the lot or even getting service to their current vehicle. They all have their mobile devices at the ready and chances are they visit their Facebook feed at least once during that time. Now imagine your dealership's ad magically appears in their feed.

Make sure your offer is compelling by giving users a reason to not buy from the competition and at the very least visit your dealership. If your dealership is willing to run a "beat any deal" promotion this is perfect for a local awareness ad. What car shopper doesn't want the best deal? Chances are you will be able to quickly convince potential customers to visit your dealership before making a final purchase decision.

### Lead Generation Ads

These types of ads allow user contact information to be captured directly in Facebook. The creative is extremely important in lead generation ads. The offer is important as well so give users a reason to give their contact information. Service coupons, special offers on trade-ins, and low monthly payments are great offers for lead ads.

Once user information is collected your dealership needs to respond promptly and with relevant information. The contact information can also be included in a newsletter campaign, and vehicle or service offers.



## Dynamic Retargeting Ads

These ads are a great way to serve ads to potential customers who have already visited your dealership's website. The ads are a carousel of images of specific vehicles visited and the type of vehicles visited by the user on your website. As an example, if the user visited the VDP page of a Volkswagen Jetta then the ads would feature that specific Jetta as well as other Jetta vehicles available in your inventory.

Any Facebook advertising campaign should include dynamic retargeting ads. These are customers that are low in the sales funnel and have a strong intent to purchase a vehicle. Using these ads reinforces your dealership in the mind of the potential customer and should lead to additional sales for your dealership.

## Facebook Groups

Your most passionate owners and advocates for your brand reside in Facebook groups. They have self-identified themselves as wanting to be part of your brand. These can be very powerful allies in the world of marketing but your dealership has to understand how to properly draw these users into your marketing mix. As mentioned earlier, Mustang fan groups can be found across the nation. Why not reach out and offer to host a group meeting at your dealership? Pay attention to these groups and participate in the discussion. Take time to answer their questions and you will be looked at favorably among these hyperactive customers.

These types of groups don't necessarily have to be specific to the automotive industry. Many community groups are open to having meetings at different locations. This could be the perfect opportunity to showcase your dealership by inviting them to have a meeting at your dealership.

## Facebook Marketplace

Dealerships now have the opportunity to post used and certified used vehicles on Facebook's Marketplace. Your chat provider can also be connected to Marketplace, allowing visitors to contact your dealership immediately about a specific vehicle. This is a free way to further market your inventory on the largest social media platform in the world.

Facebook is a very powerful marketing tool for dealerships if used in the right way by seasoned professionals who know exactly how to create compelling content that is specifically optimized for the platform. The Automotive Advertising Agency has auto advertising professionals dedicated to using the best practices for activating advertising campaigns through social media. We have used Facebook to efficiently drive traffic to client dealerships around the United States and can do the same for you. Contact us today to put our exper



## Instagram

Instagram users are 58 times more likely to like, comment, or share a brand's post than Facebook users and 120 times more likely than Twitter users to like, retweet, or respond to a tweet. If your dealership isn't taking advantage of the over 500 million users on Instagram, you are missing out on the most personal and beautifully simplistic social network on mobile. By the way, mobile consumption of media passed online consumption in 2013 so your dealership definitely needs to be active on Instagram.

Like, share, and comment are all part of the social media marketing lexicon but how do you get people to actually respond to your content on social media and in particular on Instagram? What advantages does Instagram have over other social media platforms and what tools are available to improve your content on Instagram that will actually lead to sales? The Automotive Advertising Agency has developed this guide to answer these questions and to address topics concerning Instagram that you may not have known to ask.

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**58x** MORE LIKELY TO LIKE  
COMMENT, OR SHARE  
*Instagram posts compared to a post on Facebook*

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Let's first begin with a brief list of the pros and cons of Instagram:

### Pros

Easy to use on a mobile device. Instagram is made for mobile phones so everything is optimized for creating and viewing content while on the go.

Sight is the preferred method for most humans to gain knowledge and interact. Instagram is based on images which cater to this innate preference.

Instagram is new compared to other social media platforms and has a younger, millennial audience that is more open to interacting on mobile platforms.

The social network encourages interaction through more reasonable personal networks and limiting spam.

### Cons

Instagram offers limited messaging and interactions and offers no link sharing.

Despite the seemingly significant drawbacks, because of the visual nature of Instagram and that of selling cars, it's the must have social media platform for all dealerships.



# "The Cars We Drive Say A Lot About Us."

**Alexandra Paul**

While the star of the cult classic, Christine battled with a possessed 1958 Plymouth Fury in the movie she is right about cars. Good or bad the car we drive does indeed say a lot about us. The car we drive may not be indicative of the actual person we are but more of our aspirational self. The fact is that people don't drive cars to get from point A to point B. That view of an automobile is utilitarian whereas most people drive a car or would choose to drive a car that makes a visual statement. The current tagline for the Ford Mustang, "We All Drive. Some of us Roar" is a perfect example of what sells a car.

Making a visual statement is what Instagram does best and why your dealership needs to be there. You could use words to tell others how the aggressive styling of the Ford Mustang makes the Triple Yellow color scream as it goes down the road or you could show this picture:



Did you know there is a registry of yellow Ford Mustangs? There is and you would know if you were on Instagram.



Instagram has been on your radar or you have an account for your dealership but you aren't sure how to make the most of your social media efforts and you can't take as good of photos as the one above. We hear you and rest assured that most dealerships in the country don't have the resources to create these types of visuals either. Many OEMs post incredible professional photos that your dealership can use. Ford, as an example, is no exception. Take a look at this picture that got over 130K likes.



These types of aspirational Instagram posts are building equity with potential customers. You don't need to always be asking for the sell. Instead, social media guru Gary Vaynerchuk advocates in offering value to customers with useful content six or seven times before asking for the sell.

These are great photos but all your content can't be photos from the OEM. Dealerships have to put some local flair and personality behind their Instagram account. To do this you can use a simple post or what Instagram refers to as Stories. A story in Instagram is a short video or slideshow that is only available for 24 hours. This is great for specials that only people on Instagram will see giving them a reason to follow your dealership. Because the stories expire within 24 hours, stories also force people to act immediately to take advantage of the deal.

Stories are also a great way to show a product and walk prospective customers around a vehicle. Show the coolest features of the latest model that will get people's attention. It doesn't matter if they are in the market for a new automobile or not. It establishes your dealership and OEM as innovative and worth a follow.

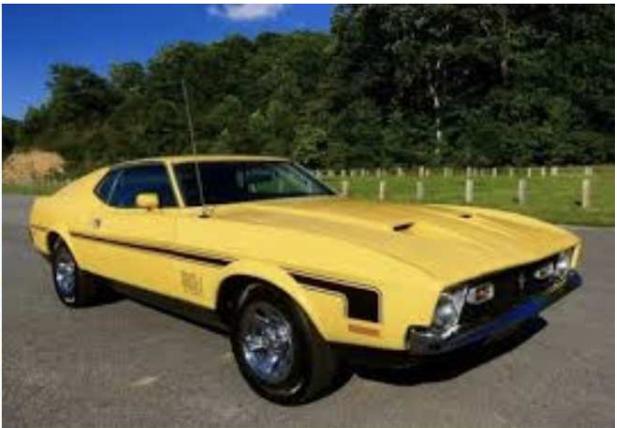


Salespeople can use Instagram to give a more personal side to your dealership. This puts a face to your dealership and if done well can begin to build a rapport with potential customers. Dealerships do a great deal of community service. If you don't, consider it, if for no other reason than the instagrammable moments that community outreach provides. Giving back to the community is never seen as a bad thing in the eyes of consumers.

Keep your Instagram account authentic by posting personal and local content. Posting about the local sports team, a holiday, or even the weather are all great ways to keep your Instagram account local as well.

Now that you understand the importance and a little bit of how to create content that your target audience will respond to it's important to understand how to get them to engage with your posts.

Ask a question is an easy way to get people to interact with your Instagram content. Staying with our Ford Mustang example, post the following four pictures of generations of Ford Mustangs and ask which is their favorite.



Another way to increase interaction with your Instagram post is using the right hashtags and mentioning other people in your post. The above post should use the #mustangfanclub #yellowmustang #yellowmustangregistry #yellowmustangs hashtags and reference the @worldwidestangs account in the post.

Being active on Instagram by liking and commenting on other posts is another way for your own posts and Instagram account to gain traction. Every time your Instagram account likes or comments on a post it creates a direct link back to your account. It also increases the likelihood that people will reciprocate by liking and commenting on your posts.

Hopefully by now you understand the importance of using Instagram for your auto dealership and have a general idea of what makes for good content. Social media, especially Instagram can be overwhelming. The Automotive Advertising Agency is a full-service advertising agency dedicated to the automotive dealership industry. We have helped many dealerships get the most out of their social media accounts and have the expertise to help your dealership do the same. Take a look at our latest case study and contact us today to see how we can drive sales to your dealership.



## **The Automotive Advertising Agency**



## Twitter

You can't do much in 280 characters to sell a car. Tweets are temporary and people rarely pay attention to them. It takes a lot of luck to get people to respond to your tweets so really Twitter is pretty much worthless for my dealership. These are all statements we've heard auto dealerships use in defending their decision to ignore Twitter to market their dealership.

Deciding to ignore Twitter is making the conscious decision to say to the world that the social media platform that was responsible for over \$700 million in automotive sales in 2013 isn't for me. You aren't alone in ignoring Twitter. A survey recently conducted in a webinar of auto dealerships revealed that 43% of dealerships don't use Twitter. Astounding numbers considering there are over 70 million active users on Twitter and they are 79% more likely to buy a car in the next four years compared to non-users.

Twitter uses are  
**79%**  
more likely to buy a new car in the  
next four years versus non-users.

Don't have your attention yet? Almost half of car buyers in the U.S. are on Twitter and over 35% of high-income households in the U.S. are active on Twitter. "I need a new car" is a pretty popular sentiment on Twitter. In fact, there are over 145,000 similar tweets every day. Twitter users exposed to lower funnel auto campaigns are 166% more likely to purchase that brand of car than the national baseline.

Does that change your mind? If not, it has probably encouraged your competition to start using Twitter if they weren't already. Unlike other social networks like Facebook and Instagram, people use Twitter to discover content outside their social circles. In fact, 40% of Twitter buyers say the platform made them aware of different vehicles



Imagine there was a resource of potential customers that self-identify themselves as being in the market for a new car and all of these people are within 15 miles of you. Sounds good and something your dealership would like to take advantage of. Now picture you communicating with these people individually. A direct line to potential customers to introduce them to your brand and your dealership. That's exactly what Twitter is for auto dealerships. A little-known fact is that you can actually serve video content have people visit your website without ever leaving Twitter.

That's right you can run an ad for a vehicle, allow people to shop on your website for that exact vehicle, schedule a test drive in less than it takes to get a cup of coffee. Amazing technology that you need to put to work for your dealership. Twitter is great for sales but its also great for service. The importance of using factory parts or getting an oil change at the dealership instead of a quick lube place is easy to do in 280 characters or less. Content that engages the consumer before and after the sale builds customer loyalty and brand equity for your dealership.

Now that you know your dealership needs to be on Twitter it's time to contact the Automotive Advertising Agency. We have experience generating revenue for our clients by using Twitter and other social media platforms to drive traffic to their dealerships. We can do the same for you.



## **The Automotive Advertising Agency**



## YouTube

If there was a way to reach and influence potential buyers more than television, newspapers, or magazines you'd want your dealership to take advantage of it. According to a study commissioned by Google, 69% of people who used YouTube during the car buying process were more influenced by the video they watched than television, radio, or newspapers. The same study found that 6 out of 10 people enter the car buying unsure of what car to purchase.

Car review videos on YouTube are viewed more than 3 million times annually and half of these were from a mobile device. Walk-through videos are particularly relevant early on in the buying process when consumers are trying to determine if a particular vehicle will meet their needs. Google has confirmed that the number of searches involving terms like "towing capacity," "trunk space," and even "panoramic sunroof" are all increasing.

### 3 MILLION CAR REVIEWS

Annual number of views car review videos get on YouTube

After a potential customer has viewed a video on a vehicle that they like their next thought is likely if they can afford the vehicle. This kind of questioning can be answered towards the end of the video in broad terms. The price and financing of a vehicle is fluid depending on many different variables including a person's credit. Discussing financing options including leasing without getting into specifics will keep the person viewing the video interested and more likely to visit your dealership.

Let's assume the potential car buyer has seen your video, is interested in the car and is now contemplating where to purchase the vehicle. The buyer is likely to use their mobile phone to search for the dealerships closest to them. If you are on the other side of the country it's very unlikely that person will ever walk through the doors of your dealership but what if the potential buyer is in the same city or even state as your dealership? There are things you can do in the video that will increase your chances of actually making a sale from your YouTube efforts.

Pick someone from your dealership that is good on camera, clean cut, speaks well, knowledgeable about the vehicle and a person the majority of viewers would relate to. The setting of your video is vital because it allows viewers to get an impression of your dealership. If you have a state-of-the-art service center or a newly remodeled immaculate showroom floor this makes for great backgrounds provided they can be adequately lit. These backgrounds will likely necessitate filming the video when the dealership is closed. If this isn't possible then look for a well-lit place within your dealership where noise, even from air-conditioning will not be an issue. If a place like this isn't available at your dealership consider renting a space for filming videos.



Fast forward to the potential buyer who saw your dealership's YouTube video has actually made their way to your dealership to see the vehicle in person. This isn't your typical visit to kick the tires but they are a serious buyer. Your sales staff shows them the vehicle they want. Their next thought is probably going to be if they are getting a good deal. It's likely they will visit another dealership in your area on their mobile phone while at your dealership to check price and availability.

This isn't necessarily a bad thing because they are likely going to do the same when they are at a competing dealership. There are ways to target customers that are visiting competing dealerships through social media. Not to mention all the dealership equity you built up by taking the time to create a really informative YouTube video. The salesperson in the video was knowledgeable, trustworthy, and someone that the potential customer is obviously interested in doing business with otherwise they wouldn't be at your dealership in the first place. Who knows what is going to happen at another dealership or what kind of salesperson they are going to get if they leave your dealership? The fear of the unknown is greater than the fear of not getting the lowest price. The YouTube viewer is driving home in a brand new vehicle from your dealership and all because you put a little time and effort into making a vehicle review video.

This is a simplistic view of the power of YouTube and if it were that easy then every dealership would do it. The truth is there are some cons to go along with all of the pros of YouTube videos.

## PROS

**SEO** - Google owns YouTube and so videos are a good way for your dealership to show up in search results.

**Eyeballs** - More than 1 billion users visit YouTube every month so the audience is waiting for your great vehicle videos.

**Low Cost** - Your videos on YouTube don't need to be cinematic quality. Most DSLR cameras that shoot video offer high enough resolution. A good mic for the salesperson will be under \$100. You also don't need the next J.J. Abrams to film these videos. A tripod is the only thing you need and the ability to push record.

## CONS

**Competing Brands** - It's possible that your competition can run ads or suggested plays before, during, and after your video.

**Limited Branding** - YouTube is limited in the amount of branding that is available for dealerships on the platform.

**Website** - If a user is watching the video on YouTube they aren't on your actual website watching it. It can be difficult to convert viewers from YouTube to your dealership website.

**Competing SEO** - It's possible that your video content on YouTube competes directly with content on your dealership website.



Understanding the nuances of YouTube and other social media platforms as they relate to car dealerships can be very difficult which is why you need a partner like The Automotive Advertising Agency. We are a full-service advertising agency specifically for the automotive industry. TAAA creates all types of content for our clients including radio and print ads, website graphics, banner ads, social media, reputation management, SEO, and SEM. Driving traffic to dealerships is what we do best. Need more sales? Contact us to see how we can help.



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# LinkedIn

LinkedIn targets professionals wanting to build their network, access knowledge, insights, and stay informed of the latest career opportunities. Recently, the social network has experienced unprecedented growth. These are a few facts on how engagement is booming on LinkedIn:

## Engagement on LinkedIn



This growth is great news for sales professionals like your dealership. Need more proof? According to LinkedIn:

**51%**

Increase in the possibility that salespeople will exceed their monthly sales goal if they use LinkedIn for social selling.



**3X**

Salespeople are three times more likely to exceed their annual sales quota if they use social selling on LinkedIn.



Launched in 2003, LinkedIn now has over 500 million professionals and 19 million companies using the social network. These numbers are compelling reasons why your dealership needs to be using LinkedIn to sell more cars each month but how do you get started? Taking a holistic approach to promoting your dealership on LinkedIn requires an optimal mix of an organic presence and boosting engagement through paid reach.

The first step in increasing sales on LinkedIn is enhancing your brand and content on your LinkedIn company page, showcase pages, and long-form posts. LinkedIn Slideshare is also a valuable free tool that builds brand awareness with your customers.

Your marketing objective will dictate the appropriate content strategy to use on LinkedIn.

Brand awareness is for those dealerships that need to get the word out and begin to engage potential customers on LinkedIn.

Thought leadership helps customers in their buyer's journey by providing how-to articles, automotive industry news, and trends.

Lead generation attracts potential buyers with both upper and lower funnel content.

This type of content includes whitepapers and case studies. Possible topics for content include the past, present, and future of automotive sales, the disruption of the auto industry presented by electric vehicles, and how technology is impacting the inner-connectivity within each vehicle and inter-connectivity between vehicles.

An ideal content strategy uses all three types of content. Trial and error gives advertisers the optimal mix.

Your dealership will have some content perform better organically than others. It's important to understand which organic content is performing better. This is the content to amplify using paid campaigns. LinkedIn offers different paid options for an advertiser. Sponsored Content in the LinkedIn feed, LinkedIn Sponsored InMail, Display Ads, and Text Ads are all ways to expand the reach of your organic content.

Sponsored content is LinkedIn's most versatile paid opportunity for dealerships. This allows your business to place content into the LinkedIn feed of your target audience. Sponsored content provides information and creates brand awareness for those high in the sales funnel and generates leads for potential customers lower in the sales funnel.



SponsoredInMail this helps to take your dealership messaging to a personal level. LinkedIn delivers a targeted, personalized message to the inbox of prospects. This may be challenging for dealerships to use because of the difficulty in determining who is in the market for a new vehicle based on their LinkedIn profile.

LinkedIn Display Ads gets your message to a targeted audience using visible Display Ads. LinkedIn's demand-side platform (DSP) or agency trading desk (ATD) helps your dealership tailor your audience to increase the effectiveness of your display ads.

LinkedIn Dynamic Ads these ads put the power of a users LinkedIn profile to work for you by taking the information contained within the user's LinkedIn profile and dynamically creating an ad based on this information. This highly engaging paid campaign is ideal for driving traffic to a dealership's website.

Compelling messages and great visuals make content stand out from the rest and increase the effectiveness of your organic and paid campaigns. It's important to A/B test different ideas and versions of campaign creative but here are a few tips from LinkedIn that have proven to be effective over time.

## 5 KEY ELEMENTS TO GREAT CONTENT

- 1 Statistics**  
Updates with statistics led to an increase in impressions by 162% and a 37% higher click-through-rate.
- 2 Call Out Your Audience**  
Including your target audience in your creative led to a 53% higher conversion rate and a 19% higher CTR
- 3 Image is Everything**  
Different images lead to different results. LinkedIn increased the CTR for one ad by 177% just by changing the ad's image.
- 4 Words Say a Lot**  
Is it a "guide" or an "eBook" and does it matter? LinkedIn found that "guide" increased CTR by 100%.
- 5 Say it With a Quote**  
An image with a quote realized a 30% increase in CTR versus the image without the quote.

Source



Most dealerships will make use of the Sponsored Content on LinkedIn so here are few tips to optimize your content to get the most out of your advertising efforts.

**Rich Media** - visuals are extremely important so use the best photos or graphics possible. The image size for Sponsored Content is 1200x627 with the text safe area 1000x586.

**Brief Messaging** - messaging should not be more than 150 characters. Great visuals do not need much text to get your point across. Get to the point and focus on why the target audience should click on the link.

**Statistics Do Well** - easy to digest statistics like “80% of Sponsored Content clicks are from mobile devices.” This happens to be true so optimize your content for mobile.

**Variety** - change things up a bit. All creative should not look the same. Avoid the fatigue of your target audience seeing the same old ad from the same old dealership. Different cars, different colors, different calls to action. Monitor what works and does not to promote the best content possible.

Using the LinkedIn Audience Network is imperative to make the most of your advertising spend on the platform. You can exclude categories, select mobile apps to target and sites where you do not want your ad. It takes some experience and understanding of organic and paid advertising on social media websites to successfully integrate LinkedIn into your outreach efforts.

Another effective tool on LinkedIn for automotive dealerships is Lead Generation Forms. Once again this takes experience to optimize the lead generation form to get the necessary information from the greatest number of leads possible.

LinkedIn Text Ads are a great opportunity to reach your target audience if you understand the nuances of this advertising medium. Most dealerships will not have someone on staff with the expertise to take full advantage of text ads on LinkedIn but here is an overview of maximizing text ads.

**Include an image** - use a bright and clear image of a business professional from your dealership. This makes your ad more appealing to prospective customers.

**Strong Call to Action** - all advertising needs a strong call to action to succeed. “Get More Information,” “Take the Wheel,” or something specific to the automotive industry or the particular vehicle would work as the CTA. Remember to call out your audience directly.

**Different Versions** - different pictures and different CTAs will help you understand what drives traffic to your website or dealership.



**Turn Off Low-Performing Ads** - track the different versions of your ads and turn off whichever ads are performing the poorest.

**Make Adjustments** - changing the targeting of the ads, raising bids, and making design changes to ads can have a significant impact on the results.

LinkedIn presents automotive dealerships with a largely untapped resource to attract new customers. With close to 550 million users, it is easy to see why LinkedIn is becoming a must in the world of advertising. It takes highly-competent professionals with a specific skill set to make the most of your dealership's marketing spend on LinkedIn. The Automotive Advertising Agency is a multi-cultural, full-service, creative advertising agency that understands the importance of moving metal. We have decades of experience in digital media and advertising. Our creative team will craft a customized message that will enhance your market positioning and increase your profitability. Let's talk and make big things happen.



## The Automotive Advertising Agency



## Reputation Management

It's possible that your most effective way of marketing your dealership and attracting new business isn't something you can buy. A dealership's online reputation can make or break a customer's decision to visit one dealership over another. In fact, a study recently found that 24% of car shoppers find online review sites to be most helpful in determining the best place to purchase their next car. Even more astounding is that 59% of auto shoppers choose a dealership based on their online reputation. Research firm Gartner believes that nearly 90% of the purchasing decision is based on customer experience.



Truly amazing that online reputation plays such an important role in the buying decision of car shoppers. Mobilizing a loyal customer base to write positive online reviews can give your dealership a sizable competitive advantage over other dealerships. Word of mouth referrals and online reviews aren't as easy traditional methods of advertising. Great reviews can't be bought but have to be earned and asked for. Considering that 95% of auto shoppers begin their search for their next vehicle online and it's easy to see why reputation management may be the best marketing opportunity for automotive dealerships.

Negative reviews or a lack of reviews can be detrimental to the financial success of a dealership in various ways. Fewer customers visiting the dealership means fewer sales, poor conversions of the people who do visit the dealership, and an overall poor brand image. It's easy to see how not properly managing reviews can lead to significant problems for a dealership so how can you properly manage your online reputation.



Create value for the customer and don't worry so much about the sale. Be helpful is more effective than slick sales tactics. The more helpful your dealership is to the customer the more value you have added to their shopping experience and the more likely they are to say positive things about you. Conversely, the more pressure and less empathy you show customers the more likely they are to have bad things to say about your dealership. One study found that customers that received a bad experience are 50% more likely to leave a negative review than customers that had a good experience leaving a positive review. This means that it's possible for negative reviews to increase at a higher rate than positive reviews if your dealership provides a poor experience for the customer. As a result, the negative reviews will be more likely displayed as part of your profile on Yelp, Google, and Facebook. A profile with negative reviews prominently displayed on a profile can almost be a death blow to a dealership's online reputation.

Now that you understand the importance of online reputation management and the possible negative implications associated with doing a bad job of managing dealership reviews you probably want to know the principles of achieving, promoting, and maintaining a positive online reputation. Dealerships that do well in online reputation management actively ask for reviews. Send the first request within 24 hours of the customer visiting your dealership. This means that your dealership could be responsible for sending hundreds of emails every month. Sounds like a lot of work but trust us it will be worth it in the end. The increase in reviews is likely to raise your number of positive reviews and overall star rating, both of which are vital to reputation management.

Getting reviews is only half the battle. Responding to them is the other half and is equally time-consuming if not more than getting the reviews. Successful dealerships respond to a minimum of 40% of reviews. Ideally, a dealership responds to every negative review and a majority of the positive reviews. How you say something is almost as important as what you say. Never belittle a customer or use a tone in your responses that could be considered condescending. This will only lead your dealership into an extended conversation of the poor customer service provided by your staff and serve as an example of that poor service for the rest of the world to read.

Dealerships also should actually analyze reviews for what we call sentiment analysis. Is a salesperson or someone in service being referred to constantly either positively or negatively in the reviews? If so take the appropriate corrective action if they are negative and reinforce the behavior if it's positive. Reviews are a great tool to address specific issues with customer service at your dealership. This feedback is free for the asking so make the effort to receive, read, and respond to as many online reviews as possible.

Online reputation management sounds like a daunting task and something you don't have the time or the manpower to do properly. We understand this at the Automotive Advertising Agency and is the reason why reputation management is one of the many services we provide to our dealerships around the country.

