

Tier Zero SPECIAL REPORT

Tier Zero...is it the Holy Grail of dealership advertising? The automotive manufacturers currently use tier one national TV advertising to support their brand, and then zone dealer groups spend in tier two TV, and finally on tier three, your own dealer TV dollars drive sales leads. This is the traditional marketing model for the industry.

But isn't it time to consider a higher tier of marketing? Why would we need this? Because today the very same national lead aggregators that are selling you inventory placement and sales leads are airing an estimated two hundred million dollars in national TV ads. The message being sold to consumers basically short-circuits the dealer shopping process. In other words they are drawing the sales leads to themselves instead of you.

Since you may be too busy to see many of these TV campaigns lets review a few quotes from some of the lead aggregator TV messages: "[We take] the anxiety out of the buying process", "Get a hassle free experience.", "Find out what others are paying for your new car.", "Confidence comes standard.", "I don't need to bring a dude with me"

These words make shopping at a car dealership sound terrifying. Is that the intent of these lead aggregators? How can a local dealer begin to even think about competing with six national companies and two hundred million dollars of TV ads basically intercepting the shopper?

Here's how. There are single point dealership and mega dealer groups using a new marketing model right now and the results are impressive. Increases in short term and long term lead counts, improvement in grosses, more spot deliveries, higher closing rates, increased brand market share within 120 days. These owners are seeing the future. The future is when dealers will be taking back their local market sales lead generation. Over the last ten years the amount of options for buyers to get car pricing and inventory locations has ballooned. NADA confirms that buyers are shopping approximately just one dealer before buying in many cases, down from five dealers just over a decade ago. That fact should give you pause. The question is how can dealership bring back the buyer "directly" to the dealership?

A solution is Tier Zero. Tier Zero is the marketing principal that proves that even in a situation where your dealership ads are not running nationally you can still take back your local market. How? By getting your message elevated, far above the lead aggregators, other dealerships, above even the tier two zone TV ads. With Tier Zero you can have your message reach more buyers first, and even reach them faster.

The first step to starting this process is to review your current sales stats and buying patters, your BDC web stats, BDC phone stats, buyer appointment times and days, and finally desk and delivery days and times. When you have this simple data you can begin to build a proper regional TV campaign that is timed perfectly for today's "on the move" buyer. When your message elevates above the competing "noise" you make your dealership a web and phone destination for a regional buyer. Your message should also make a promise of positive experience, but also offer compelling reasons to buy now and buy directly. Simply saying to a shopper: "You'll love buying here." is not enough today. You need to bring all of the relevant buying points into your message.

With a Tier Zero TV campaign you make finding your store simple, you make it easy, you take the fear out of approaching your dealership. You make buying a car fun again. And after all isn't that what the customer really wants anyway?

As published in Wards Dealer Business magazine June 2014. Adam Armbruster is a partner in the business growth firm Eckstein, Summers, Armbruster & Company located in Red Bank, New Jersey and can be reached at 941-928-7192.