

How to Measure Dealership Advertising Results

Many dealers report that all of the drastic changes in consumer media usage has caused them confusion about how to measure what works when it comes to ad campaigns.

You may have even already discovered that the old standby measurement tool, the customer survey, is becoming irrelevant due to the fact that your consumer is spending more and more time “virtually shopping” before “actually buying”.

In other words, by the time she finally comes in to your store, she may forget what advertisement media brought her there!

We already know that consumers begin “actual” car purchases by viewing the dealership web site...but we also know that something motivated them to visit that Web site in the first place.

Remember in the 1980's television ads generated immediate store visits, and then in the 1990's television ads generated phone calls? Well now television ads generate Web site hits. Today the consumer is beginning her shopping pattern virtually, before physically.

Try it yourself. Tell a female friend about a great new store and most likely the first question she will ask is “What's the Web site?”

So if you are still asking current customers the question: “How did you hear of us?” expect confusion when you sit down to go over the final research data.

Today you need to design new measurement metrics. Here are the best metrics for measurement as reported by a mixture of our dealer associates:

1. Organic (Non-Sourced or also called Non-Searched) Web site hits
2. Overall Web Site traffic volume during TV Ad Flights.
3. Click Through Rates of linked television station Web site ads.
4. Positive / Negative Relationships of Incoming Phone Calls to Television Ad Flights
5. Closing/Conversion Ratios of Television Leads generated
6. Gross Sales during Television Ad Flights
7. Net Profitability during Television Ad Flights
8. Increase / Decrease in the usage of printed media run during TV Ad Flights

Did you notice that none of these measurement tools involve talking to actual customers?

Today, you need to design “measurability” into your television and internet message.

Your Web site address should always be the last thing the consumer sees and hears. Why? Because we already know that interested consumers will go to their computer next! Don't be passive and make consumers “Google” to find you since your competition will most likely show up on the first Google page as well.

Next your television flight needs to be planned around the consumer lifestyle patterns so that she can act immediately after seeing your commercial. An example of this is for a Honda dealership to run high levels of Early Morning news to reach Working Women so that she can see your television “Web Driver” message and then log on to your website at work that same morning.

In the end, campaign measurement is kind of a bad news / good news scenario. The bad news is that television campaigns have never been harder to measure with traditional methods, the good news is that better metrics have arrived that are much more accurate than customer surveys. Getting accurate feedback about your television campaign is crucial to a knowing what ad concepts and media plans are most effective. Today however, asking the consumer may be the worst place to start.

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