

HOW TO Gather, Close & Retain MORE AUTOMOTIVE LEADS *THAN YOU EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE*



THE AUTO DEALER'S COMPLETE GUIDE TO
LEAD GAINS AND CUSTOMER RETENTION

 AutoRaptor

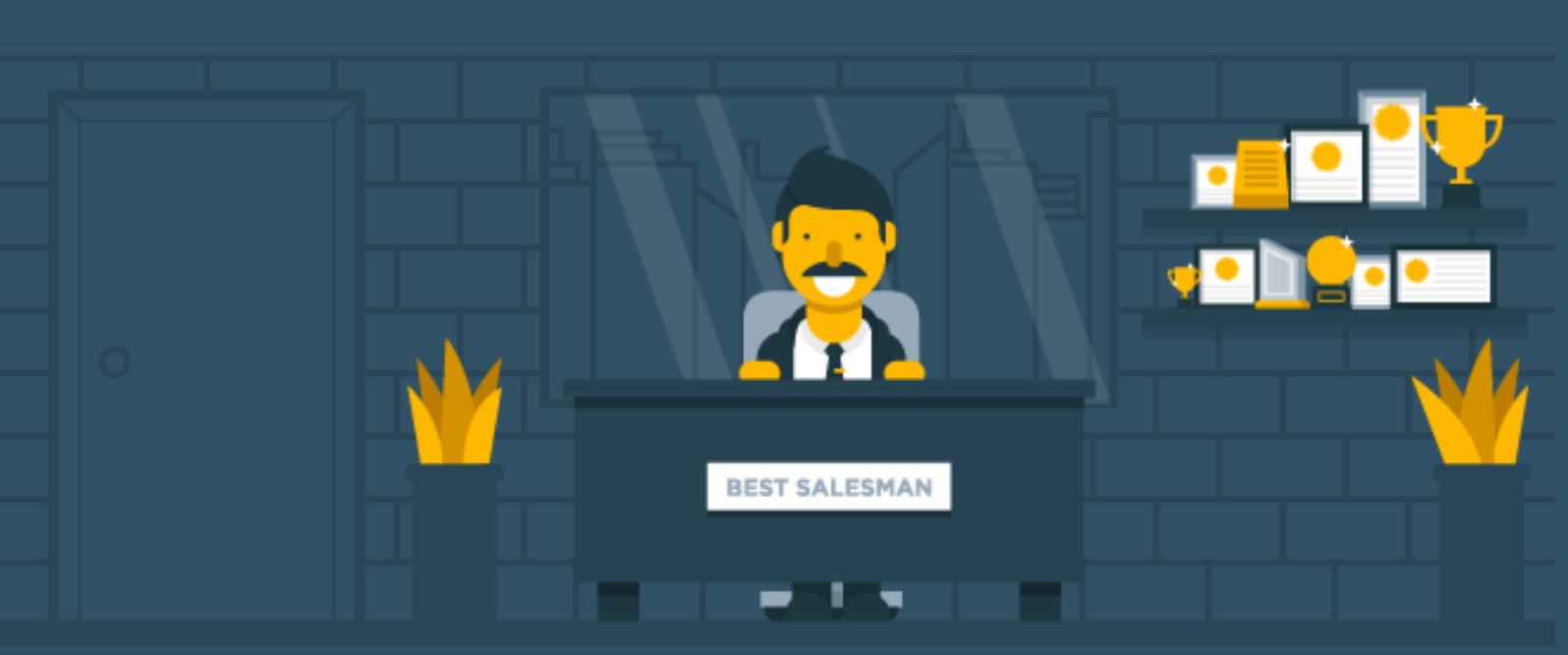


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FOR SALE

INTRODUCTION

Do you have a proven, time-tested strategy for getting leads in the door, and converting them into happy buyers on your showroom floor?

The great thing about the owning and working for a dealership is that everybody drives. People will always need a vehicle to get from point A to point B, and your job is to get them into the vehicle that makes them excited about the adventure.

Many aspects of the car business have changed, but one principle remains the same: quality leads are king. However, the source of quality leads is always changing. Car buyers do their research online now, they might "like" a photo of a car on Facebook before they set foot in your showroom, and they could schedule a test-drive online before you've ever had a chance to talk to them. Traditional marketing still has its place, but millennials seek engagement with your dealership long before they arrive, and are happy to fill out an online form for information. Meanwhile, all this online engagement makes it even easier for you to obtain leads, even if your methods for following up might need adjustment.

Here's what it comes down to: Your automotive lead generation strategy needs a refresher. In order to help you make adjustments on a regular basis and stay ahead of your competitors, we've created this guide to make sure you and your team have the best training possible. With the way the car business is evolving, it's more important than ever to stay on your toes.

Now, let's get started!



CHAPTER 1

HOW TO OVERFLOW YOUR CUP OF LEADS

How to attract more automotive leads from every source online, on the phone, and in person.

There is so much advice out there on how to help your sales team succeed. It can be really overwhelming, and sometimes discouraging. Lucky for you we have compiled some of the best tips into one great list. Are these tasks already part of your daily procedures? If so, that's great! If not, don't fret because it's never too late to make improvements. Investing your time, money, and energy into automotive lead generation is crucial to sales growth. There are numerous tips and tricks to try, and now is the time to get started. Diversify your marketing, reinforce your sales pipeline, and turn leads into customers at a higher rate.

1. Stick to the tried and true marketing basics

Regardless of the marketing strategy you use, there are three important basics to cover: a valuable offer, putting that offer in front of the right people, and giving them a reason to act. If you can instill those qualities into all of these tips, you'll have success generating qualified leads.

2. Make ten sales calls a day

Don't sit around and wait for the leads to come in. Your marketing team is doing their best to drive more traffic to the dealership, but your salespeople need to pitch in. Have them make ten calls every day for a week. Those combined 45 minutes of work could deliver you thousands of dollars in new business a month. Take control of your automotive lead generation!

3. Offer definitive content in exchange for email addresses

Creating something for free, or a "freemium" to give away on your website creates leads and builds your email lists. While this has worked in the past, it's getting harder to catch interest for your content. Create something that offers a "definitive" answer to your prospect's questions. They will never need to read, study, or research the topic again. Make the content engaging, thought-out, and well-written.

4. Re-engage your lost prospects

Every dealership has promising leads that dropped off the map. They came into the dealership, checked out the inventory, showed interest, but then left and never came back. Get in contact with these people through email or a phone call. If you follow-up with a great offer, they (or someone they know) might be interested.

5. Create a mobile-responsive website

Automotive lead generation starts with a perfect website. It's the digital doorway to your car dealership, where most of your prospects will visit before getting in touch with a salesperson. Mobile readership is becoming the norm today. Make sure your website is fully responsive to mobile browsers and formatting. Without it, your dealership misses out on the web traffic it deserves.

6. Make virtual walk-through videos

High-quality video content drives engagement and shares. Hire a video specialist to create presentations of vehicles and promote them on your website, social media channels, and third-party websites.

7. Publish and promote SEO'd blog posts

Blogging is a useful tool for car dealerships. Publishing content on a consistent basis offers several benefits. It showcases your dealership as a resource for customers looking for information. A blog gives share-worthy content for readers to engage with over social media. It optimizes locally-targeted keywords to get in front of precise viewers.

8. Run a comprehensive PPC campaign

Driving targeted traffic to your website is an effective strategy for automotive lead generation. Use Google Ads, Facebook ads, Twitter, and more to advertise your offer. Make sure your marketing team has a quality copywriter, so you get the best ROI for your advertisements.

9. Re-vamp your referral program

The best leads are referrals. That has never changed, and never will. Invest your time and energy into building out a referral program that works. Giving your delighted customers (and you must delight them!) a reason to send over a referral will increase your bottom line sales. Renew your offers and give better incentives.

10. Cross-promote with local businesses and organizations

Exchanging promotions with local organizations helps spread the word about your dealership and keep it on top of people's minds. Find a few businesses or charities that are open to the idea of sponsorships and cross-promoting marketing material.

11. Use conversion architecture on your website

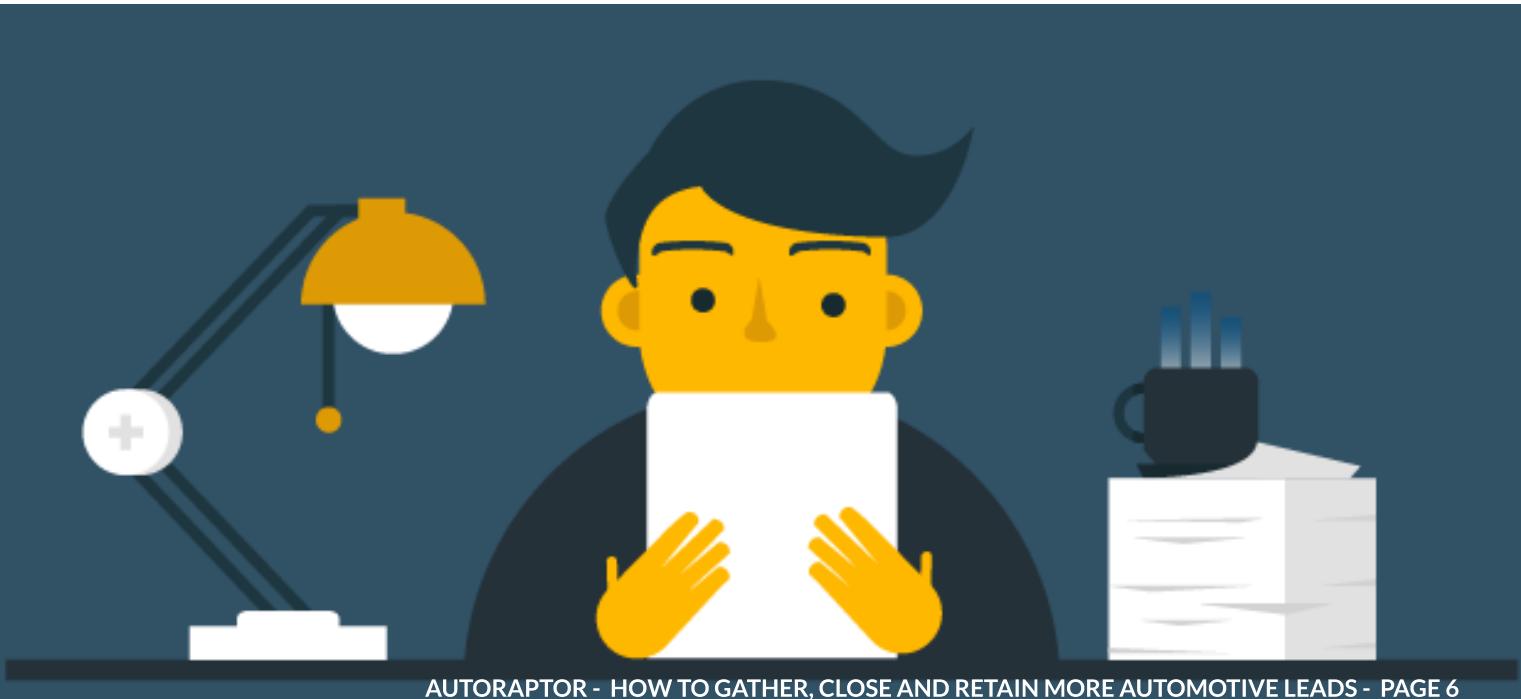
What's the point of driving web traffic to your site if you don't have a way to qualify and convert them into leads? Every page should have a simple way to contact the dealership, fill-out web forms, respond to promotions, and receive follow-ups from salespeople. Make it easy for prospects to get in touch.

12. Invest in a dealership-centric CRM tool

Give your salespeople the tools they need to follow-up with leads and keep track of their daily workflows. CRMs designed for car dealerships offer features tailored for those sales processes. They provide a central hub of communication for managers and salespeople so they can assign, follow-up, and connect with every lead.

13. Pick the best third-party sites for your inventory

You've used them many times before: AutoTrader, Cars.com, Edmunds, and several more. One of the issues many car dealers run into is listing in too many places. Figure what third-party sites deliver the best results and double-down on those sites. Increase your advertising, include better photographs and descriptions, and record your results.



14. Send out direct mailers with a strong incentive

Leaflets, brochures, and print letters with strong offers still work. If you know how to make print material stand out, there is a good chance to see a high return on investment (ROI). Make your print material stand out with attractive photos, well-written copy, and a call-to-action that gives the reader a reason to respond quickly.

15. Give customers plenty of opportunities to share with others

Make it easy for customers to share their experiences via social media. When you send out that congratulatory follow-up email after a purchase, include buttons for sharing on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Also include these share buttons on your website, blog posts, videos, and emails.

16. Hire a copywriter to give your offers an edge

Copywriting is a skill that professionals develop over years of practice. Don't assume that you can do what they do—hire an experienced freelancer to give your marketing material the edge it needs. Copywriters know how to appeal to the emotions, pain points, and interests of your audiences. They can help boost ROI on automotive lead generation projects above what was possible before.

17. Attract, entice, and engage your Facebook supporters

If you want Facebook and other social media channels to drive leads, you have to work extra hard to promote. Getting followers interested in your dealership means you have something valuable to offer them. Engage audiences with valuable content through blogging, videos, shared links, and opportunities to connect.

18. Make your pictures stand out

Vehicles are visual candy. You can write about them all you want, but it's the picture that will capture the attention of your prospects. Make sure your images are professionally done. The right angle, lighting, backdrop, color balance—these qualities make a difference for the visual experience.



19. Engage referral sources on LinkedIn

Salespeople have an opportunity to build relationships with customers on LinkedIn. It's a platform that makes it easy to network and get introduced to new people. A LinkedIn message is a good opportunity to turn your customers' into referral sources. Ask to be introduced to his or her network and offer something in return for their support.

20. Get listed in Google Places for local searches

Cover all the bases for getting listed on Google search results. Step one is to verify your business on Google Places. When someone types in "best car dealership near me," who will he find? Is it your dealership or the one down the street? Local SEO practices matter for car dealers.



Not sure where to start with all of this great advice?

We recommend that you bring up some of these topics at your next sales meeting. The only way to make these strategies work is to implement them. Make a checklist of any areas that can be improved, and make sure you do follow ups with your staff to make sure they are getting done. With the competitive nature of the car business, it's important to stay on top of the latest trends.



CHAPTER 2

ENGAGING LEADS LIKE A BOSS

Now that you have all these great leads, how can you figure out which ones will turn into successful deals?

Well first of all, you can stop sending boring, un-targeted email blasts to your entire database. You've been on the receiving end of those emails before.

Otherwise, you're pretty proud of your dealership's marketing and advertising efforts, right? You have that clever commercial running right now, targeted Facebook ads, a responsive design website, and you have a big holiday sale coming up soon. As far as attracting new customers goes, you're nailing it.

There's just one question, though: when's the last time you gave some real thought to your automotive customer retention strategies? Are you so fixated on new business that you're ignoring the customers you've already reeled in?

It's time to readjust your priorities. The general rule is that it costs 6 to 10 times more to acquire a new customer than it does to retain an existing one. Your existing customer base is 60-70% more likely to make a purchase, while only 5 to 20% of people will become new customers.



Loyal customers are the lifeblood of your dealership, so it's wise to spend quality time with your team to think strategically about how to keep those customers.



Improve customer retention strategies by figuring out who your customers are

What are you doing right now to retain customers? Do you mail out a quarterly dealership newsletter? Send occasional email blasts to your entire database about upcoming sales? The good news is that you're trying; the bad news is that you're not spending enough time on customizing your efforts to the customer.

Challenge yourself to think deeper about who your customers actually are. Create unique profiles for groups of people that exhibit similar qualities and send out targeted messages that address their individual needs. For example, here are four different profiles you could use in your strategy:

Loyal Larry

Loyal Larry is that guy who knows everyone in your dealership. He asks you how your mom is doing, will wave you down in the grocery store to say hello, and brings in all his friends and family members when they're in the market for a new vehicle. He's been coming to your dealership for years and values that relationship.

Trendy Tara

Trendy Tara bought her most recent vehicle from you, but that doesn't mean she'll be back again. She's really tuned into trends and the brands that other people are talking about. She has never bought the same vehicle make twice, and there's a good chance you'll be the next brand she leaves in the dust for the newest, coolest model.

Committed Clyde

Committed Clyde is the opposite of Trendy Tara. Clyde is a brand loyalist. He grew up with his dad driving a certain brand, and when he got his license, he went out and bought that brand as well. When his kids are old enough to drive, there's a good chance they're going to commit to the brand, too.

Local Linda

Local Linda buys from your dealership because it's convenient. You're located near her home or office, and it's just easier for her if she needs to pop in for a quick oil change. She's happy with your service, but if she moved or got a new job, you might never see her again because she hasn't really established any personal connection with your team.



Customize messages that will resonate with specific personas

Once you've identified your existing customer base and what's driving them (no pun intended), you need to figure out how to talk to them. Strong automotive customer retention strategies consider the customer's state of mind, what stage of life they're in, and how they prefer to be communicated with.

According to Omnichannel research, companies with multi-channel engagement have an 89% retention rate versus 33% for businesses without it. That means picking up the phone, sending e-mails, incorporating live chat onto your website, posting on social media, and texting customers are practices that everyone in your dealership needs to be comfortable with.

That doesn't mean all of those channels are going to work for every targeted group. Because Trendy Tara may be a bit younger and tech savvy, the best way to reach her could be via text and social media. However, Committed Clyde might be a bit older and respond well to personalized emails and phone calls. Think about that before reaching out to any existing customers or creating a drip campaign—you want to get the most bang for your buck and shouldn't waste time on communications that will get ignored or deleted.

In the end, customer retention in the automotive industry is all about creating a memorable, enjoyable experience. Pay attention to detail, show your customers that you care about them, prioritize exceptional service, and hopefully, you'll find those customers returning time and time again.



CHAPTER 3: MASTERING THE ART OF LEAD FOLLOW-UP

Okay, so far you have the leads and you've identified your customer. Now how do you make sure you are assigning them to the right salespeople?

Assigning leads is one of the core responsibilities of a sales manager. It's a task that takes a lot of finesse. You have to know the who, what, where, why, and how of every prospect that comes into the dealership. If you don't have a core set of lead assignment rules to govern the process, your salespeople won't make the most of the opportunities handed to them. There's one thing you need to be successful with lead assignment: rules. If you want to see better follow-up, you have to lay down a standard.

Rule #1: Only allow active players to take the field

When you allow sales reps to claim leads, you'll sometimes run into a tricky problem. Someone will sign into the CRM system and claim a lead when he isn't scheduled to work that day.

You can see how that would make follow-up less of a priority. He'll come into the dealership the next day and try to contact the leads he claimed while relaxing at home the day before. Guess what? Those leads are gone. They're probably already in the process of buying a car at another dealership.

Rule #2: Set a time limit on follow-up efforts

There is no better way to ensure proper follow-up than having a time limit on prospects. You're basically saying: "When I assign you a lead, follow-up within thirty minutes or it will be passed to the next person."

Of course, you have to make these lead assignment rules realistic and fair. You can't assign a lead to a sales rep in the middle of a test drive and expect them to follow-up right away. Make sure you give out leads to people who have the time to follow-up quickly.

Rule #3: Be fair, but don't be virtuous

Sometimes sales managers get caught up trying to please everyone. They'll have a hot lead come in and wait until the "next person in line" is available. There's nothing wrong with wanting to be fair, but don't let your virtues get the best of you. A lead is a lead—he needs attention by any means necessary. In other words, don't be afraid to skip over a salesperson for the sake of making a sale. You have to think of the dealership as a whole, as well as your individual salespeople.

Rule #4: Don't allow reps to overload themselves

Your salespeople need to be accountable for their workloads. If they keep on saying they're available for more leads, you'll keep piling on the work. Meanwhile, they're actually falling behind and letting quality leads slip away.

When you use a CRM system like AutoRaptor, your staff can update their statuses to "available" and "busy." This feature allows you to assign leads to the right people and keep everyone at a steady pace. Don't allow your staff to overload. Make it mandatory that they update their current status so you have a better idea of who is ready to follow-up and who isn't.

Rule #5: Require everyone to utilize the workflow steps in your CRM

You need a central communication device to keep the workflow on point. Everyone has their own way of doing things with customers and daily tasks. That's great—they should be able to work in the way that best suits their productivity.

When it comes to team communication, however, a CRM tool allows everyone to work within the established workflows. For instance, if you send a lead to a salesperson in the morning, you'll see updates in the CRM dashboard.

You never have to wonder if they forgot to follow-up. You don't need to check with them, and they say "Oh, I made the phone call hours ago. We have an appointment set up for tomorrow."

If you use a CRM all that information will be built into the workflow and easy for everyone to see.



Get feedback on your assignment rules and make adjustments with the team

Lead management is a team effort. You may have control of assigning prospects to your staff, but that doesn't mean your salespeople don't have opinions. Give everyone a chance to provide feedback on your lead assignment rules and make adjustments as you move along. Eventually, you'll reach a foolproof process and see your productivity (and sales) climb.



CHAPTER 4: RETAINING LIFELONG CUSTOMERS

There is nothing better than making a sale. Well, there may be one thing better, and that's repeat clients!

Client loyalty is a sign of a job well done, and earning a customer's respect is a surefire way to keep those sales coming in. A happy customer might want to come back for a vehicle for their spouse, child, or even make valuable recommendations to friends, family or co-workers. Here are some great tips for building customer loyalty.

Garnering brand loyalty begins and ends with a dedication to customer service excellence. For those who are looking to increase repeat business and build a referral base, we've put together our best car dealer tips for creating lifelong customers.

The reasons why consumers decide to stick with a particular brand or business go beyond the simple offerings of good pricing and incentives (although these are still important). Create a business ethos that focuses on customer service and maintaining long-term relationships for years to come. While you're working on it, try out these car dealer tips to see what works best for your company.

1. Offer complete leadership transparency

As the owner or general manager of a dealership, an effort should be made to connect with customers on a personal level. Staying behind the curtain is expected of higher level executives, but stepping out to speak with a customer one-on-one can make a big difference in how they perceive the business as a whole. Also, it makes your customers feel important, valued, and confident in their relationship with your dealership.

2. Develop loyalty incentives and reward programs

Many dealerships will offer a rewards program for their customers. Whether it be discounted pricing for immediate family members, free oil changes for life, special offerings for referrals, or incentives to trade-in, car dealers need to focus on coming up with unique packages for their customers. Delivering exceptional value will keep your client base growing and thriving over time.



3. Keep in contact long after the sale

Once the customer has driven off the lot in his new car, it's expected that the salesperson will contact the customer in a few weeks to ask about his experience. But, after those initial follow-ups, customers usually receive only promotional emails every once in awhile and an occasional friendly hello when they arrive at the service department. There is more to be done after the sale. Consistent social media interaction, quarterly check-ups, newsletters and more can help maintain a strong relationship.

4. Make the small stuff count

Customers take notice of the small details, especially when a dealership cares enough to take notice, too. For example, providing a waiting room space specifically for children to play is an excellent way to demonstrate dedication to service. There's nothing a parent loves more than bringing their children along for errands and discovering a productive way to keep their kids occupied. Try to brainstorm the needs of clients, however small you might think they are, and figure out ways to meet those needs in unique fashion.

5. Show that it's not all about the money

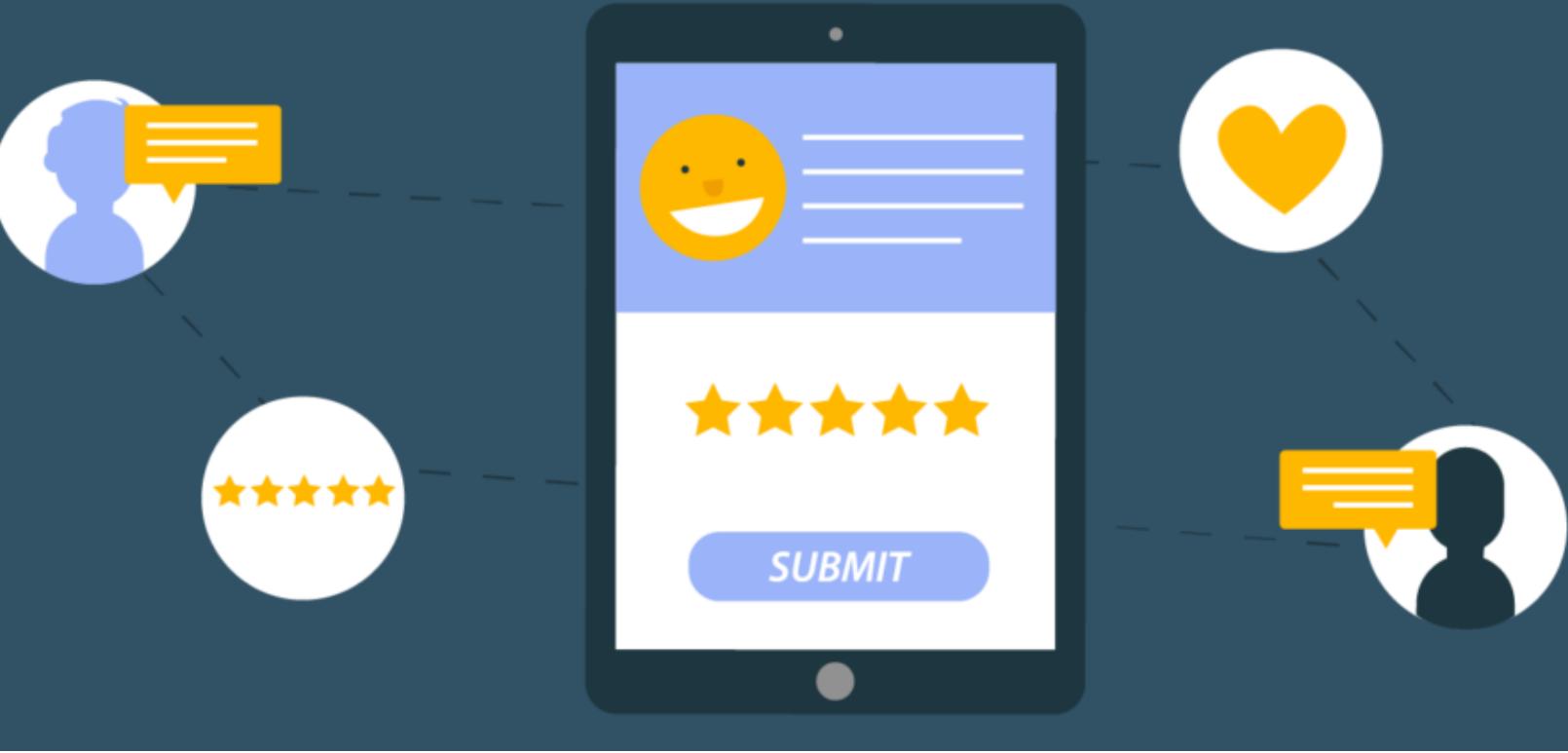
Consider developing a monthly newsletter filled with useful content and no promotional material. New customers can opt-in to receive the subscription, which can touch on hot topics like car maintenance tips, dealership events, and auto industry news.

6. Display timeliness of services and repairs

Your car service department should coordinate by delivering repairs or maintenance work on time. Also, these check-ins provide an excellent opportunity to show a little extra care by throwing in free tire rotations, fluid fill-ups, vacuuming, etc. You can also set up a reminder service, notifying your clients when an oil change is necessary.

7. Offer convenience and availability

Hours of operation should be optimized for customer convenience and ease of availability. List your staff members' information online so people can easily find and contact them with questions or concerns. Seek to make your dealership accessible for your customers. Keep an eye out for customer reviews online, and see if there are any patterns in complaints (or compliments!). If possible, address them online so that future prospects know you value your reputation and are willing to do anything to please customers.



8. Remember dates

Every customer enjoys being recognized by their friends and family during birthdays, anniversaries and special holidays. What about receiving a happy birthday from your car dealer? That one will usually take the cake, especially with a personalized note from the sales rep or general manager. Just remember: these courtesies can easily turn sour if filled with advertising or promotional content. Leave that stuff for later and focus on developing a good impression.

9. Provide cleanliness and friendliness

Having a clean and respectable office environment can make a big difference to a customer. The dealership should be presentable and each staff member focused on helping visitors find answers to questions. Seeing a coffee stain on the floor shows a lack of professionalism and attention to detail. Also, having a designated secretary to field any walk-ins and direct them to the right person is a nice touch.

10. Be active in your community

Demonstrating a commitment to the local community also communicates a broader sense of relationship building and business ethics. Customers living in the community are more apt to do business with dealerships that support local charities, school districts, and fundraisers.

Raise standards for service and your retention will raise, too

Overall, dealerships need to focus their energies towards creating an atmosphere of service excellence. Remember that quality customer care has more to do with depth than width -- the small things can make a big difference for long-term retention and lifelong business relationships. These car dealer tips can help to get you started in the right direction and to think outside the box regarding retention strategy.



CHAPTER 5: PUTTING IT ALL INTO ACTION

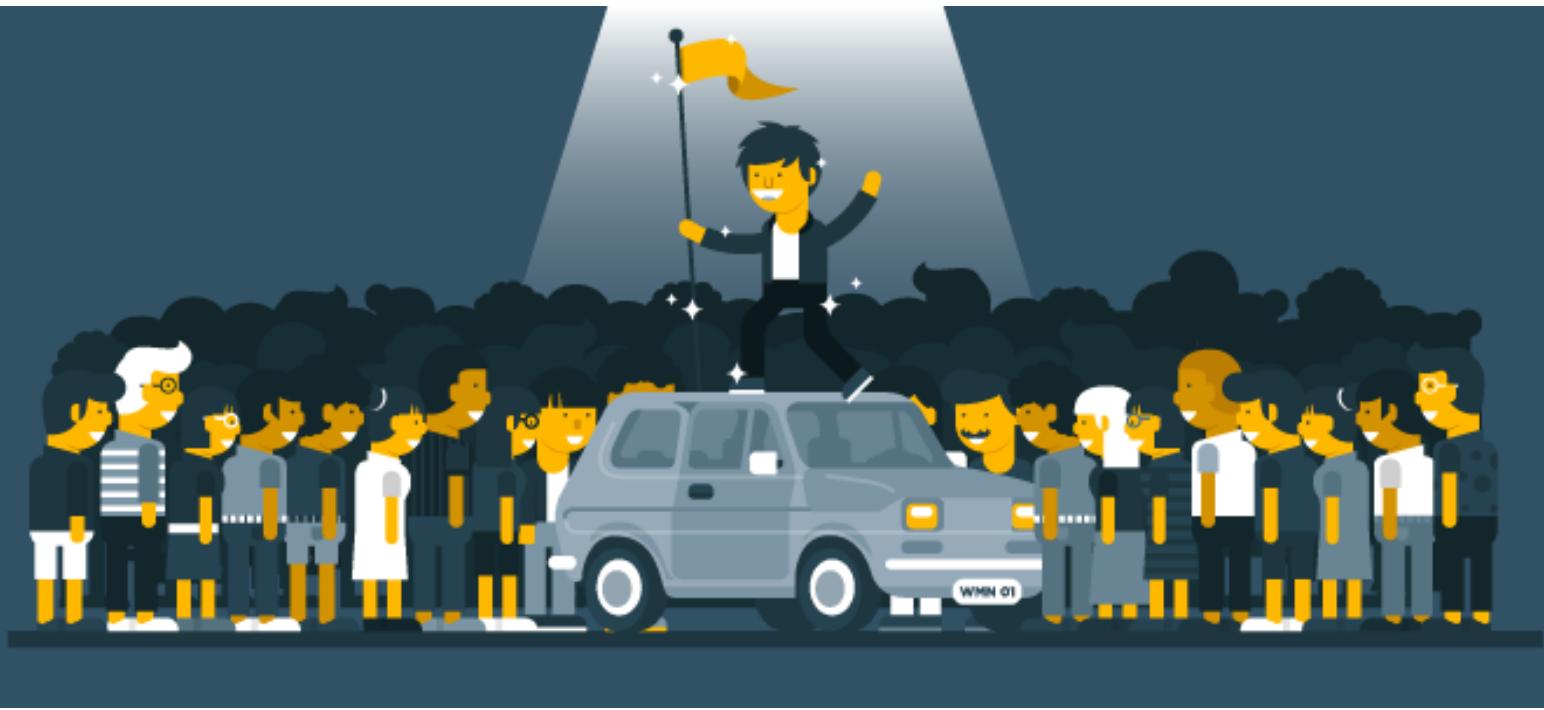
Now it's time to wrap things up and let you apply these strategies to your own dealership's routine.

Just remember the key issues we've covered and you will have no problems generating more leads, closing deals, and keeping happy, lifelong customers!

Just remember these important points:

- **The Internet is your best tool for lead generation.** Most of today's customers will search online before even thinking about contacting a dealer, so it's important to make your presence known online. You deserve to attract a portion of the 3.5 billion searches done every single day!
- **Make a checklist** out of our list of tips and tricks to present at your next sales meeting. Incorporate it into your procedures and watch the leads roll in! It's important to stay current with the ever-changing car business. Not everyone likes change, but this isn't the time to be stubborn. It's time to grab those leads before someone else does!
- **Get to know your client base** and greatly increase your chances of a closed deal! It may seem difficult to some, but it's a lot easier (and more profitable) to keep an existing client. Knowing your client's persona—and sending follow up that appeals to that particular persona—can really be a driving force to your success.

- **Follow-up is key** to sales success! Using CRM software can really help with this part. When your sales team is organized, they can stay focused on their monthly goals. Laying down some basic ground rules will keep your sales team focused and working together. You don't want your sales team working against each other, but together for the greater good of your dealership
- **Customer loyalty** is one of the best ways to make profitable sales. The relationship is established, and the trust is there, so you don't have to work as hard with existing clients as you would with a new one. Less time spent on relationship building leaves more time for car buying, and establishing good practices towards building lifelong customers is key for any successful salesperson.



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“ AutoRaptor has helped me in MANY ways. I am able to easily keep up with all of my customer. Also I don't have to share my personal information, such as my personal cell number and email, in order to keep in contact with my leads. I love that I am constantly kept up-to-date about new features in the application. It's a great tool all around to have if you are a Sales Rep! ”

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