

Internet Marketing



Chris Reed

Winning The Race For Sales

you or your OEM may have started them on their journey.

What that other dealer recognizes is that this confusion creates an opportunity for them to get their unfair share of demand created by your OEM and regional association's marketing spend. On average, OEMs and regional associations spend two to three dollars for every marketing dollar you spend at the dealership. Your competitor paved a road across the gap and installed signposts wherever the consumer could get lost, capturing much of the traffic that used to go to your dealership.

They paved the road by making sure their online marketing messages stay in lock step with their OEM's campaigns. If a consumer sees a promotional ad and then searches for the promotion on the Internet, the dealership shows up in those search

For the last six months, the competing dealership across town has outsold you every month, and the gap is growing. You can't figure out what they have done to lure your shoppers away. You both advertise on TV and in the paper, which hasn't changed in years, but they must have developed some secret strategy to steal your customers.

What that other dealer has done is to recognize and act on new shopper behaviors that have turned automotive marketing on



its head. Only 10 years ago, if a consumer was interested in a car, the only way he or she could research it was to walk your lot or visit your showroom. There was a direct connection between your OEM's brand spending and traffic to your dealership. This world no longer exists.

For 80 to 90 percent of shoppers today, a chasm has emerged between you and your OEM's brand and promotional marketing investment on your behalf. This chasm has been filled by an almost infinite variety of information sources on the Web, ranging from unfiltered user reviews to Edmunds.com and from blogs to social networks. Today's shopper has infinite opportunities to be confused and distracted away from the path to your dealership. The irony is that the user is in control of their purchase experience, yet often wanders around aimlessly hearing a wide variety of opinions. In that wandering many never make it to your showroom, even though

results because they bought those search terms, so their name appears at the top of the Google or Yahoo search screen. When the user clicks on the search link they go straight to the dealer's Website, with that promotion front and center.

The signposts are additional search and online display advertising for consumers, in their local area, that build a steady awareness of their dealership so the consumer will turn to them whenever they want research information only the dealership can provide—such as inventory and local promotions.

What about that other dealer's steady presence on TV and in the paper? Many a battle has been won by generals who left their campfire burning while they marched their army around the enemy's flank.

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