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2013 Dealer Best Practices: **Improve the Car-Buying Experience for Women**

PITTSBURGH, PA- Women-Drivers.com

There is no denying the purchasing power of the woman car buyer. The numbers speak for themselves and their impact on car sales is irrefutable. To that end, forward-thinking car dealers are implementing best practices in the showroom, in the service department and online. Though these practices are designed to improve the car-buying experience for everyone, the focus is most definitely on the woman car buyer in 2013.

1. A Code of Ethics

Be honest. Increase visibility and build customer confidence in the dealership. Provide exceptional customer service. Improve your reputation. Instill loyalty in all your customers. It's a mouthful in theory, but in reality it is achievable - make every associate a true ambassador.

Treat women car buyers fairly and respectfully. Be knowledgeable and likeable. Listen to them and make every effort to understand and relate to their specific needs and wants.

As a dealer principal, or GM, put *your* cell phone on *every* sales ambassador and service advisor's business card. Though your team is quite capable of handling and dealing with complaints, this subconsciously alerts the buyer that the buck stops with you. Smart owners already employ this tactic. They say that in the very infrequent times that they do receive a customer call, the customer is almost apologetic for the call. That, or they are disarmed they actually got through to the boss.

2. Build Trust Online

A dealership's brand reputation online is important. And, it really does make a difference with SEO. Build trust by having web content above and beyond "Inventory & Pricing", "Need Help with Credit?" and "Get Your Service Work Done Here." If you don't have a powerful, interactive online presence and value, you are losing business.

Use each outbound company email as an opportunity to provide customers with links to recent articles or tips that affect or impact their lives. And then, make a request for them to write a dealer review, to follow your Twitter channel, etc. It takes thinking and authenticity - and a little less automaticity and generality.

3. The Internet/Social Media

At one time everyone was skeptical of the internet. Many car dealers are now skeptical of social media. Your customers don't share your skepticism. They only know a world with internet and social media is a big and growing part of their internet experience and daily life. They don't plan to stop using it anytime soon.

Women love the internet, and, their smart phones are their immediate access. Doing their homework online gives them confidence in their car buying decisions. Now they are posting reviews and sharing their experiences with other women car buyers online. The effect that the Internet has had on their online interactions has been enormous. Embrace it and pull it towards you business.

4. Blend the Sales & Service Experience

Introduce customers to the service department as part of the sales delivery process. Ensure that they come back to the dealership again and again for their service appointments by provide them with a DRIP service campaign with coupons and engaging tips and helpful money and time savings advice. This will increase the chances of them becoming loyal service customers -- customers much more likely to buy their next vehicle from you. When they stop coming in, reach out to you. Create a 'We Want You Back' initiative. And, regardless of the brand you sell, have concierge vehicles available, so she doesn't feel like she is being held hostage at the dealership all day and night.

Provide customers with apps and on-line tools that will assist in understanding what is needed and what is being repaired on her vehicle. Have in store or on-line classes to educate and provide value – and, offer her a discount on future service work or a gimme (a Starbucks gift card) if she brings a friend.

5. Go Green

Implement processes designed to reduce the impact your dealership has on the environment. Start a recycling program for paper, cans and bottles. Reduce showroom and lot lighting when the dealership is closed. Recycle used oil, oil filters and the water you use to wash cars. Initiate a program to plant hundreds of trees to offset the carbon emissions from the SUVs you sell.

Many women are environmental enthusiasts who support the cause for cleaner air. They want a better environment for their children and their children's children. Protect the environment and promote clean air and let them know about your efforts, as well, as the 'carbon foot print' of some of your vehicles.

6. Redesign the Showroom & Service Area

Ok, so it's really expensive to overhaul a showroom. Understood. However, canvassing the showroom with updates is not. Create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere in both areas with comfortable seating, WiFi connectivity, flat-screen TVs and designated play centers. Make them into places where women and families, are comfortable spending time there, especially those with children. Skip the popcorn, but don't forget the lattes.

7. Create the One-Stop Shop

Provide services not typically found at competing dealerships or the independent auto repair shop. Don't just inspect the car for normal service items like brakes and tires. Look for things like door dings, scratches and stained carpets. Provide detail servicing, dent removal service, and paint repair on site to increase dealership revenue and build value in the dealership experience.

Women car buyers repeatedly use the dealership for their servicing needs and appreciate when car repairs can be done in a timely fashion and at their convenience. Time is their most valued commodity and the more services the dealer can provide, it's a win-win.

About Women-Drivers.com Women-Drivers.com is a marketplace connecting women buyers to trusted *Certified Women-Drivers Friendly™ Car Dealers* and encourages extraordinary commercial experiences and lasting relationships between these two groups. Women-Drivers.com is a producer of highly engaging Facebook women+family content and publishes a platform of integration services that build social communities for car dealers. The Company provides innovative web-based marketing solutions that build trust and transparency, resulting in greater sales and servicing from women. Follow on Twitter @womendrivers.