

Nine Ways To Get More Out Of Your Dealership's Advertising

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Think Consistent Advertising Campaigns that Steer Relationships...

This year you are likely focused more rigorously on improving your advertising's ROI. It is a common goal shared by many dealers as the market of buyers shrinks, and the inventory on dealer lots expands. Advertising budgets are often one of the first areas to be reduced during slow times, which ironically just perpetuates the growing inventory as fewer ads reach fewer potential buyers. Unfortunately, reducing the ad budget is an unavoidable reality for many, making it all the more important to ensure that those remaining ad dollars are going as far as possible.

So, how do you get the most out of your advertising budget and secure a healthy ROI?

1. Commit to an advertising campaign that integrates several media formats, but maintains the same call-to-action throughout all pieces of the campaign.
2. Clearly state, several times, what it is that you want people to do.
3. Use a direct-response tool in all pieces of the campaign that is easy for buyers to remember and easy to track, like a toll-free vanity 800 number (800-NEW-FORD) with call tracking services.
4. Analyze the response rates to your overall advertising efforts by monitoring your campaigns and tracking how many calls come into your dealership because of ad buys.
5. Track the cost-per-lead of your campaigns based on the cost of the overall campaign versus the number of leads the campaign generates. This is easy with a call tracking system. Most vanity 800 numbers and call tracking providers offer a campaign summary tool. All you have to do is plug in the campaign spend numbers and as calls come in, the tracking system updates and automatically calculates the CPL.
6. Build a strong lead database and market directly to these contacts. Research tells us buyers are not only using the Internet to find a new car. A toll-free service with a call tracking system will capture each incoming caller's name, address, and demographic profile, including average home value and household income based on the caller's location.
7. Stay consistent with your advertising plans. Instead of a one-time splash, successful dealerships develop campaigns that will keep their name and brands in the market place and in front of buyers on a regular basis. If you have to cut back somewhere, buy smaller newspaper ads, run thirty-second radio spots, and thirty-second television non-peak spots. Smaller ads and shorter spots allow advertisers to stretch budgets and maintain a presence in the media for a longer period of time. Repetition is the key to retention when it comes to buyers!
8. Target your existing customers. If a relationship already exists, then it only makes sense to take advantage of that. Inevitably, this core base will need service for check-ups and repairs. A savvy dealer includes the same trackable direct-response tool in the communications to these people, because chances are, even though they know who their dealer is, they cannot remember the dealer's local or numeric toll-free numbers. So, a smart dealer gets their dealership a branding, toll-free vanity 800 number like 1-800-GREAT-CARS.
9. Splash your dealership's toll-free vanity 800 number on all 'dealer plate' vehicles and courtesy shuttles. These cars and trucks serve as mobile billboards and a perceptive dealer knows not to miss out on an opportunity for "free" advertising.

Finally, as Leo Burnett (of advertising fame) said, "Make it simple. Make it memorable. Make it inviting to look at. Make it fun to read."

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