

## An Easy Way to Brand Your Dealership

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Times have changed and finding the perfect and available toll-free phone number to use in your advertising campaigns is a challenge. Sure, you can get any numeric toll-free from your phone company, but who wants that? You want something unique and, in today's economic environment, you need something unique to brand your dealership, bring in more leads, and stand out from your competition.

That unique something is a toll-free, vanity 800 number (e.g. 1-800-GO-TOYOTA®, 1-800-NISSAN-1®). Unfortunately, these advertising tools are a scarce resource these days, but it is still possible to join the ranks of these brand-conscious marketers by getting a branding vanity toll-free 800 number like 1-800-NEW-CARS or 1-800-PRE-OWNED.

To find a cost-effective and lead-generating vanity 800 number for your dealership, here's what you need to know:

### The fast lane

Contact a vanity 800 service provider who has a quality inventory of true vanity 800 numbers. A true vanity 800 number means it is a complete vanity with the 800 prefix, like 1-800-NEW-RIDE (versus a partial vanity that has a combination of numbers and letters like 1-888-252-RIDE). Studies show that call-in conversion rates from ads using toll-free numbers with the 800 prefix are higher than alternative prefixes like 866, 877, or 888. Vanity 800 service providers also offer toll-free service, call tracking, and call recording for quality assurance. These services enhance your overall lead tracking and management programs.

### The slow lane

If you know the perfect vanity 800 number for your dealership, then it may be possible to determine if it's available by dialing it from your phone. In rare situations, you'll find that the vanity 800 number is not currently being used by another business or individual and you can go about trying to obtain that number for yourself. It's important, however, to know that according to the FCC it is illegal to sell a toll-free number, so be wary of anyone who answers the line and offers to "sell" you the perfect toll-free 800 phone number.

### Gridlock

You can try looking for a vanity phone number through one of the well-known telecom service providers like AT&T®, but there are few, if any, available. You can also consult a toll-free broker, but, again, most brokers are not operating within the constraints of FCC rules on buying and selling toll-free numbers so beware. Moreover, brokers do not have access to the best vanity numbers and they most likely do not provide the tracking and recording services that are critical to your overall lead management system.

Even though finding the perfect phone number (one that speaks your brand and that people will remember) can present a challenge, it is possible. Just remember to go through these three steps:

1. Search for a vanity number with the 800 prefix. The others (888, 877, and 866) are not as recognizable or memorable, nor as credible.
2. Look for a full vanity 800 number and not a partial-vanity.
3. Expect that your vanity service provider also have a tracking system in place so you can monitor your incoming call volumes, analyze advertising results, and capture priceless customer data.

Laura Noonan has 15 years of experience in the vanity 800 number and telecommunication services industry. She coaches hundreds of clients each year on using toll-free vanity 800 phone numbers as direct marketing tools to increase advertising response rates. Email Laura at [lnoonan@800response.com](mailto:lnoonan@800response.com) This e-mail address is being protected from spambots.