

It's Not About Reviews

Over the last few years consumers have become empowered with access to information that makes them better shoppers for various products and services.

We've also seen auto dealers scramble to utilize reviews to look good online, but sometimes their methods have been suspect. Both Google and Edmunds removed hundreds if not thousands of car dealer reviews found to be either fraudulent or suspect.

No one disputes the value of reviews but maybe we need to re-evaluate the end game. Dealers need to look at customer reviews in the same way we look at Google or Bing Maps. We don't visit these maps sites because we love maps; we visit because we want to get to a destination in a direct and uncomplicated fashion. They are a means to an end. I believe it is the same with auto dealer reviews. We need to acknowledge that reviews are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to what consumers really want from auto retailers.

Consumers don't want reviews . . . *they want a simple way to tell the good guys from the bad guys*

Let's face it many people do not trust car dealerships. Looking at reviews on a dealers' site and seeing only 5 star reviews does not engender trust in that dealership, and in fact might just be the opposite. Visitors know these reviews have been filtered and seek a more honest solution to find those good dealers. A negative review that shows a problem resolved is better social proof the dealer cares about their customers.

Consumers don't want reviews . . . *they want someone they can trust who is patient and treats them with respect*

Auto shoppers buy a car maybe once or twice a decade and it can be very confusing process. Often they aren't sure of what they want and need. Having someone they can trust guiding them through the vehicle selection and buying process is a comforting feeling. Sales professional's need to be patient and move at a pace that ensures the customer makes the right decisions and leaves feeling good about the vehicle they acquired and the entire customer experience.

Consumers don't want reviews . . . *they want someone who will help them when they have a problem*

The only people that do not have problems are six feet below ground. The rest of us have problems . . . which might include credit issues, budgetary restraints, and lack of a down payment as well as negative-equity on a trade-in. Good sales professionals are problem solvers. They are resourceful and call on dealership associates to solve the problems and keep the

customer happy.

Consumers don't want reviews . . . *they want to deal with someone that makes them feel comfortable each step of the way*

Auto shoppers don't want fake sincerity. Customers can tell when sales people are faking it and that is a sure way to lose the sale. Trite lines like, "I want to earn your business" are a sure signal that the sales person could care less about earning their business. Professionals who really want to earn their business do so by listening and caring.

Consumers don't want reviews . . . *they want to view videos that highlight and inform them about products and services*

Let's face it we all love watching videos instead of reading online option lists and vehicle specifications. Dealers and manufacturers should consider posting entertaining and informative videos on multiple channels to enhance their value to customers and prospects. Customers will appreciate watching dealer videos when the main focus is informational and not a sales pitch. This builds the dealership brand and increases loyalty.

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This article is based on his blog post from DrivingSales.com

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