



IMPLEMENTING A DIGITAL SALES EXPERIENCE

NAVIGATING THE NEW REALITY

VinSolutions

NAVIGATING THE NEW REALITY

The digital car buying experience has arrived, and it's here to stay.

Consumers want buying a car to be just like buying on Amazon, and the COVID-19 pandemic only accelerated this change in buyer behavior. In fact, 2/3 of shoppers would now prefer to buy a vehicle 100% online.*

There will always be buyers who prefer the traditional way of buying a car. But if those are the only customers you're prepared to sell to effectively, you stand to lose a growing number of potential buyers who demand a more modern way to buy.

We know implementing a fully digital sales experience can be a significant undertaking for your dealership. That's why we're here to help. This guide will give you the strategies and tools you need to successfully create and implement a digital sales process.

*"You as a dealer should be prepared to meet the consumer **where** and **how** they want to be met."*

JAMES MAYNARD

Senior Vice President of Product and Engineering
Cox Automotive Dealer Software Solutions

*2020 Cox Automotive COVID-19 Digital Shopping Study

The 3 Modern Sales Scenarios

Dealerships must be able to facilitate a sale from all possible channels at every stage of the sale. Instead of one linear sales model, there are now three scenarios you must account for:

The Traditional Scenario

These buyers prefer to do everything in the dealership, from test drives to negotiations and paperwork.

The Digital Scenario

These buyers have no interest in coming into the dealership. They're more comfortable searching, negotiating, and filling out paperwork online.

The Hybrid Scenario

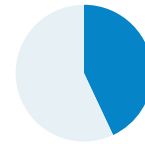
These buyers like the best of both worlds. They're happy to do the traditional steps they love in person, but would prefer to take the steps they hate online.

*"We're giving the customer the option to transact **how they want to**. We can do it all online, we can do it on the phone, or [the customer] can come for the traditional buying experience."*

SCOTT RISLEY

Digital Marketing Manager
Mohawk Chevrolet Honda

BUYERS WANT TO DO MORE ONLINE



43% of buyers during the COVID-19 pandemic did more steps online than ever before.



71% of shoppers want to do more of the purchase steps online compared to the last time they purchased a vehicle.

Source: 2020 Cox Automotive COVID-19 Consumer and Dealer Impact Study

Let Your Buyers Take the Wheel

It might feel uncomfortable at first, but the best thing dealers can do is relinquish control of the sales process. Supporting the sale, not controlling the sale, will allow you to increase market share.

Give consumers the freedom to control their experience and support them every step of the way. They'll appreciate your flexibility and will find your dealership to be more approachable than less accommodating competitors.

Start by preparing your BDC and sales teams to have effective conversations that go beyond scheduling in-store appointments. And equip your dealership with the tools it needs to manage online and in-store traffic simultaneously.

*"From a messaging standpoint, we're selling the experience. We're selling convenience. We're showing off relevant messaging. ... **We're showing customers we're listening and we're paying attention.** We're putting a safe environment out there and pushing our **new and improved online experience.**"*

JEFF RAMSEY

eCommerce and Marketing Director
Jones Junction

TALKING POINTS THAT SUPPORT THE SALE

"I'll explain your new buying options."

Take on the role of an educator, helping customers understand that online buying options are safe, streamlined, and secure.

"Do you need help?"

When you see a customer is stuck on a web page or step of the buying process, offer assistance rather than immediately pushing for the in-person appointment.

"I see where you left off; let's pick up there."

Nothing will turn your customers off more than making them repeat themselves. Always acknowledge you know where the customer left off with your dealership.

"That information you shared online will save you time today."

Build customers' confidence in new digital car buying processes by reaffirming that each step they complete online makes the next one a little faster and easier.

Put Personalized Service First

Every car buyer is unique. That's why providing personalized service and building relationships is essential.

Start by retraining your dealership staff to prioritize personalization over speed. Make sure your customers hear the same voice on the phone or are greeted by the same salesperson when they come in. Use the information they've provided to advance the sale while addressing the buyer's needs.

Remember, speedy service doesn't matter if it feels cold and impersonal.

*"A major issue with sales effectiveness comes from the digital side of things. **The worst thing you can do is make your customers feel unheard or unseen** when they've done a ton of work to know exactly all of the information that they've submitted to you."*

MITCH ROVITO

Performance Manager
Dealer.com

ACHIEVING PERSONALIZATION AT SCALE

Does providing a highly personalized experience to every customer feel daunting, or even impossible? Consider implementing a data mining or artificial intelligence tool that integrates with your CRM, such as VinSolutions Connect Automotive Intelligence. By automatically aggregating customer data into insights stored in the customer record, the tools deliver the info your salespeople need instantly.

Set Expectations Up Front

Consumers might want a digital sales experience, but that doesn't mean they know how the process will work. Be upfront with customers and explain what to expect from your dealership's process. Most importantly, make them aware of their buying options. Let them know they can conduct the process fully in-store, fully online, or somewhere in between.

*“When it comes to setting customer expectations, there are two things you need to accomplish. Step one is **building awareness** of the platforms you offer. Step two is then showing customers **how to use them.**”*

MITCH ROVITO

Performance Manager
Dealer.com

Turn Your Website Into a Salesperson

Your dealership's website can no longer be a billboard directing customers to your store. It needs to facilitate every stage of the sale.

An effective website provides buyers with accurate information about inventory, incentives, pricing, and financing options. Make the process easy enough for buyers to do on their own. But give them outlets to quickly get help when they need it.

*“In order to really have an effective website, it has to be in educational mode. It's not just about selling the unit. **It's about educating customers** through this new process of selecting a vehicle and looking at finance opportunities or leasing opportunities online. They're not used to doing that, and we have to teach them how.”*

MO ZAHABI

Senior Director of Product Consulting
Cox Automotive

Keep Your Eye on the Prize

This transition to a digital sales process won't be easy, but it will pay off if it's done correctly. When the going gets tough, keep these three benefits in mind to help you power through the process.

3 Benefits of a Digital Sales Process



Your profits will increase. Your digital processes and tools will gather important data that will help you close the initial sale and increase the customer's lifetime value.



Your data will become more accurate. Say goodbye to data entry mishaps. Every buyer will input their own information online, which takes a heavy burden off your team.



Your staff will feel empowered. Your teams will be more well rounded and more efficient when it comes to closing deals.

*"We're adjusting to where customers are, and we're making changes. We're improving our messaging, and that has led to us **doubling our leads, more sales opportunities, and more conversions.** It has worked out well."*

JEFF RAMSEY

eCommerce and Marketing Director
Jones Junction

LET'S TRANSFORM YOUR SALES PROCESS **TOGETHER**

Implementing a fully digital sales process will be a major change for your dealership. That's why Cox Automotive is here to help you every step of the way. We have the resources, technology and expertise to help you take your dealership into the future.

We're always here to help you succeed and we value your partnership.

For a guide to getting started, download the **Dealer's Playbook for Implementing a Digital Sales Experience.**

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