

HOW TO GET THE CUSTOMER TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT



by Raul Vazquez

Customers will do whatever you ask of them if you ask the right way. The place to ask is in the call to action (CTA). Without a CTA, all ads are destined for failure. The importance of the CTA can be summed up with one word – CONTROL. Control is important because it is what allows you to track your media and it is what allows you to be ready to sell the customer a car. Implement these procedures on all your ads, not just special finance ads, and your dealerships will become more profitable.

It all starts with the phone call. You want the customer to pick up the phone to call you as soon as he reads, sees or hears your ad. The faster you can make this happen, the better your chances of selling this person a car. Customers will call right away if you give them a reason to do so, create a sense of urgency and offer a unique buying opportunity. After all, they are in the market for a car. Why wouldn't they call you if you push the right buttons? How do you make the phone ring? Tell the customer to pick up the phone and call now. It really is that simple. Once you get the customer on the phone you can tell them when to come to your store, who to see, and what to bring. This is control.

Almost every ad, including all of the ones I discussed in last month's article, do not have a call to action or have a weak one. Ads without CTAs cause customers to walk in the door unannounced. And when this happens you do not know how they got there and why they are there. You are not ready for them. What would you do if you were getting ready to sit down to dinner and one of your friends stopped in and wanted to join you? You may or may not be able to feed them. Had you invited them, however, you would be expecting them and have enough food for them. Selling a car is no different.

The only reason anyone should ever walk into a dealership is because they just happen to be driving by. If anyone ever walks into your store and says that they heard your ad on the radio and thought they would stop in, you have done something wrong. First, most stores have no way of knowing how walk-in traffic makes it into the store or for that matter, that the customer was there at all. For them to know, they need to have some way of logging walk-in traffic. There are dealerships that are very good at this but even if yours is one of them, nothing you can do will help you with the next problem. You know it was a radio ad but on what station? You can ask the customer. They might know. Good luck. The reality is that the customer does not know where they heard your offer nor is it their job to know. It is your job to know what ads and what media is getting customers in the door.

Have you ever driven by a car dealership and seen what must be their entire sales force outside smoking cigarettes? Good one, huh? This happens because the philosophy of most dealerships is to open their doors in the morning and have a bunch of salespeople ready to attack anyone who comes in the door. I will give you this – car dealers are an optimistic bunch. Most dealerships I walk into have more salespeople than customers at any given time. Of course, it is a good idea to do this because you never want to make a customer wait. The problem lies in the fact that you really never know how many people are going to walk in that door or at what time. You are leaving it all up to chance. This is how I define lack of control.

There is not a person reading this article who has not made a reservation at a restaurant. Why do customers make reservations? You make a reservation because you want to make sure you get a table when you want it. You do not want to have to wait an hour to sit down or worse yet, at a popular restaurant, not eat at all. It is the job of every ad you place to be sure that you make the customers feel like they are making a reservation at the most popular restaurant in town.

Restaurants also accept reservations because they want to know how busy they are going to be on a given evening. Doing so makes staffing easier, ensures that they prepare enough food, and eases customer service issues caused by making people wait. Reservations help create a pleasurable dining experience. Appointments will do the same for you.

To summarize, make the customer call you. The phone number they call is the only true way to know which ad generated the call. Make an appointment. It makes the customer commit and it allows you to be ready.

Control the customer and you will sell more cars. I guarantee it!

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For comments/questions regarding this article, check the reader response fax on page 54 or e-mail Raul at rvazquez@wosfmagazine.com.