

# Winning strategies for 2020 and beyond

It goes without saying that the dealership's lifeblood relies on selling cars. Given the relative volatility of the new car market, our first recommended strategy is to **sell more used cars**. Once this has been achieved, our second strategy is to **'sell your dealership'**. Our third strategy is to **fill the workshop**. Underpinning three of these strategies. Our fourth **retention**, and our fifth, **digital marketing**.

Our research tells us that the biggest driver to customer satisfaction is salespeople themselves, so emphasis on recruitment and training is important – training around explaining finance and paperwork, as well as the sales process.

Product knowledge is essential. Before the internet, most customers were relatively ill-informed about the vehicle they were looking at, but today you often hear people say: "Customers know more about the cars than we do". Frankly, that's not good enough. You would be disappointed if a waiter couldn't explain the menu, a golf pro couldn't recommend a club or someone in B&Q couldn't tell you how to decorate a wall. Surely the same applies when we are dealing with cars?

To get enquiries, you have obviously got to hold the stock at the right price. Acquiring the right stock is more of a challenge at present, so you'll need to work hard on that – maximising part-exchange retention is a great start.

Next, 'selling' your dealership. In a very competitive market, it's critical to understand customer satisfaction and get feedback on the service you provide. This also gives you review content and stars you can share on your website to attract new customers.

When you are 'selling' your dealership, you are also starting to sell servicing.

Whether you use a service plan, loyalty programme or a tight communications programme, servicing a customer's car



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will aid future retention and loyalty. Getting customer feedback on the aftersales experience is arguably as important as the sale itself.

Retention strategy is all about getting relevant feedback after each transaction, recording it and using that to inform your next communication. This could

be driven by vehicle health checks (VHC) or a refined CRM programme.

Finally, we come to the fifth strategy, digital marketing. More than half of customers visit just one dealership and 51% of customers (even more in Northern Ireland) cite a website as the key driver for their purchase. So, we are all agreed your website is your new shop window. Whether you're a PLC or a one-man band, this is the chance to impress prospective customers with your authentic self. But don't forget, most customers won't visit your home page, whether it's click-throughs from classifieds or paid search campaigns. They will be targeting either search results or individual car details or ad pages. Presenting your reviews and USPs within your site is as important as maintaining excellent photography, videos and spec.

So, there you have it, our five strategies for 2020! If you'd like to know more, or disagree, let us know.

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