

What's measured is managed (and what's managed normally improves)

Neil Addley, founder and MD, outlines the JudgeService ethos and how it helps you

Q What's JudgeService all about?

A Insight and content. In essence, we are a research business providing insight into what customers think about your business in real time. This allows you to improve your customer experience and promote your reviews and star ranking to attract more customers.

Q How so?

A Some 95% of consumers will read a review before purchasing. 72% won't buy unless you have reviews. People are looking for third-party endorsement of their buying intention. By carrying reviews and ratings using our widgets or API, our clients show they can be relied upon.

Q What makes you different from other "review" providers?

A We're not just a review provider. We provide insight and 100% verified, authentic reviews.

Some other platforms allow anyone – competitors or even colleagues – to publish reviews. Some allow you to choose which ones to display. This goes against our principles of truth, honesty and integrity.

Our mission is to help our clients make the world a better place, one customer at a time. You can't do that if you hide the truth or, worse still, deliberately set out to obfuscate it.

Also, we are an automotive specialist, which means our clients get really usable, granular insight and reports rather than generic inter-babble!

Q How long has JudgeService been going?

A We've just celebrated our eighth birthday. Over that time, JudgeService has surveyed hundreds of thousands of car buyers and lost sales.

Our granular surveys mean we have been able to establish the link between stock turn and customer satisfaction and sales.

Q How do you do that?

A The data used is from more than 100,000 surveys in the past year, matched with the number of days in stock the vehicles have been advertised online for sale.

Q And what does it tell us?

A Customer satisfaction drives stock turn. Customers at dealerships with higher customer satisfaction buy cars faster, significantly driving down the days a car stays in stock.

Q What's the most important driver to satisfaction?

A The single most significant factor in this relationship is the customer's opinion of the salesperson. People buy from people.

Q What's the difference between promoter scores, recommendation and overall satisfaction?

A Not much! The number of days a vehicle is in stock before it sells is directly affected by customer satisfaction. There is an almost perfect correlation between the promoter score and recommendation score.

Q And how do you know that satisfaction drives speed of sales?

A There is a direct correlation between the number of days it takes to sell a car and the level of customer satisfaction, in this case measured as a promoter score. A dealer with a promoter score of 30% will see cars stay in stock for just over 46 days, whereas a score of 70% will be 34 days. A 90% promoter score brings it down even further, to 28 days.

In effect, this creates additional sales "days" as a "free hit" – more sales requiring no further capital.

Q Apart from the salesperson's attitude, what else drives customer satisfaction?

A The other key areas that drive satisfaction are the attitude at handover, explanation of paperwork and the vehicle itself. In isolation, a 5% improvement in salesperson's attitude sells a car 5.3 days quicker, attitude at handover 4.8 days, explanation of paperwork 4.7 days and both mechanical preparation and cleanliness 3.9 days quicker.

Q And does this really improve stock turn for your clients?

A Great question. Yes, clients who use JudgeService typically see their recommendation levels and promoter scores increase over time. Typically by 20% over a three-year period. That's moving metal five days quicker! That improvement starts in the first three months, continuing in the first year, the next three and then ongoing.

Q So what are your top tips for car dealers right now?

A Knowledge is power. We've got seven top tips on how you can start to improve your customer experience from tomorrow.

1. Meet and greet. Attentiveness matters! The results are conclusive. Customers want to know you care about them and are available to help.

Make sure your magic meerkat is on the

lookout for customers on the forecourt or display. Rain or shine, customers want to be acknowledged.

2. Train your team to explain paperwork, documentation and finance

Your probably spend time training closes and objection-handling, but how much time do you spend teaching your team to explain paperwork and finance documents?

3. Keep it clean

Whether it's the car being cleaned before being put on display or the general standards of the forecourt, customers notice your attention to detail and judge the rest of your business by the standards you set.

4. Maximise your web presence

As well as accurate pricing, good specs and great photography, ensure you carry your reviews, recommendations and star ratings on your website. Customers are looking for who to choose.

5. Invest in customer feedback

Don't lose sales because someone, somewhere has decided the customer won't deal "today".

One man's tyre-kicker is another woman's hot prospect.

6. Measure customer satisfaction

If you're not measuring your used car customer satisfaction or lost sales then you have no barometer on your performance. Its like driving without a speedometer.

7. Coffee, a tank of petrol and car mats

People notice these things. Plastic cups and vended coffee may have been alright 20 years ago, but people expect more now. Decent coffee and a proper cup.

Explain whether they have to pay for a full tank or whether they'll get mats. People are used to paying for upgrades, just get the offer right.

Q That's great. What next?

A Exciting times ahead. We're revamping our websites and doing some fantastic new research into what turns a lost sale into a customer and on the key drivers to long-term customer loyalty. There are some really interesting findings. Watch out for our next white paper, due in late May. It'll be a great read.

Q So how does someone get on board with JudgeService?

A To get a copy of the new white paper or to put a visit in the diary, drop us a line: neil@judgeservice, or call 01423 225 166. You can also visit our website: business.judgeservice.com

COMPANY PROFILE

Key products: ReAct (post-transaction reviews); ProAct (lost sales survey); Reputation Manager (reputation dashboard); Snap'n'Share (handover celebration)

Founded: 2011

Based: Harrogate, North Yorkshire

Visit: business.judgeservice.com

Email: neil@judgeservice.com

Telephone: 01423 225 166

JudgeService
★★★★★