

Make e-commerce work seamlessly with your physical sales operation

We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next 10." When considering the automotive industry, it is certainly heading towards e-commerce, however we are unsure of when this will materialise entirely. We believe that implementing e-commerce in automotive online showrooms is the logical next step in order to stay in line with the changes in customer behaviour.

E-commerce should be used as a method to unite the online showroom to the physical dealership, not replace it. Rather than having two distinct channels, the two should work together to create the ultimate experience for the customer, no matter how they wish to complete their user journey.

We think customers should have the freedom to configure their own deal, whenever and wherever convenient for them. It's the experience that customers have come to expect, moving forward with customer behaviour trends. In-store still matters, with 40% of consumers expressing that it is important to have a personal connection at the dealership (Coxautoinc, 2015).

Car buyers are becoming increasingly confident with their purchases, essentially becoming their own salespeople. This is a result of spending more time considering their decision online, utilising vast amounts of information, including product reviews, offers and comparisons. Eventually, e-commerce will save showroom time for both parties.

As e-commerce is relatively new within the automotive industry, it requires research, development and

ongoing testing for it to be successful. We can make a judgement on what other industries are doing, but what works for them may not necessarily work for us. E-commerce shouldn't act as a replacement for lead generation, because it is still vital to catch those at the earlier stages of the conversion funnel, especially when 88% of consumers won't buy a car without test driving it, (SilverBullet, 2019).

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There are some concerns against e-commerce, one of which is that it will increase competition from more distant dealerships. However, there are ways to reduce the risk of this, by focusing on triggering positive associations on why customers should buy from your brand, to stand out against the competition, and build brand loyalty.

Additionally, consumers today rely on online reviews. These have become so important that 94% of people have avoided a business because of negative online reviews, according to ReviewTrackers. As a complementary feature to e-commerce, dealerships should consider using a customer feedback service or engage with customers on social media and review platforms.

By 2030, it is predicted that the automotive industry's share of online purchases will overtake that of appliances. In our opinion, it's never too soon to start thinking about your digital strategy for the future.



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