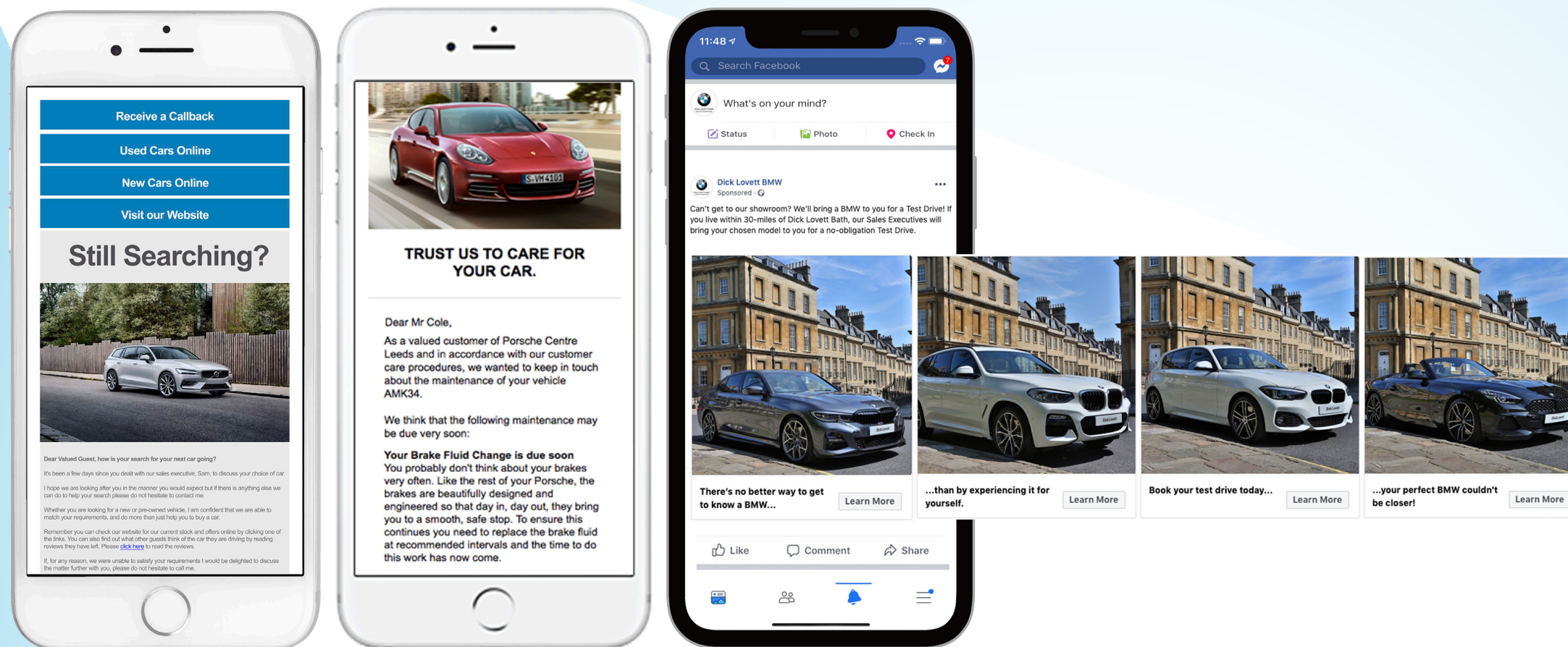


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Data holds the key on customer journey

Economic uncertainty and the slowdown in the new car market have created even more urgency for dealers to optimise their use of data-driven digital marketing.

Many AM100 group leaders have reported a noticeable toughening of the market since May. Many said their teams are working much harder to get results. And Jeremy Evans reports there's been an uplift in new clients seeking CRM and digital marketing services from Marketing Delivery, plus existing clients expanding their brief.

Having guided clients through the introduction of GDPR in 2018, Marketing Delivery now finds there's a desire to sustain sales momentum through the ongoing Brexit saga.

"There's definitely a sense among dealers of 'We've got to crack on, we've got businesses to run,'" said Evans.

But dealers are in a strong position, thanks to the data they hold and the ability to reach prospects at multiple touchpoints in the journey through Marketing Delivery's expertise.

Evans said: "There's never been a better time to be able to stay in touch with customers. There's more data than ever before, and better technology than ever before, to enable that to happen.

"The message from us is to get the data right, or work with a company like us to get the data right. It's difficult to do it in-house when you've a million other jobs to do, but companies like ours can help."



Jeremy Evans
Managing Director
Tel: 01892 599 917
jeremy.evans@marketingdelivery.com

Data is crucial. Evans said that Marketing Delivery spends as much time with clients working to enhance the quality of customer data, such as checking aftersales data against the DVLA data for MOT expiry dates, as it does building the campaigns for them.

For dealers, getting staff to consistently input all customer data correctly can be a challenge, but Evans said once sales executives or service advisors have experienced the benefits of doing so, from the results generated by Marketing Delivery's targeted activity, they fully appreciate the importance.

That data allows Marketing Delivery to put its dealer clients in front of in-market consumers. It could mean automatically re-targeting a Facebook

Marketing Delivery

DATA DRIVEN MARKETING

user in a geographical area who's previously shown interest in a particular make and model of car on a classified website, thanks to its SocialStock and LeadBox tools.

"Our traditional strengths have been to look after customers once they've already contacted the dealer, through our CRM systems and re-marketing to them.

"But actually to bring in a chunk of them in the first place because the tool is there to allow us to target people when they're in-market is an exciting opportunity really.

"We're now looking at the target pre-enquiry and it continues through the whole customer journey," he said.

Marketing Delivery is a Facebook Agency Partner, which demonstrates its expertise in managing clients' paid-for and organic content. It also gives Marketing Delivery access to the social media giant's product developments – recently Evans fed back to Facebook's team about dealers' desire to display a monthly payment.

It could equally mean delivering a series of tailored service or MOT communications automatically by email or SMS to a customer from eight to 10 weeks out from the due date, to ensure the dealership has maximised the chances of retaining that customer's aftersales business. Or serving focused emails to customers who are waiting for a particular type of car to come into stock.

Established in 2007 as an outsourced marketing function supporting smaller dealer groups, Marketing Delivery now provides its clients, which include the Cambria, Dick Lovett, JCT600 and Sinclair Groups and the UK Volvo dealer network, with CRM and acquisition marketing solutions across email, mobile, SMS and social media – the technology that customers use in their everyday lives.

"Customers expect communications to be professional, interactive, personalised and highly targeted. This can't be achieved without looking at the customer journey as a whole and connecting at key touchpoints using a variety of media options," said Evans.

Rather than using a scattergun approach, data modelling and programmatic marketing makes a dealer's spend much more cost-effective.

"It's the sniper rifle rather than a sub-machine gun. You're picking out those people, and then once they are an enquiry and into the CRM system they get all those targeted email follow-ups through that enquiry cycle to get them through to the other end."

Marketing Delivery has been approved by Volvo for several years, and has just secured an approval with Volkswagen after a lengthy evaluation.

Evans said clients get broader benefits from Marketing Delivery's services, as his team is able to analyse the activities of the consumers being targeted, and the results of campaigns, to give accurate insights into how the business can

Advertising feature

THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO BE ABLE TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH CUSTOMERS

JEREMY EVANS

improve. It might mean identifying particular failings or inconsistencies in how staff gather customer data, or discovering process 'road blocks' in the digital journey which lead a significant proportion of potential customers to give up and go elsewhere.

Evans said: "What this data allows us is to analyse what happens next, so the dealer benefits from that intelligence."

Evans knows Marketing Delivery's 'managed automation' services can bring clients extra business that, if left purely to an under-pressure sales or service team, will be lost.

He said most dealerships that use their Lost Sale programme get three to four deals per month from customers they would have otherwise missed, and the Car Alerts tool currently delivers on average eight to 10 deals per month for one brand with which Marketing Delivery partners.

In aftersales, top performer Ancaster is achieving more than 50% retention of MOTs thanks to its timely, focused communications.

New developments for Marketing Delivery include working with other technology firms such as EnquiryMax and CDK Global on API connections. Currently dealers' data feeds from their showroom systems and DMS into Marketing Delivery's DataHub overnight, where it is evaluated, checked and prepared for the next communications.

Evans expects to be in a position to take data into the DataHub in real-time in the near future, and that can only enhance dealers' marketing even further.

"Ultimately we'll improve sales conversion, increase customer retention and present clients' dealerships in a very professional light to their current and future customers," he said.

For more information, C: 01892 599 917 E: get.in.touch@marketingdelivery.co.uk