



Converting to an All-Digital Dealership

A Checklist from Trader Interactive

During times of uncertainty, it's possible your dealership may have to operate 100% remotely. That's a tough reality when so much of our business is based on human interaction within the physical dealership. Fortunately, with digital marketing and sales technology, much of your dealership is already online. By transitioning the last few touchpoints to digital, you can give your customers a near-total personalized online experience during times of social distancing.

To help you turn your website into your new showroom we've created a Checklist for Converting to an All-Digital Dealership:

Update your basic information on your website(s), third party marketplaces, and anywhere you may have a virtual dealership with accurate and up-to-date...

- Contact info
- Hours of operation for both sales and service
- Available inventory

Optimize your unit listings by remembering to get P.A.I.D.

- Price: clearly provide the for-sale and/or rental price
- Appearance: Include all relevant keywords so the listing appears higher in search results
- Images: Photos (and videos) enhance consumer interest and buying confidence
- Descriptions: Include all relevant specifics, including mileage, condition, fuel type, vocation, and upfit details

Maximize your online presence

- Do what you can to extend your advertising visibility across digital platforms, from your website to 3rd party online marketplaces
- Manage your reputation by soliciting positive online reviews and productively responding to poor reviews
- Help consumers get to know you & your dealership by posting on social media accounts
- Demonstrate your expertise by producing and/or sharing interesting, relevant content (blogs are free and easy to maintain)
- Stay top-of-mind and provide updates with emails to your customers and your prospects

Adjust communication

- Allow for as many forms of communication as possible
- Update your automated emails & replies, as well as out-of-office voicemail, with any new hours of operation or business policies affected by the current situation
- Ensure phone calls will be forwarded to the correct staff member or hunt group, and consider allowing calls to be taken on cell phones during this time
- Ensure live-chat & texting features are on -- and being checked regularly -- so that consumers will be able to contact you however they can
- Leverage video as a tool to help close deals

Follow Lead Management Best Practices

- Ensure you've designated the appropriate person to respond to leads
- Respond to all incoming leads and messages -- preferably by the end of the same business day, and within an hour if possible
- Although consumers may be more informal online, be sure your digital communication is always professional, helpful, and informative
- When a consumer reaches out, answer all questions or concerns they bring up fully and transparently
- Inquire as to how, during this uncertain time, you can move the consumer from prospect to customer, and then figure out how to satisfy those needs
- Remember your existing appointments and adjust accordingly, whether they have to be cancelled or shifted to alternative service options. Just be sure to clearly communicate those changes to the customer

Hopefully your dealership will be able to reopen its doors to regular business soon, but you need to be prepared for both the short-term reality, as well as the possibility of the current situation extending well into the future. Keep this checklist on hand to plan for both scenarios, so that -- not matter what happens -- your dealership will be set-up for continued success.