

You Don't Need Super Powers to be Effective with Email Marketing

WHITE PAPER



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Executive Summary

Consumer expectations are increasing at the speed of light. How can you possibly get ahead if you are not listening to your consumers and connecting with them in the ways they expect?

Optimally targeting communications, refining your content, and putting the focus on data are paramount to every dealer's success, especially with email marketing. More sophisticated marketers are segmenting their campaigns—just as they did with direct mail in the past—while the savviest dealers target consumers utilizing artificial intelligence and deliver individualized content automatically.

This whitepaper will explore how dealers can:

- **Develop an effective email marketing approach**
- **Improve their processes for reengaging prospects and unsold leads**
- **Prevent customer defection by refining email retention strategies**
- **Go beyond email with cross-channel communications**

Email Marketing Today

Consumers expect you to know them. They expect individualization, which is why it's alarming that 70% of brands don't personalize their emails¹, especially when individualized subject lines can increase open rates by 50%².

Simply put, consumers expect you to come to their rescue—on their terms.

How dealers market to customers and prospects is becoming data-driven, individualized, automated, and dynamic. Online and offline behaviors are merging into one—just 'behavior'—and automotive marketers can track all of it to customize communications accordingly. Artificial intelligence is helping dealers nationwide deliver relevant information to car shoppers before they even know what they want.

“Despite the fact only 20% of marketers use behavioral triggers in email marketing, statistics show that behaviorally targeted emails (such as the ones based on transactional and trigger-based data) have an average open rate of around 50%.”³



CRM email blasts no longer cut it. Everyone is talking about artificial intelligence as part of email marketing because everyone needs it. The same basic principles apply—emails need to have clear, engaging subject lines and concise content. The more someone has to scroll, especially if they're looking on a mobile device, the less likely they are to stay engaged with content further down. But that content, as well as calls-to-action, need to be dynamically tailored to each consumer so they are calls-to-action that they care about.

Effective email communications need to be:

- Automated and dynamic
- Triggered as a result of behavior
- Individually tailored
- Concise and relevant

Reengaging Prospects And Unsold Leads

A clever joke on Family Guy once had Spider-Man coming to the rescue of the main character Peter with the explanation of, "Everybody gets one." Consumers, on the other hand, expect to be saved every time they're in need rather than being forgotten after 30, 60, or 90 days of follow-up.

Many people are still in market even if they showed interest months ago without immediately purchasing a vehicle. These leads are often tossed aside to focus on newer leads coming through. Your dealership might not have a large enough staff to manage aging leads on top of fresh ones, but neglecting unsold leads is a wasted opportunity you can't afford in today's fickle market.

How can a dealership accomplish the sort of individualization necessary to effectively engage each consumer short of asking their staff to write a tailored message to everyone in their database?

Marketing automation.

By utilizing an AI-driven marketing automation tool, dealers hold the power to connect with individuals at critical moments in their individual buyer lifecycle. Marketing automation is software that provides a greater degree of individualization, automated and dynamic sending for email communications, while simultaneously letting the consumer drive the content they receive.

Dealers need to hit consumers consistently with relevant communications so that once they start to engage again, you can automatically respond with triggered follow-up based on what they want.



“One major reason for the rise in complexity in asset management is the need for customization. Personalized content is an important component of one-to-one marketing, and a critical part of the customer acquisition process. Local (or field) marketers need autonomy and flexibility to reach local target audiences because personalization and relevance drive revenue at the local level.”⁴

Basically, if you want to better penetrate your local PMA, you must have the capacity for individualization at the consumer level with your email marketing. When as much as 98 percent of qualified leads fail to result in closed business, consistency in frequency and personalization in messaging even after 90, 60, or 30 days have passed is crucial to reengaging the leads you thought you lost.⁵

Refining Customer Retention

To truly be a superhero marketer in today’s industry, dealers need to turn customers into advocates

It is a common misconception among dealers that once a customer has purchased a vehicle they will remain a loyal customer for the duration of their lifecycle. Instead of focusing time and energy on retention, dealers spend most of their dollars’ hunting for new leads.

Only 53.6% of car shoppers in 2017 repurchased from a brand they already own, and while there may always be a place for conquest in the automotive industry, focusing too heavily on lead generation can come at a high price.⁶

“The average dealership will have 54 interactions with a customer over the course of a single vehicle ownership. Each interaction is an occasion to build a relationship and maximize future sales (and service) opportunities.”⁷

The key to customer retention is to remember that customers do not want to feel as though they are being sent a canned message or a pre-recorded response.

Email retention programs are built to keep an eye on the customer journey and maximize your presence in places where people might change course and consider competitors. Just like



with prospects and unsold leads, utilizing a marketing automation platform can give dealers a competitive advantage in retaining customers that blasting emails out of a CRM simply cannot.

When 62% of owners say communication with the dealership throughout their owner lifecycle directly influences their next purchase, dealers cannot afford for those interactions to be generic.⁸

Cross-Channel Communication

Email marketing continues to be important for overall sales and service conversions and that is not going to change, but dealers should not rely on email alone—just like the best heroes have more than a single superpower.

2/3 of buyers involve multiple channels in their purchase process. Even more interestingly, those shoppers have a 30% higher Lifetime Value than single-channel customers.⁹

Having a presence across more channels means more customers see you where they prefer to spend their time, whether it is scrolling through Facebook, watching TV or their favorite streaming service, or more than likely—all of the above. Precise measurement on cross-channel touchpoints is therefore vital to marketing success, but more important is the ability to tie those measurements together for a full view of the customer that better informs where they are in their buying lifecycle.

The most successful cross-channel experience for a customer comes from individualization, when marketers take both online and offline behavioral data and integrate that into automated communications to engage prospects, unsold leads, and current customers alike.

All of the above allows marketers to better optimize their programs for the best results, creating a constant lifecycle that keeps consumers engaged by always taking into account what they really want across every channel and any device.

Buyer detection is also vitally important for dealers today to help learn more about current owners re-entering the market who might defect, providing intelligence on existing leads, and alerting dealers to dormant leads coming back to life.

Dealers can best maximize their marketing efforts by utilizing artificial intelligence tools and multi-channel marketing to automate individualized communications to everyone in their primary market area.



Conclusion

One of the major challenges dealers face today is breaking through the clutter of marketing content constantly hitting consumers. Effective communications stand out only when they mean something to the individual, and consumers expect that kind of tailored content every time they open their inbox or they simply hit the delete button.

To get ahead of competitors, dealers need to refine their email marketing strategy by targeting customers and prospects using AI-driven, automated marketing communications across channels. While developing your strategy, focus on the buyer lifecycle and how each person's journey is different. Once a prospect becomes a customer, that lifecycle does not end and neither should your marketing.

Be the superhero marketer consumers want by providing them the individualized 1:1 engagement they expect.



- 1 “3 Common Personalization Fails (and How to Fix Them).” Campaign Monitor. January 2018.
- 2 “Study: Personalized email subject lines increase open rates by 50%.” Marketing Dive. September 2017.
- 3 “How to Personalize Your Marketing Strategy with Behavioral Targeting.” Business 2 Community. July 2017.
- 4 “The #1 Reason Companies Struggle with Brand Consistency.” MarcomCentral. November 2016.
- 5 “How to Bring Customer Leads Back from the Dead.” Inc. April 2017.
- 6 “Driving Loyal Owners.” IHS Markit. January 2018.
- 7 “Personalized Messages Hit the Targets.” CBT News. August 2017.
- 8 “Auto Dealers: 5 Ways to Improve Your Close Rate in the Showroom.” Vertical Blog. January 2016.
- 9 “4 Cross Channel Marketing Stats Marketers Need To Know Going Into 2017.” Oracle. December 2016.

ABOUT OUTSELL

Outsell drives more revenue for auto dealers by transforming how they engage consumers throughout their lifecycle. Outsell makes dealers’ lives easier by keeping them in front of customers and prospects using automated marketing communications across channels – helping them retain more customers and attract new ones. Dealers using Outsell’s proprietary technology are tipped off when consumers are most ready to engage, buy, or service. The Outsell marketing platform manages millions of interactions every month for dealers representing all major automotive brands.

