

The Experience Every Customer Wants



What typically happens when a customer walks into the business office? In most cases, the customer automatically puts up a wall and does not want anything to do with the process. Most people say they would rather see a dentist than go to a dealership because of a past negative experience. But, what if all customers could feel 100% comfortable about the experience they will have when purchasing a vehicle? It is possible!

Between the internet and manufacturers, there are not as many opportunities to maximize front-end gross as there used to be. However, dealerships can make up for these lost opportunities on the back-end. In order to do this, the customer experience must be superior every time and something they would not expect from a dealership. How can dealerships create this level of customer experience? The answer is pretty simple. Listen to what the customer is saying they want or need, do not tell them what to buy. The best finance departments have one thing in common. They put the customer experience first and, thus, have extremely high back-end gross profits. One critical part of the customer experience is how the sales department turns them over to the business office. All salespeople should use the same word tracks to transfer the customer's trust to the business managers. Being able to transfer trust to the business office is very important to the customer's perception of a good dealership experience.

The next step is to treat the customer like a client, not like the next up. If the business manager is only worried about working their pay plan, it will be obvious to the customer. The simplest way to provide customers with a great experience is to listen to them and sell them based off their true needs instead of your own agenda. A quality introduction and customer interview can be powerful tools for the business manager. A good introduction should tell the customer about the dealership, the business manager, and the experience they can expect from the business office. The interview can help unveil the customer's true needs and make-or-break their overall experience. Make sure you focus on providing them with a world-class experience instead of pushing products to meet a "quota."

Along with focusing on a good buying experience for customers, it is equally important to focus on providing them with a good driving experience after they leave the dealership. The best way to do this is present products that will give the customer a worry-free driving experience based off their vehicle choice and lifestyle. To get the customer's buy-in on the presented products, they must clearly

understand the features, benefits, and how the products meet their specific needs. Ask the customer questions that put their mindset in real-life scenarios and will further justify the value of the products. Base the questions off the You Told Me (YTM) gathered during the interview:

- "Would you be able to pay a \$3,000 repair bill out of pocket once your vehicle hits 36,000 miles?"
- "Wouldn't it be nice not to worry about paying out of pocket or finding alternate transportation when you have to repair or replace your tire and wheel because of the pothole you hit on your way to work?"
- "What if you could have peace of mind knowing your new light tan leather and floorboards will be protected when the kids spill a red sports drink everywhere after a soccer tournament?"

While in the business office, customers do not remember all the issues they had with their previous vehicles. However, these questions may prompt them to remember a similar situation and how much they paid out of pocket, along with all the hassle. Emphasize to the customer that F&I products are designed to provide a worry-free driving experience.

Most of the time, dealerships gain loyal customers because of the complete experience (both buying and driving) and not because of the vehicle sale price. Again, dealerships that pride themselves on their customers' experiences have great CSI, good sales volume, and a large loyal customer base with repeat business. A customer will appreciate a business manager who took the time to educate them on how they can benefit from F&I products. Especially when they find themselves with a flat tire or cracked windshield, and they know everything will be easily taken care of.

So, how can a dealership build an experience-driven and not product-driven team? Be committed to training every department on how to treat and speak to a customer. Instill in the employees that meeting the customer's needs is priority and not pushing products. Continually provide them with development opportunities to ensure the business office maximizes back-end gross. Training and development is the key to business managers always delivering a world-class experience to customers.

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