



Upcoming DealersEdge webinars

The Chicago Automobile Trade Association has established a partnership with DealersEdge to provide high-quality training and informational webinars that offer the content to CATA member dealers at a significantly discounted rate.

The rate for CATA members for the weekly presentations is \$149, half what is charged to users who do not subscribe to DealersEdge. Webinars premiere on a near-weekly basis.

Even for dealers who hold an annual membership with DealersEdge, the new relationship with the CATA represents a savings because DealersEdge offers its Webinars to its own members for \$198. Regular annual membership fees are \$397, and normal webinar fees are \$298 for non-DealersEdge members.

Once purchased, DealersEdge webinars and accompanying PDF files can be downloaded and viewed later—and repeatedly. No matter how many people watch at your location, each connection costs a CATA member just \$149. A telephone connection is not needed; and the fee includes both PowerPoint slides and audio.

To register for any of the DealersEdge webinars, go to www.cata.info. On the tan bar across the top of the screen, click on Education/Careers and follow the dropdown menu to CATA-DealersEdge webinars.

Coming topics:

Premiering Thursday, Sept. 5 at 12 p.m. CDT

“Dealership Data Security in a World of More and More 3rd Party Vendors” When you grant access to your data to third-party vendors, that access may be putting you and the dealership in peril. Learn how to safeguard in this environment.

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7 signs that your social media presence needs help

Recent studies show that 70 percent of people are more inclined to do business with a dealership with which they can communicate through social media. That means that social media these days can make you or break you. It also means it's time for you to get on board and make your presence the best that it can be.

Do any of the following signs apply to you? It might

be time to start solving your social media problems:

1. When was the last time you posted?

Have you abandoned your page? You should be posting on a regular basis, and not just on Facebook. Twitter, Google+ and Pinterest also apply. If your page is abandoned, you might as well not even have one.

The fix: Start posting, at
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Car loans getting bigger, but most payments still on time

Many Americans are carrying higher auto loan balances, but the financial strain isn't resulting in more missed payments, new data shows.

Average auto loan balances have increased amid a strong market for cars and trucks this year, rising to \$13,435 in the second quarter. That's up 4.5 percent year-over-year and a 1.3 percent increase from the first quarter.

Many drivers have moved

to replace older vehicles after holding back on purchases for several years following the last recession. Low interest rates and good lease terms have also helped fuel U.S. auto sales, which jumped 14 percent to 1.3 million in July.

As more drivers have gone car shopping, lenders have responded, making loans available to more borrow-

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Webinars

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New systems and services are popping up almost daily in the car business. To benefit from the service offered, you oftentimes must grant access to your raw customer data. When faced with this request, you should ask if the data is safe. You should also consider all the downside risks.

This webinar will point out the risks involved when third parties have access to your data, and outline for you what safeguards you should employ to keep yourself as data-secure as possible.

- What to look for in vendors to make sure they are equipped to keep your data safe and secure
- A step-by-step guide to dealership data security including questions to ask your vendors about their data-handling policies
- The importance of SSAE Certification and why vendors should have it before they access your database.
- About critical policies, processes and procedures to keep your data secure
- Internal best practices to protect dealership and customer data.

Premiering Thursday, Sept. 12 at 12 p.m. CDT

“Learn How Google Wildfire is Recasting Digital Marketing Strategies for Auto Dealers” This webinar will describe how you can use Google’s Wildfire platform to provide a better customer experience and improve the ROI of your Digital Marketing/Social Media efforts.

The growth of the impact of Social Media platforms, coupled with the rapid growth in the number and use of mobile devices, has again turned the world of digital marketing on its ear. What you learned yesterday may no longer apply today.

Recent studies have determined that two-thirds of your marketing messages are being opened, read and interacted with on mobile devices. And that could be great — except most of your carefully crafted digital marketing efforts and not compatible with mobile devices. Ouch!

Keeping up with Google is a full-time job for many. Brian Pasch, a frequent DealersEdge contributor, does just that. He is so impressed with the capabilities of Google Wildfire that his firm has partnered with Google to specifically fit this platform into dealership digital marketing efforts. Learn:

- Why device-independent website pages are critical for reaching customers
- Why social media advertising opens new doors to reach in-market shoppers
- Why Polk vehicle ownership data is powering social media advertising success
- How to expand the leads and sales opportunities for your dealership with a mobile marketing strategy

Northwood’s ‘golden’ auto show is Sept. 27-29 in Midland, Mich.

In marking its 50th show in 2013, the Northwood University International Auto Show’s upcoming theme is “Cruising Through the Golden Anniversary.” The three-day show is Sept. 27-29 at the university’s Midland, Mich., campus.

“We want to celebrate the past, present and future of the auto show and the auto industry,” said Adam LaFurgey, the Northwood show’s general chairman. “Our decade-inspired displays will showcase the best of the automotive industry and incredible opportunity it has for the future. This show will be one to remember.”

More than 600 students are working to create a show that attracts about 50,000 visitors a year. The show, held during the peak of the autumn season at Northwood’s heavily wooded campus, features about 500 new domestic and imported cars, trucks, recreational vehicles, vans, experimental and specialty vehicles, plus various exciting automotive aftermarket products.

For more information and a schedule of events, go to www.northwood.edu/autoshow or call the show’s public relations chairwoman, Kristin Hammond, at (989) 837-4823.

Loans

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ers, even those with less-than-perfect credit. The new loans, which tend to have higher balances early on, are pushing up the average balance.

But Americans are keeping up with the payments. The rate of U.S. auto-loan payments late by 60 days or more was essentially flat in the April-June quarter, inching to 0.80 percent from 0.79 percent in the second quarter of last year, credit reporting agency TransUnion said. The delinquency rate fell from 0.88 percent in the first three months of the year.

“It’s encouraging to see consumers take on more auto debt while delinquencies remain low,” said Peter Turek, TransUnion’s vice president of automotive.

The CATA Bulletin is produced by the
Chicago Automobile Trade Association
18W200 Butterfield Rd. Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181-4810

The CATA Bulletin is distributed via blast e-mail every other Friday except during the Chicago Auto Show, when it is not produced.

Listings of items for sale are subject to the approval of the CATA. Candidates for employment must submit a full resume to the Editor. Review past editions dating to 1998 or search by subject at www.cata.info.

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More women than men prefer auto leasing: study

Dealers may hesitate to classify their lease customers based on gender because both sexes are looking for good deals. But female leasing priorities can differ, according to some observers.

Understanding those differences can help close a deal and boost customer satisfaction.

“Women have a more enjoyable experience when leasing,” said Anne Fleming, president of Women-Drivers.com, a review service that certifies dealers who meet certain guidelines. “They feel less pressure.”

Women who lease from a dealership are more likely than men to recommend that store, she added. “Women are looking for more flexible options at the dealership,” and the relatively straight-forward nature of a lease contract is attractive to them.

Women upfront know the monthly payment, which often is lower than that of a purchased vehicle, so there is less haggling to get the best deal.

“Our research revealed women feel more confident (about leasing) and less confused,” Fleming said.

Dealers who want to

draw more female lease prospects should advertise to inform women about leasing’s advantages, she said. “It comes down to educating and making things simpler. That, along with social media, is a key way to get women into the dealership.”

Women appear more budget-minded in selecting a leased vehicle. A survey of 700 drivers conducted jointly by Women-Drivers.com and Swapalease.com indicated men prefer to lease upscale brands such as BMW and Cadillac. Women learned toward Honda, Toyota, and Nissan.

Low monthly payments were a priority for women, with 44 percent seeking to pay \$299 or less, compared with 25 percent of men. Women preferred longer leases: 34 percent liked 36-month leases, while 40 percent of men favored 24-month leases.

“Absolutely, women lease because of the lower monthly payment,” said H. Paul Ritchie, president of Hagerstown Honda in Hagerstown, Md.

Ritchie leases to more women than men, but he also has more women customers overall. Knowing they “can turn and walk away when the lease payments are up” also appeals to women customers, Ritchie said.



Maintenance plans on leased vehicles are big selling points, one sales manager said.

Though much of the car’s maintenance is covered by the factory warranty, Hagerstown Honda sells a lot of maintenance plans to women lessees, Ritchie said. That allows for more personal financial-planning certainty.

“They know what their budget is on the car month after month,” he said.

Maintenance plans on leased vehicles are big selling points at Sierra Honda in Monrovia, Calif., said sales manager Ellen Leung. Her women customers like to buy oil-change, roadside-assistance and wheel-and-tire protection packages with their leases.

Women are more likely than men to lease a new vehicle — 21 percent compared to 18 percent, according to J.D. Power and Associates. Women ages 18 to 34 years old have the highest lease

rates, at 26 percent.

The 2013 study confirms what dealers are seeing. Lower monthly payments, lower maintenance costs, a greater ability to obtain financing and the “deal” are factors for why many women lease rather than buy vehicle, the study determined.

At Longo Toyota/Scion in El Monte, Calif., more and more women ask about leasing, said new-car sales director Aaron Misajon. He attributes that to Toyota’s aggressive ad campaign promoting leasing.

Another factor comes into play, too, Misajon said: “Women are more open to listening to the pros and cons of leasing. For a lot of men, if they are not interested in leasing, then they are done.”

August: Best sales month since 2006?

Retail new-vehicle deliveries were set to reach 1.27 million units for August, J.D. Power projected in the month’s closing days, which would be up 12 percent from August 2012 and translates to a seasonally adjusted

annual selling rate (SAAR) of 13.1 million units.

The Power forecast signals that August may be the best month for retail deliveries in the past seven years.

Social media

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minimum, two or three times a week. At KPA, we promote posting daily — seven days a week, including the weekends. Find the amount that works best for you.

2. What kind of things are you posting?

Do you post anything and everything? Stop. Stop right now. In the past, this was common, but now we know better. When you post, you want it to be strong and efficient.

The fix: Post automotive content that relates to your community. Use local content for your local business. Make it interesting!

3. Is your engagement ratio low?

To be safe, your engagement ratio should be about 5 percent, which is above the industry average of 1.7 percent. To figure out your engagement ratio, look at your “talking about this” number and divide it by the number of page likes.

The fix: Begin a localized following. Engage your community and communicate with them through relative posts and quick responses.

4. Do your competitors show up when you search for your dealership?

Sometimes when you type your dealership into Google search, you might see that your competitor shows up in your results. This is unnerving, but with some devotion to where you’re posting, you can own your results page.

The fix: Focus heavily on your Google+ page, posting regularly. Google searches Google+ regularly. Your results should shift within 24 hours of posting to Google+, slowly eliminating the competitor showing on your search

page. Additionally, using Google+ will keep your search information above the fold. Using Google+ is quick and easy and makes a huge impact on your search.

5. Do you leverage your brand?

Your OEM spends millions, or even billions, of dollars a year on advertising. Are you taking advantage of that effort?

The fix: Use the content created by the OEM. Repost the items and correlate them with your individual dealership.

6. Do you communicate?

Do you solve problems and complaints that may arise? Do you respond when someone is merely contributing to the conversation? Once again, it’s important to respond to every comment. This is an opportunity to address issues before they go to channels that you can’t control, like Yelp. This is an opportunity for your customers to communicate with you and gain a relationship before they even come into the dealership.

The fix: Always respond to any comment posted on your page, quickly. Turn an angry customer into a return customer. Discuss community-relevant content.

7. Do you advertise?

It’s easy to use Facebook to boost a post. For \$5 to \$20, you can increase the number of people who see your posts.

The fix: Boost! Make sure your best content is seen as much as possible.

That’s it. Change these seven steps of your social media and you will be on your way to greater leads.

This article is provided by KPA, a provider of Internet marketing services including Social Media for more than 5,100 dealerships and service companies. Contact KPA at info@kpaonline.com or (800) 853-9659.

Industry sponsors sought for uniforms for collision repair students

A Hoffman Estates-based foundation that helps secondary and post-secondary school collision students is seeking sponsors to pay for technician shirts and work pants for the students embarking on the new school year. Representatives of the Collision Repair Education Foundation said the more engaged automobile industry members are with the schools, the better prepared the collision students will be to enter the industry after graduation.

Kadel’s Auto Body, a multishop operator in Oregon, recently sponsored the purchase of uniforms for collision students at Portland (Ore.) Community College. Instructor George Warneke said: “The timing of this donation was perfect.

“The students are starting the last term of their two-year certificate in auto collision repair, and the uniforms help them look and feel professional as they go out into the workforce.”

Brandon Eckenrode, development director at the Collision Repair Education Foundation, said many industry members aren’t aware of their local collision school programs. “In order to fulfill the industry’s dire need of capable and efficient entry-level workers, we all need to start taking an active role with these collision programs,” Eckenrode said. “Sponsoring these work uniforms is a great initial opportunity to support local collision school programs.”

At \$50 a student, the work uniforms include a pair of Cintas work pants and technician shirt. Businesses that sponsor at least 100 uniforms will have their company logo screen printed on the back of the shirts.

To identify local collision school programs and to learn more about the sponsorship opportunity, contact Eckenrode at (847) 463-5244 or Brandon.Eckenrode@ed-foundation.org.

Newest Chicago Auto Outlook is online

The latest edition tracks new- and used-vehicle July sales in the eight counties in which the CATA has concerns. Get it at www.cata.info/publication/chicago_auto_outlook_current.