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CATA golf June 11 at Cog Hill

Be part of the CATA's annual golf outing, which returns with a noon shotgun start on Tuesday, June 11 at Cog Hill Golf & Country Club in Lemont. Or register for just dinner at 6 p.m.

All registrants receive a nice gift, and many golfers will win prizes that range up to \$25,000 for a hole-in-one. Golfers also get a cart, advance access to the driving range, lunch, and beverages at sponsored locations.



Dealer members of the association can secure golf tickets for \$95 each; for allied members, \$125 each. Dinner-only tickets are \$75. For full details and to register, call the CATA at (630) 495-2282.

NADA to automakers: Abandon auto shows at your own peril

BY PETER WELCH, PRESIDENT NATIONAL AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSN.

There is no doubt that the way we market new vehicles has changed radically during the past few years. OEMs and franchised new-car dealers have more ways to spend their marketing budgets than ever before, and pinpoint e-commerce tools and digital targeting have enhanced these marketing advances. But one star continues to shine: auto shows.

In 2005, the average customer visited a dealership 6.1 times prior to purchasing a new vehicle. Today that number has dropped to 2.4 visits. So where do consumers go to actually touch and feel

new vehicle product? Given their physical presence, auto shows are a unique, experiential channel where consumers, armed with information gathered online, can evaluate vehicles first-hand across all segments and brands.

And while auto shows measurably ignite consumer excitement for a brand, perhaps their greatest impact is on vehicle purchase consideration and brand loyalty — the two metrics that just so happen to matter more than any other in today's ultra-competitive market. Auto shows do this by concurrently introducing new potential customers into a brand's pipeline while reaffirming the brand's unique value proposition for

Thinking of hosting a fundraiser for the USO July 13? Get registered!

For dealerships considering an aggressive, marketing whether to participate in the upcoming USO fundraiser, consider this: It is vital to register right away in order to be included in all the various promotions planned by the Chicago Automobile Trade Association.



The CATA is developing a wide promotional campaign leading up to the July 13 event. All CATA messaging will direct individuals to www.DriveChicago.com to find a list of participating dealers, with links to information on any specific events.

SEE **BBQ**, PAGE 3

current customers in a meaningful way. For example, we know that many millennials delayed their first new-vehicle purchase until later in life than previous generations. As a result, their introduction to OEM brands was delayed. But millennials today are buying new cars at a higher rate than they did a decade ago. According to a recent Strategic Vision report, the percentage of new-vehicle sales to consumers under the age of 35 was 19.3 percent. In 2007, it was 16.6 percent. And guess who's coming to many auto shows at a higher rate than any other demographic? That's right; millennials.

SEE **AUTO SHOWS**, PAGE 4

Wait, you use social media ... but don't have a content calendar?

By **PATRICK MCFARLAND**
ITS LOGISTICS

You wouldn't plan a big family vacation around the world without creating an itinerary, would you? Of course not, and you shouldn't be using social media without a coordinated schedule either.

In order to succeed with a social media strategy, you need to post on a consistent basis and keep your audience engaged — and a content calendar will help you accomplish that. So, how do you get started?

The first step is choosing a platform for your shiny new calendar. Micro-

soft Excel is a great place to start, or if Google is your jam, try Google Sheets or Google Calendar. There are also several free online organizational tools like Evernote and Trello that are highly recommended. Or if you have the need and the budget, more robust tools like Sprout Social or CoSchedule are available.

With a platform in place, the next step is to organize your content into categories and get started on the path to social media scheduling nirvana. Here are a few that everyone can use regardless of service or product:

1. Brand awareness/promotional:

Sell your service, offer a deal, talk about your next event, etc.

2. Conversation-starter: Post a timely news article, offer your thoughts and ask your audience theirs.

3. Educational/informational: Establish your expertise and give your audience useful and educational information.

4. Fun/entertainment: Why not be the first one to share that funny meme or crazy cat video?

5. Inspirational/motivational: Drop a motivational quote, recommend a good book or share your favorite healthy recipe.

Graduating high schooler earns CATA grant for more schooling

The Chicago Automobile Trade Association on May 24 presented the 2019 Spirit of Carol Cooling Scholarship to a graduating senior at a northwest suburban high school. Tyler Delahanty received a \$1,000 grant to put toward future studies.

The CATA established the scholarship in 2014 to honor Cooling, an alumna of John Hersey High School, in Arlington Heights, and a longtime special events director at NBC 5 Chicago who succumbed to cancer in 2013. As owner of the Chicago Auto Show, the CATA worked closely with Cooling

to produce live TV auto show specials, many of which won Emmy Awards.

“Carol inspired everyone with whom she came in contact, and not just through her work ethic; it was her passion, determination and perseverance for living a life she loved that showed her true colors,” said CATA President Dave Sloan. “With the Spirit of Carol Cooling Scholarship, our hope is that her legacy lives on, and that she continues to inspire students to become the best version of themselves — even when life doesn't deal you the finest cards.”

John Novak, Hersey's assistant principal for student activities, said that Delahanty was an “exceptional choice for the award,” as Delahanty is heavily involved in a number of activities both inside and outside of school. Despite all of that extracurricular involvement, Delahanty has been able to maintain a 4.05 GPA and score a 32 on his ACT.

At Hersey, Delahanty has been a part of the theater tech crew and a member of the scholastic bowl team, and was inducted into the National Honor Society and the World Language Honor Society.



Tyler Delahanty, right, with CATA President Dave Sloan.

Delahanty will use his scholarship money for tuition costs this fall in Ohio at the University of Dayton, where he will study education.

May sales forecasts mixed

J.D. Power and LMC Automotive were predicting 1,226,800 retail new-car sales for May, which would be a 3.1 percent year-over-year dip and the fifth straight month of softer sales, Auto Remarketing reported May 29.

But some dealers are getting a shot in the arm from their used-car sales, which for franchised dealers have grown nearly 6 percent month-to-date, according to J.D. Power.

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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/publication/bulletins.

David E. Sloan
Erik K. Higgins

President, Publisher
Editor, Director of Dealer Affairs

NADA, ATD leadership search for next generation of service techs

While overall employment at U.S. franchised new-car and -truck dealerships continues to rise, dealers say they still are having a hard time finding and hiring service technicians.

“We could hire 20 to 30 auto techs immediately. Every store needs techs,” said Charlie Gilchrist, chairman of the National Automobile Dealers Association. “Every dealer I talk to is in the same situation. The industry is facing a critical shortage of service technicians.”

About 39,000 new service techs graduate each year from U.S. career technical colleges and training programs. Yet the industry needs to replace nearly 76,000 techs each year to keep up with retirements and new job demand. That leaves an annual shortfall of about 37,000 trained techs, the NADA estimates.

“Our biggest focus right now is recruiting and training people,” said Gilchrist, who operates franchises at five locations in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. “Dealer involvement is critical. Dealers need to get involved with the recruiting and hiring process to make this work.”

At Gilchrist’s Ford dealership in Weatherford, Texas, students from the local high school’s automotive technology program are offered internships where they shadow full-time techs and observe the day-to-

day service work being performed.

“Candidates who show an interest in the profession are then encouraged to consider a full-time position after they graduate from high school and follow a career path that includes full certification from the manufacturer,” he said.

Gilchrist’s service director also serves on the high school’s advisory board, working with instructors and administrators to implement programs and policies that best prepare graduates for real-world employment opportunities.

For Jodie Teuton, chairwoman of the American Truck Dealers, the service technician shortage at her eight commercial-truck dealership locations in Louisiana has become so acute that she hired a full-time recruiting and training manager to fill vacant positions.

“Our goal this year is to hire an additional 51 service techs from all tier levels,” said Teuton, vice president of Kenworth of Louisiana, a full-service dealership with seven locations, and full-service Hino dealerships in Baton Rouge and Monroe. “That includes hiring master techs and others with varying levels of expertise to keep up with current and anticipated demand.”

To spark interest in service technician careers at automotive and com-

mercial-truck dealerships, the NADA Foundation this year rolled out a new multi-faceted Workforce Initiative, which includes a new website, nadafoundation.org, and videos featuring technicians identifying what they like about their careers.

An immediate goal of the initiative, which is gaining financial support from across the entire industry, is to fill OEM technician training programs to capacity. To help accomplish that, the NADA Foundation website includes the first and only interactive U.S. map of training and scholarship opportunities available to aspiring technicians.

“This can be a great career path that does not require a four-year college degree. It’s important to realize that in most cases upon completion of a reputable training program, potential employers will be ready to hire them immediately,” Teuton added. “We believe in growing our employees from within, and we give them all the tools necessary to continue their development.”

So far, the NADA Foundation has received a \$100,000 donation from Toyota Motor North America; \$50,000 from PACCAR (Kenworth and Peterbilt); \$50,000 from the National Auto Auction Association; and \$25,000 from Porsche Cars North America.

BBQ

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

But after the print ads are developed, it might not be possible to add registration latecomers.

The registration process can be completed by contacting Jim OBrill, the CATA’s marketing director, at jobrill@drivechicago.com and (630) 424-6085.

Some popular fundraising activities include:

- **Car Washes**, with dealers asking for donations;
- **Lunch specials** for employees and their families and friends. Leave the brown bag at home and eat in, to support the troops with a donation;
- **Cornhole/BagGames**. No American barbecue is complete without a corn-

hole/bags tourney!

• **Social Media Donations**. Enlist employees to promote the dealership’s USO Barbecue for the Troops through their Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and similar accounts, to collect additional donations through an event page.

A record 115 area new-car dealerships last year raised a combined \$157,000 dur-

ing July fundraisers for the USO of Illinois, and Turtle Wax donated an additional \$25,000 toward the Barbecue for the Troops campaign.

The \$182,000 collected helps USO of Illinois serve more than 325,000 active duty, guard and reserve military and military family members annually through three program areas including USO centers.

James Bond to drive electric Aston Martin in next film: media reports

Famous for his high speed car chases, James Bond hardly is an obvious tree hugger. But the world's best known spy apparently has gone green, with British media reporting that he is switching to an electric Aston Martin.

The suave secret agent, played by Daniel Craig, will be taking to the wheel of the luxury car company's new \$330,000 Rapide E, its first electric car, in the 25th Bond movie, the reports said.

Aston Martin confirmed it was manufacturing a limited edition of 155 models of the car, but refused to say whether "007" would be driving one in the film due out next year.

Britain's Sun newspaper reported that the decision was spearheaded by the film's director, Cary Joji Fukunaga, quoting an insider who described him



as a "total tree-hugger".

"Everybody is afraid of Bond getting labeled 'too PC' (politically correct), but they all felt the time was right to put him in a zero-emission vehicle," the insider was quoted as saying.

American Fukunaga replaced British director Danny Boyle, who pulled out of the movie last year due to "creative differences."

Craig will be playing Bond for a fifth time in the as yet untitled movie. It is

expected to be his last stint as the secret agent created by author Ian Fleming in 1953.

Powered by an 800-volt battery system, the Rapide E is expected to have a top speed of 155 mph with a 0-60 mph acceleration time of under 4 seconds, according to Aston Martin.

But there is one snag: Bond may have to find someplace to plug in after 200 miles.

Global automakers are planning a \$300 billion surge in spending on electric vehicle technology over the next five to 10 years, according to a Reuters analysis.

The growth is driven largely by environmental concerns and government policy, and supported by rapid technological advances that have improved battery cost, range and charging time.

Auto Shows

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

And they buy. Dr. Richard Waterman, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School who has been examining auto show impact on consumers for 20 years, finds that auto show attendees are consistently twice as likely to make a new-vehicle purchase in the year following their show visit than the general population.

According to Foresight Research, auto show attendees cited show attendance as more influential on their purchase decision than digital advertising, direct marketing or event sponsorship. What's more, among new-vehicle buyers who attended an auto show prior to making a purchase, 56 percent indicated their purchase was influenced by the show they attended, with 21 percent of buyers attending an auto show purchasing a brand they were not already considering before the show. And of those who reported they would be in the market to buy a new vehicle within a year of attending one recent auto show, 90 percent said their auto show visit had influenced what vehicle they would ultimately purchase.

The numbers simply don't lie. When it comes to generating meaningful consumer experiences that enhance purchase consideration and brand loyalty — and that lead to sales — local-focused content and events are king. Local and regional auto show organizers and involved dealer groups know what will move the needle, and an OEM has the opportunity to communicate with current and potential consumers in their own backyards, often with local brand representatives who

speak to consumers in terms with which they are comfortable and who will heighten their relationship with the brand.

Unfortunately, a number of OEMs have recently decided to pull back their investments in auto shows — often in favor of new digital tools. And while digital's potential for marketing is growing, the gritty reality is that many consumers require an in-person experience with a product before purchase.

Luckily, OEMs don't have to reinvent the wheel. America's auto shows are a proven investment that pays high dividends, not just in raw sales but in brand excitement and customer experience — particularly when consumers are questioning whether the time is right to buy a new vehicle at all. This is why smart automakers don't see auto shows as a relic of the past, but rather as a launchpad for their digital marketing prowess.

It is true that show costs have unfortunately escalated in recent years — as convention centers have raised rates, displays have become more sophisticated, and the cost of logistics continue to rise. But that's no justification for throwing the baby out with the bathwater. And the brand gurus know this. There's a big difference between expenses and investments. We hope the OEMs come back around to what dealers know and what the numbers show: Auto shows drive sales and brand loyalty.

Let's find a way to harness that reality and make auto shows work better for us. The numbers clearly tell us that showing the metal is still the best way to move the metal.