



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 drop-down menu to CATA-DealersEdge webinars.

Coming topics:

Thursday, Nov. 29 at 12 p.m. CST

“Learn the Secrets and Savings of Consolidating Back Office Operations for Multi-Location Dealer Groups” Many have tried and failed. Learn about those who have made it work and work well.

It makes a lot of sense. So many back office tasks are

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Voting brisk in Chicagoland Dealers Care Facebook contest

Nearly 7,000 votes had been cast in the first week of a monthlong Chicagoland Dealers Care contest on Facebook. The contest continues through Dec. 12.

The 4-year-old Chicagoland Dealers Care program supports area nonprofits that are favored by CATA dealerships. In the Facebook contest, a gallery of 19 dealers and the charities they support are featured. Visitors to the Facebook page can vote for a favorite charity, and the top three vote-getters will win cash donations.

The winning charity gets a \$3,500 donation and pro-

duction of a Chicagoland Dealers Care public service announcement that will appear on NBC 5 Chicago and the websites of the charity program and the television station.

Second prize is a \$2,500 donation and third prize is a \$1,000 donation.

Beyond the contest, Chicagoland Dealers Care donates up to \$1,500 to nonprofits that are supported by area dealers. Grant requests have come from a variety of causes: academic programs, cultural arts, performing arts, medical research, and even

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Auto show telecast wins Emmy

NBC 5 Chicago on Nov. 18 captured an Emmy for its coverage of the 2012 Chicago Auto Show. WGN-TV also was nominated for its auto show broadcast.

The WMAQ-TV special, “NBC 5 Presents the 2012 Chicago Auto Show,” won in the category, “Outstand-

ing Achievement for Special Event Coverage (Live).” WGN-TV Channel 9 was competing in a related category, for edited special event coverage, with its program, “The 2012 Chicago Auto Show.”

The Emmys were present-

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Webinars

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duplicated by individual dealership locations that could benefit from economies-of-scale and more efficient use of your most talented staff. But all too often the attempted consolidation fails to deliver or is so frustrating that it is scrapped altogether.

This webinar features Jodi Kippe and Mercedes Hendricks from the Dealer Services Group at Crowe Horwath., who will detail how some dealer groups have attained huge savings and improved efficiencies by consolidating many support functions. You will learn:

- How to merge different policies, floor plans, and OEM financials
- Why setting up a standard chart of accounts for all points is essential for improved efficiency
- How to get the DMS to do more of the work
- The benefits of having standard report formats
- Ways to streamline reporting for financial statements, bank reconciliations, accounts receivables analysis, floor plan payoffs, and vendor payments

Thursday, Dec. 6 at 12 p.m. CST

“How to Analyze Your DMS Billing and Systematically Reduce Costs” There is tons of money to be saved by shaving your DMS monthly charges. Learn what DMS vendors don't want you to know.

Dealership data processing costs are huge. But according to expert Paul Gillrie, much of what you get invoiced for every month can be either unnecessary or just plain wrong. Join this session and learn from Paul's insight and analysis of thousands of dealership DMS bills.

Find out where you are overspending by getting charged for services you do not use! You will learn:

- How your monthly bill compares to other dealers paying for similar services
- How discounts and benefits negotiated need to be continually checked
- What typical items appear on monthly bills but are no longer used — what is cancelable
- Are increases in rates allowed under your agreement?
- Can you get refunds for overpayments?

Contest

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humanitarian needs.

Some initiatives have been developed into 15-second spots broadcast on NBC 5, and all are trumpeted on the CATA's weekly radio show, “Drive Chicago,” at 8 a.m. Saturdays on WLS 890 AM; and on the association's website, ChicagolandDealersCare.com.

Crazy colors a hit on small cars

Rankings of the most popular car colors generally are fairly conservative, with whites and grays making up the top of the list. But, for some reason, small cars — and especially very small cars — tend to steer their own course on colors.

On tiny cars, loud, odd-ball colors are the rule.

There are a few reasons that colors such as “Lime Squeeze” are popular in petite cars, said Nancy Lockhart, color marketing manager for DuPont's automotive coatings divisions.

First, small cars tend to be purchased by younger people who haven't yet had the youthful nonconformity crushed out of their souls. (That happens later. Then they buy gray mid-sized family sedans.)

Second, bright colors tend to look better in small doses. A color that might seem garish on a large car can be tolerable and even fun on a tiny car like the Ford Fiesta.

And third, said Lockhart, these small cars are usually new to the U.S. market, even ones from Detroit brands such as Ford and Chevy. So they're carrying with them color schemes that were popular in their original home markets of Europe and Asia.

Annual AIADA meeting is Feb. 11

Circle Feb. 11, 2013, in Orlando, Fla., for the next American International Automobile Dealers Association's annual meeting and luncheon.

Featuring keynote remarks from Mercedes-Benz USA President and CEO Steve Cannon, the gathering will provide dealers with valuable insight into how the U.S. economy is driven by the international nameplate auto industry. It also will also help dealers understand how they can maintain their edge in today's economic and political climate.

During the meeting, the 2012 AIADA chairman, Ray Mungenast of Missouri, will pass the gavel to incoming chairwoman, Jenell Ross of Ohio. A distinguished industry member also will be presented with the 2013 David F. Mungenast Lifetime Achievement Award.

To register, call 1-800-GO-AIADA.

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Review past editions dating to 1998 or search by subject at www.cata.info.

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Some car shoppers suffer information overload

Most people go online as soon as they decide to buy a new vehicle, spending an average of 16 weeks shopping for models before visiting a dealership.

A few early birds begin much sooner, says Arianne Walker, a senior director at J.D. Power and Associates.

“Some start online shopping two years before buying a car,” she said. “For others, it’s a few weeks.”

Four out of five Americans use the Internet to car-shop and research. They consider it an important activity, but not necessarily an enjoyable one. Many people complain about information overload, according to a J.D. Power survey.

“More information sources plus the sheer number of auto options equals overload,” Walker said at the company’s recent Automotive Internet Roundtable in Las Vegas. “This is especially true among millennials.”

J.D. Power’s monitoring of social-media website chats detects such frustrations. One Internet user wrote: “Car shopping is exhausting and confusing. With every search online, I have to drink a sip of wine.”

Too much information can shake confidence and delay purchase decisions, Walker said.

Some Internet car shoppers worry about potential online-offline disconnects. “I hope these prices are the same at the lot as they are

online,” someone said on a social-media website. Another wrote, “Salesmen really get miffed when prices online are cheaper than on their sheets.”

Dealerships can help reduce the car-shopping stress and bridge the online-offline gap, Walker says. “As Retail 3.0 takes hold, the information and experiences need to be the same across channels,” she said.

Walker advises dealers to focus on both the pricing and emotional side of the buying experience and to “reach out to consumers who are feeling a disconnect.”

Dealers can help shoppers close in on a purchase by highlighting vehicles that best meet their needs, Walker said. For instance, a young family that drives 22,000 miles a year, enjoys the outdoors and has a household income of less than \$60,000 requires a certain range of vehicles, Walker said.

Although more people are using smartphones and other mobile devices, J.D. Power research indicates 99 percent of Internet car shoppers use their desktop computers, 70 percent exclusively.

Almost 30 percent of Internet car shoppers use multiple devices. Of that group, 20 percent use smartphones and 18 percent use computer tablets.

Car-shopping on desktop computers peaks during work hours (9 a.m.-12 p.m.), while mobile-device use is heaviest between 8 p.m. and 11 p.m.

Online shoppers are most interested in car prices, followed by model information and vehicle comparisons, said Walker.

Internet shoppers are more willing to travel farther to a dealership once they are ready to buy. “For dealers, that means more customers,” said Walker. “But it also means more competition.”

More than 70 percent of Internet shoppers do not submit online quote requests, Walker said, “primarily because they don’t want to give up information to a dealer. They want to do things on their own time. Fifty-four percent of those not submitting quote requests said they were reluctant to be contacted by a dealer.”

Despite the high level of Internet activity, Walker said the dealership experience remains critical. “After doing all that research online, people go to the dealership to truly kick the tires,” she said.

The customer experience is “becoming the last battleground,” said Don Butler, vice president-marketing for General Motors’ Cadillac division and a speaker at the roundtable.

“Customer experience can be a differentiator,” said Butler. “It doesn’t have to cost a lot of money. It’s respecting people’s time, helping facilitate the process and doing little things, such as greeting them by name.”

Fiscal cliff not a big threat to car sales, Edmunds analysis says

As 2012 winds down, so too does the country come closer to the fiscal cliff — the \$600-plus billion slate of mandatory tax increases and government spending cuts due to take effect Jan. 1.

In the worst case scenarios, analysts claim that “going over the cliff” could reduce

GDP and send the country spiraling into recession in 2013. The good news is that even the experts assign a low probability to the government doing nothing about the potential fiscal changes.

The more likely compromise scenarios involve more limited tax hikes and spend-

ing cuts and, as such would have a more limited economic impact, including on car sales in 2013.

President Barack Obama ran on a platform of raising taxes. In particular, he has strongly supported letting the Bush-era tax cuts expire for individuals earning more

than \$200,000 and households earning more than \$250,000 a year.

But according to Edmunds, such tax increases would affect only about 4 percent to 5 percent of car buyers, and those wealthy buyers would not be less likely to make car purchases.

Many dealerships to pause for year-end holidays: CATA survey

Ninety-four dealers responded to a recent query about their operating hours over the coming Christmas and New Year's holidays.

The results show all operations will pause on Christmas Day and many on New Year's Day. Activity is more varied on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

The chart below summarizes how dealerships will treat the holidays.

Unionized technicians are entitled to paid days off Dec.

24 and 25 and Jan. 1, unless a shop agreement has been reached.

In all cases, workers must work their regularly scheduled day before and after the holiday in order to receive pay on the holiday, unless the worker is off-work or on an employer-approved vacation or leave.

Dealers with union questions should call the CATA's labor relations counsel, Franczek Sullivan P.C., at (312) 986-0300.

Holiday operating hours			
Date	Open (full day)	Open (part day)	Closed
Dec. 24			
Service	0	9	85
Sales	1	56	37
Other	1	23	73
Dec. 25			
Service	0	0	94
Sales	0	0	94
Other	0	0	94
Jan. 1			
Service	0	0	94
Sales	0	22	74
Other	0	2	92

Emmy

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ed by the Chicago/Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. The chapter awarded Emmys in 64 categories during a Nov. 19 ceremony in Chicago.

Michael Ettleson, chairman of the 2013 Chicago Auto Show, said NBC 5's win and WGN's nomination confirm the commitment of the city's media to promote the nation's premier auto show.

"We do our part," Ettleson said, "to present an auto show worthy of the coverage, and my hat is off to the stations for their work to broadcast the event in a manner worthy of an Emmy."

Women drivers outnumber men

Women have passed men on the nation's roads. Indeed, more women than men now have driver's licenses, a reversal of a longtime gender gap behind the wheel that transportation researchers say is likely to have safety and economic implications.

If current trends continue, the gap will only widen. The share of teens and young adults of both sexes with driver's licenses is declining, but the decline is greater for young men, according to a study by the University of Michigan's Transportation Research Institute. The study looked at gender trends in driver's licenses between 1995 and 2010.

"The changing gender demographics will have major implications on the extent and nature of vehicle demand, energy consumption, and road safety," predicted Michael Sivak, co-author of the study. Women are more likely than men to purchase smaller, safer and more fuel-efficient cars; to drive less, and to have a lower fatality rate per distance driven, he said.

Over the 15 years the study examined, the share of men ages 25 to 29 years old with driver's licenses dropped 10.6 percent. The share of women of the same age with driver's licenses declined by about half that amount, 4.7 percent.

Male drivers outnumbered women drivers from the moment the first Ford Model T rolled off the assembly line

in 1908, the year the automobile became popular, and through most of the last century. In the 1950s, when only about half of adult women had driver's licenses, jokes about women drivers were a staple of comedians.

But the gap gradually closed. By 1995, men with driver's licenses slightly outnumbered women, 89.2 million to 87.4 million. By 2010, 105.7 million women had licenses, compared with 104.3 million men.

Likewise, in 1995 men with driver's licenses outnumbered women in every age group except those over 70. By 2010, women outnumbered men among drivers ages 45 and older and between ages 25 and 29 years old. The share of older women who are also on hanging onto their driver's licenses also has increased.

"I want to be in my own car for as long as possible. I want to be independent for as long as I can," said Diane Spitaliere, 58, a retired government worker in Alexandria, Va.

Male drivers under age 44 are still slightly more numerous than women of the same age, but that's only because young men outnumber young women in the general population, the study said. There now are 105 boys born each year for every 100 girls in the U.S. Women outnumber men later in life because they live longer — an average of 80 years for women, compared with about 75 years for men.