

Empathetic Marketing Strategies



1

Adjust Marketing Campaign Timelines

Audit everything you have currently running or in your pipeline (especially any pre-scheduled content or messages) and decide what should be paused immediately. Some pre-scheduled content may not be appropriate or applicable during this crisis.

Next, consider what needs to be prioritized or what needs to pivot. For example, you may want to turn off, pause, or adjust your automated CRM emails to customers so that the templated messages don't come off as non-empathic or uncaring during this pandemic.

Lastly, stay up to speed on the quarantine advisements in your geographic area so you can be proactive in your communication once things get back to normal.

2

Evaluate Your Images and Copy

Avoid visuals of crowds or people touching. This includes people working in showrooms or at the appearance of a crowded sales event.

Re-frame any marketing copy that describes close interaction. Reconsider figurative language like "get in touch," or "contact us now." Messages encouraging immediate interaction may be deeply scrutinized at this time.

3

Don't Capitalize on This Crisis

Keep people informed. Dealerships must communicate in response to the crisis, as it pertains to their business. For example, you should communicate about the proactive measures you're taking, store closures, or policy updates related to COVID-19.

Avoid bragging. Remember that many people are not working during this time and are genuinely worried. As a default, a spirit of humility and empathy should be a filter for anything your brand says in the near future.

Mind your tone. No "Hot COVID-19 sales!" or other tactless messaging. However, COVID-19 is a credible and believable reason as to why your dealership needs to have a sale. You would be better served explaining the impact the virus is having on your business and employees as a way to justify your special pricing.

4

Invest in Your Marketing If You Can

Many dealerships will take their foot off of the marketing pedal. This gives you an opportunity to easily take market share from them.

Many dealerships may not be able to invest in marketing due to lost sales. If that's the case, then simply skip this tip.

However, even if your dealership is closed, there is a huge opportunity for everyone and **this is easily the most important takeaway of this quick marketing guide.** Now, more than ever, is the time for you to invest more (intelligently more – not just more), not less in your marketing. That is how you will come out of this faster and stronger in the months and years to come.

Dealers who continue to run effective marketing campaigns always steal market share from dealers who don't. **It takes 3-4 years for dealers to win back lost business – if at all.**

PRO TIP

If you pull back - only pull back on marketing that you can't track, test and measure.

Invest in marketing that produces an immediate result such as a phone call, text, lead form, email... Right now everything else is a waste.

5

Reassess & Reallocate Your Marketing Budget

Clearly, sale and service events are simply not an option with the COVID-19 pandemic. If you were planning to invest \$X into a sale/service event or other in-person events, **now is the time to divert that budget into other channels, such as digital marketing and digital retailing.**

Remember, quarantines won't last forever! Consumers are continuing to shop and research for their next vehicle. When quarantines end, the dealers who have engaged with more people, who have provided info that consumers want (fast, easy and hassle free), and who built relationships with customers at the middle and upper levels of the funnel will see their sales explode.

Dealers who wait for things to settle down will be months behind.

The key will be how many people you can influence BEFORE they sell themselves online. You have to become their first choice when they do decide to buy.

6

Change Your Sales/Delivery Method

Many dealers started doing remote deliveries within the first two weeks of the pandemic. If you haven't done this, get started on this asap.

If your dealership can no longer see sales customers in-person, then see if you're able to influence or generate sales or set appointments through other means.

For example, here are some ways you may be able to change your delivery methods during this pandemic:

- Sales managers/people can offer Virtual Walk Arouds instead of doing it in-person
- Deliver the vehicle to your customer instead of people coming into your store
- Offer discounts for payment up-front. For example, offer customers the opportunity that if they can pay \$50-75 now, they will receive \$100 worth of parts or service in the future. This would allow you to collect cash *now* and secure a customer's business in the *future*.

7

Pay Close Attention to Previous Customers (Your DMS/CRM Data)

It's much easier and less costly to market to existing customers versus acquiring new customers. The key question here is, **“What else can you do to help your existing customers?”** Can you help sanitize their vehicle? Can you partner with another business to enhance your product or service?

PRO TIP

Your DMS Data can help you identify which customers are currently researching and shopping for a new vehicle (or even parts and service) online. Most dealers only use this info on social channels such as Facebook. However, you can use this **customer match strategy in paid search!** You can build paid search campaigns specific to your previous customer's search intent.

Take advantage of this asap in order to keep from losing customers.

[Your team at J&L Marketing can help.](#)

8

Highlight How Your Dealership Can Help

Your dealership exists to provide value. The products/services that help during this stressful time deserve the attention of those who can benefit from them most.

If what you do supports or enhances people's lives while quarantined, tell that brand story.

Communicate your benefits. How can you educate, entertain, or inspire people stuck at home all day?

Keep your focus on helping people and stay safe.