

YOUR DEALERSHIP NEEDS A WEBSITE.

A person in a grey shirt and dark pants is standing on a wooden floor, painting the letters 'www' on a dark grey chalkboard with white chalk. The person is holding a piece of paper and a chalk stick, and is in the process of finishing the last 'w'.

Websites Work.

Consumers use the web every day to research brands, products, and services, before they buy. This is especially true for local markets, where consumers research and compare options close to home.

Automobile dealerships are no exception. People are searching the web right now, looking for vehicles for sale in your area, and they're more likely to pay visits and make purchases at dealerships they engage with online.

Just like any business competing for local customers, your dealership needs a website.

Be visible in local search results

People use the web for millions of localized searches every day. When someone's searching online for dealerships and vehicles for sale in your area, make sure your website is one of the options.

Establish credibility

What thoughts and emotions cross your mind when you go looking for a company's website and find out they don't have one? Or that they've only got a Facebook page?

Are you:  Disappointed?  Annoyed?

People are going to see and hear about your dealership, and they're going to go looking for your website. You don't want people moving on to a competitor just because they have a website and you don't.

58% of global online consumers said they are more likely to trust a company with "owned media" such as a website, versus one that does not.³

Build a professional website and take the first step toward establishing your dealership's credibility online.

Gain trust

A website is often your first opportunity to engage with a potential customer. Publish informative content on your website that talks about who you are, and why you're a better choice than your competitors. You'll be helping to build relationships with future customers.

» **83%** of consumers consult dealership websites to look for information on cars and trucks.¹

» **27%** of consumers look at a vehicle in person after seeing it on a website.²

» For every **100** people that come into your showroom, you'll have **2500** visiting your website.⁴

¹Statistical resource: Millward Brown Digital/Google Vehicle Shopper Path to Purchase Study, Sept. 2013

²Statistical resource: Auto Trader Intercept Dealership Study, Ontario, December 2013

³Nielsen Advertising Survey, 2012

⁴Canadian Internet Registration Authority survey, March 2013.

» **37%** of consumers
consult social media when
shopping for a vehicle.¹

Network in your community

A website can be your launch pad into other forms of online marketing, like social networking. By using social networking services, you can open dialogue with people that have similar interests, begin to build relationships with individuals and businesses in your community, and increase awareness about your brand.

When an individual within your network decides to purchase a vehicle, the odds of that person coming to your dealership will be much greater because they've already conversed and interacted with you online.

Gather leads and feedback

Include opt-in content, like e-newsletters and vehicle-buyer checklists, to help you build a mailing list, maintain leads, and keep promotions in front of potential customers.

Your dealership never closes

A website will allow potential customers to browse vehicles and learn about your services on their own time, using a variety of Internet-connected devices, from virtually anywhere. Be sure to update and display an always-current inventory.

Help drive revenue

Attract new customers with website that's professional, engaging, and mobile-friendly.



¹Statistical resource: Millward Brown Digital/Google
Vehicle Shopper Path to Purchase Study, Sept. 2013

Building a professional website

Design it to be mobile-friendly

Mobile use is exploding, and if your website displays nicely on tablets and smartphones, it'll be much more likely to engage visitors and convert them into customers.

Responsive and adaptive design are approaches to building websites so they're easy to read and navigate on a variety of devices, including desktop computers, tablets, and smartphones. A responsive website adapts to your screen size and resolution, and you don't have to zoom or scroll sideways to view or read the content. Instead, content is resized, repositioned and stacked, mimicking the experience of a smartphone app. You can scroll up and down, easily read the text, and tap images to view full-screen versions.

Provide mobile visitors with a user-friendly experience to help them form a positive opinion of your business, and convert them into customers.

Think “mobile first”

Knowing that a significant portion of your audience (likely 30-50%) will be accessing your website on their smartphones, you'll need to prioritize your content. Consider the most important elements and pieces of information, like your address and a link to your inventory, and present this high on the homepage, so it's the first thing smartphone users see.

Limit the use of slogans, jargon, and extraneous copy that offers little or no value to the user.

Thinking “mobile first” will help in all aspects of the web design process, forcing you to give the most valuable page real estate to the most important content.

Make it easy to use

User-friendliness is the most important consideration in building your dealership's website.

- Make navigation intuitive, so visitors are able to find information quickly and easily.
- Use the homepage to showcase your most important content. If there are interior pages you want to draw attention to, put summary content and links on the homepage so visitors have a one-click option to get to those pages.

» **35%** of purchasers used their mobile devices to find information about cars and trucks.¹

» Approximately **20%** use a smartphone at the dealer – and approximately **30%** of use is to negotiate price.⁵

¹Statistical resource: Millward Brown Digital/Google Vehicle Shopper Path to Purchase Study, Sept. 2013

⁵Trader Market Research October 2013.

- Use a contemporary design that's simple and uncluttered, with ample white space and clear messaging, so there's no room for confusion.
- Optimize images and graphics to help your website load quickly. This will provide a good user experience, and cut down on bandwidth usage for people visiting on their smartphones.
- Integrate a Google Map and directions to make it easy for people to locate and visit your dealership.

Make it easy to read

Use your website to speak to potential customers in an honest, straightforward, conversational tone.

- Tell visitors up-front why they should come to your dealership.
- Minimize sales and marketing jargon to help earn consumers' trust.
- Be concise. Don't patronize the user by repeating the same messaging over and over.
- Use subheadings to break up copy and encourage the user to keep reading.
- Make sure that location and contact information is prominent or easy to find.

The words you use on your website will be just as impactful as the design and photography, so make sure they communicate your offering effectively.

Help it rank high in search results

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving a website's "organic" visibility in search rankings. In other words, helping it to rank high in search results without having to pay for it. Many factors influence SEO, including:

- Helpful, informative copy
- Accurate, compelling meta data
- Logical, intuitive architecture
- Mobile-friendliness

Optimize your website for search by following published search engine guidelines. Focus on content and meta data, and steer clear of "black hat" tactics (like keyword stuffing and inbound linking schemes) that could result in your website being demoted or banned from search engines.

Encourage visitors to become customers

A call-to-action (CTA) is a graphic or text element that prompts the website visitor to read more, click, call, submit a form, or do something to take the next step toward becoming a customer.

Include prominent, helpful CTAs that encourage visitors to reach out and make contact.

Use “live chat” to get more leads

A live chat option can appeal to visitors who aren’t quite ready to pick up the phone or walk into the dealership, but don’t want to wait for an email response. To be effective, chat needs to be staffed 24/7 by people that are capable of answering unique questions.

Include a live chat option on your website to add value to the shopping experience, and dramatically increase your number of leads.

Include photos to help build trust

Include 10-15 photos for each vehicle listing, and make sure they’re clear, sharp, and flattering. Impressive photos will encourage interest in the vehicle and tempt the user to visit your dealership.

Include photos of your property, showroom, and your staff. For people that visit your website before they visit your dealership, recognizing the staff and surroundings will help to build trust.

Include video to capture attention

Video can be the most compelling form of web content. Whether it’s a video of you or your team members talking about company culture and the services you provide, or an individual video showcasing the features of an vehicle on your lot, consumers consider video content when comparison shopping.

**Of all ad formats, online video is #1
for encouraging a vehicle purchase¹**

Add video to help your dealership and inventory stand out amongst your competitors.

» Generate **10x**
more leads with a price and
custom photo.⁶

» **49%** of purchasers
visited a dealership after watching
a video.¹

¹Statistical resource: Millward Brown Digital/Google Vehicle Shopper Path to Purchase Study, Sept. 2013

⁶TRADER Lead Conversion Research, September 2014.

Include awards and testimonials to establish credibility

Highlight awards for the dealership itself and individual employees, and showcase customer testimonials, to help communicate your good reputation and encourage feelings of trust and respect.

Integrate analytics tracking to learn about your visitors

Integrate a tracking code and use an analytics application to reveal website traffic stats and help you understand your visitors:

- Where they're located
- How they got to your website
- What they did when they got there

Then generate reports to help you understand what marketing initiatives drove traffic to your website, and where you can make improvements to your website content and SEO strategies.

Manage your own website

A content management system (CMS) is an application connected to your website that'll let you create, edit, and delete content, including text and photos. Use a CMS to manage your online inventory and keep it up-to-date.

Go professional to get the best results

There are many elements involved in professional web design. Choose a web design agency that offers all of the following services:

- Responsive/adaptive design
- Content strategy and development
- Copy writing and editing
- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Content management options

Building a professional website is the best way to achieve online success.