

INDUSTRY ■ NEWS

Training and coaching of staff a must for dealership success going forward



Duane Marino
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The continuing trend towards consolidation and acquisition of multiple brands and points has a number of benefits - financial leverage, manufacturer and supplier relationships, ability to utilize processes across platforms, vendor discounts, cost reduction due to scale, diversification of products and expansion into different markets. It also provides groups the ability to hire, train, retain and promote their number one asset, people.

Different groups put their focus on different things. Some focus more on operational metrics, others on client experience, others on processes and some others solely on top and bottom line. It is always interesting to work with different management teams to see what they value.

At the end of the day, no matter what your philosophy, the vision has to be executed by teams of people. The more capable the teams are, the faster and easier

the vision can become a reality.

Most groups allow their managing partners within each store to make their own decisions regarding process yet are likely to adopt the same platforms such as DMS, CRM, hardware, etc. for both consistency and vendor supplier cost savings.

Dealerships in different markets and different brands may not be able to execute the exact same processes such as Starbucks

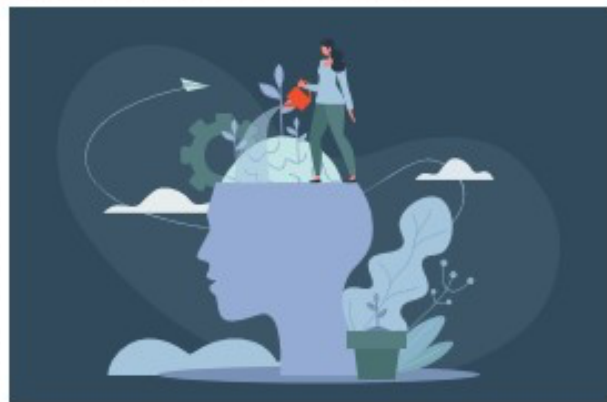
or McDonalds, but there is a strong argument to create consistency in sales philosophy and language. In order to do that, it requires a consistent message and messenger.

Should this message be delivered in house, subcontracted out or a combination of the two? Do you hire a trainer, put it in the hands of a group director or leave it up to each store?

I have found that using multiple methods of delivery training and coaching can be done at scale and pace ensuring consistency, regardless of store size or location. Effective training and coaching across large groups are things we have been doing for 10 years. All departments must be trained effectively and efficiently so your teams and customers receive a consistent message, while minimizing expense without sacrificing quality. Our full-spectrum approach (training sales, service, management and F&I) works for groups because it promotes continuity of process and a consistent base from which to measure. It also means groups can relocate and promote staff between stores easier because everybody is using a similar system.

When you invest in your team's growth and development, profits, sales, customer satisfaction and volume increase while incompetence and turn over decrease. Training and coaching should never be something your teams have done, it should be something your teams do. It's a culture thing. **www**

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Why are we still opposed to digital retailing?



Randy Price
INDUSTRY
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What a crazy year we are having in the auto industry... record low inventories, record gross profits, record gas prices and now potentially a tipping point with electrification. I gotta tell you this one feels like one for the record books! In addition, with the "r" (recession) word on everyone's minds I thought I would share some thoughts on how the industry is changing right under our feet.

During the pandemic OEMs and dealers alike scrambled to find digital retailing tools that would allow them to service clients who were no longer willing or able to visit a physical dealership in order to complete their vehicle purchase. It turns out that this was short lived as when the dealers re-opened most quickly reverted to the old way of selling cars (get 'em in the showroom then get 'em into the "box" to get 'em financed). The funny thing is the whole idea of omnichannel retailing didn't disappear it just faded because many dealers didn't truly embrace the process and at the same time limited inventories allowed dealers to control the purchase journey.

To this day I still find it amazing that I need to meet my dealership contact and go through the paper process of signing a lease application, bill of sale and a variety of other documents relating to the business office products I choose. Ironically you can purchase a home, sign an employment agreement and do just about everything else via DocuSign

(or some variation of e-contracting). Sorry, that was a soap box moment and a bigger topic for another day.

So why do dealers seem so opposed to embracing digital retailing? Its simple... its called control. Control over the process in a dealership is tried tested and true whereas dealing with a consumer over the internet shifts the power dynamic to the buyer. The whole process is exhausting, loaded with friction and continues to negatively impact the buying experience.

The current dealer lead sales process explains why the market has a love affair with Tesla, Carvana, Canada Drives and other tech companies that are disrupting the dealer business (many dealers have not truly embraced how consumers want to shop for their vehicles and likely won't make that change until normal inventory levels resume).

OEMs are also getting into the game by introducing their own "disruptors" with national new vehicle locators, mandated use of certain Digital Retailing tools and even creating their own CPO marketplaces (GM's Car Bravo, Ford Blue Oval). The buying & marketing power of the OEMs will quickly dwarf any sort of google spend or local advertising a dealer can do so maybe it's time to "get with the program". If it were me, I would have all my pre-owned inventory on these platforms as soon as I could manage!

So, what's a dealer (or dealer group) to do with all this changing landscape? In my opinion, it always comes down to process and getting buy-in from your management team. Digital Retailing is not a panacea and without implementing process change, that is designed around making it easier for your salespeople to sell more vehicles, take in high quality trades and retain decent gross longer about it. I have been around long enough to know that without these, any sort of tool is dead before you write the cheque for the deposit.

What about dealer groups? Well, the good news is they

have deeper pockets and can invest in tools that help them create processes that can be shared across the whole network (ensuring consistency and ease in training new hires). Dealer groups can also better leverage their combined "pool of inventory". AutoCanada for one is doubling down on dealer acquisitions to not only build their network of dealers but also to create an even bigger pool of inventory. Sharing inventory amongst all dealers in the group gives consumers much more choice and ultimately will drive more consumers to dealers who share in "the pool". Another added benefit for dealer group sites is they can show a broader new vehicle inventory to choose from (which as we all know is a real challenge which won't likely improve until Q4 or even 2023).

There remains plenty of real challenges for dealers as we wind down the second half of 2022 but as inventory levels improve with that will come a new set of challenges. Will we revert to a push model (sell what's on the lot) or will the "order now and buy later" really remain a "thing"? Market pressures will dictate much of what will come on this front but if I were to pick one thing that won't "go back" is how consumers will decide how they will purchase their next vehicle and yes more will want to handle a greater portion of their purchase online. There are many million Netflix subscribers and plenty of empty Blockbuster buildings to prove that.

If you have questions for me about this article or the auto industry in general, please don't hesitate to contact me directly at rprice@carmedia2p0.com. **www**

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INDUSTRY ■ NEWS

Spinelli Family

[CONTINUED FROM PG 10]

its holdings. Located in LaSalle, 15 km south of Montreal, the dealership has been a VW franchise since 1934. Groupe Spinelli is planning to move the dealership to Lachine in 2024. The name of this new dealership has been decided yet.

The celebrations also featured the launch of SpinelliDirect, an online purchasing tool that offers customers a "simplified transactional process" for ordering a new or used vehicle or leasing one. SpinelliDirect makes the entire inventory of all 10 dealerships available to online shoppers.



The Spinelli family gives back: (Left to right) Dr. Robin Nathanson of the Lakeshore General Hospital and Carole Ravenda at the Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation thank Motteux for the family's generous donations.

Giving back

The Spinelli family knows that it owes much to the communities where their dealerships are located. So, the family gives back.

Over the years, the Spinelli Foundation has supported the efforts of the Lachine Hospital Foundation, the Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation, and the West Island Community Shares. The family also encourages its 600 employees to give back with the Spinelli Employee Fund by which Spinelli employees organize and support a wide range of charitable activities.

At the 100th anniversary celebrations, the Spinelli Foundation donated \$250,000 to be shared by the charities the Foundation supports.

"Our strength and our success stem from the loyalty of our customers. We are deeply committed to supporting the efforts of organizations that ensure the quality of life and health of our clients, friends and families," said Pierre Spinelli, president, and CEO, Spinelli Dealers. "Together, we can shape the future of our community and bring lasting positive change." 

GM expands EV First Responder Training efforts in U.S. and Canada


DETROIT – GM is expanding its efforts to educate public safety, fire and emergency service providers throughout the United States and Canada as EV sales grow.

The company's latest EV First Responder Training program will focus primarily on personnel in fire services, providing instruction and sharing of best practices on how to most effectively support emergency situations involving electric vehicles, like the Chevrolet Bolt EV and Bolt EUV, GMC HUMMER EV Pickup and Cadillac LYRIQ.

This program though directly focused on responders, also benefits drivers involved in incidents, where every second matters, and is a continuation of GM-led education efforts that began more than a decade ago with the introduction of the revolutionary Chevrolet Volt. With plans to have the capacity to build more than one million EVs by 2025, GM continues to ramp investments in the ecosystem that will enable mass adoption and support those who play a vital role in the responsible deployment of electrified technology.

"Our primary goal is to provide key information directly to first and second responders," said Joe McLaine, GM global product safety and systems engineer, and leader of the training effort. "This training offers unique material and hands-on experiences that can help increase responders' awareness of procedures to help maintain safety while interacting with EVs during the performance of their duties."

GM's EV First Responder Training effort is an education and outreach program designed to offer emergency responders key information about battery electric vehicle technology, dispel misconceptions and share important industry best practices for handling electric and electrified (hybrid) vehicles safely in multiple situations. For example, many people believe water is dangerous around an EV battery, when in fact a large volume of water is the recommended method to suppress a lithium-ion battery fire. This program will be divided into both live presentations and other training formats, including combinations of expert presentations, videos, animations and virtual demonstrations.

"The best way for the public and private vehicle fleet owners to rapidly adopt EVs is to train firefighters and emergency responders on how to handle incidents involving battery powered vehicles," said Andrew Klock, senior manager of education and development at the National Fire Protection Association. 

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EV Fast-Chargers now open at 16 ONroute locations

TORONTO – Electric vehicle (EV) drivers can now charge at 16 ONroute locations along the province's busiest highways just in time for road trip season, thanks to an agreement announced last year between Ivy Charging Network and ONroute and its partners, Canadian Tire Corporation (CTC), the Ministry of Transportation and Natural Resources Canada.

Each of Ivy's ONroute Charge & Go locations has between two and four chargers to serve EV drivers, with the possibility of further expansion, supporting the charging needs of all current EV models, including charging ports for Tesla drivers.

In February 2020, Natural Resources Canada, through its Electric Vehicle and Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Deployment Initiative, invested \$8 million to help build the Ivy Charging Network. Ivy Charging Network has installed 38 level 3 fast-chargers at 16 ONroute locations, offering charging speeds up to 150 kW, delivering up to a 100 km charge in 10 minutes. Ivy will open at the Trenton North and South ONroute locations by the end of this month and at the Barrie and King City locations by the end of 2022.

"We are excited to deliver on our commitment of bringing Ivy's trusted and reliable Charge & Go fast-charger network to Ontario's busiest routes in time for EV drivers to enjoy their summer road trips with confidence and ease," said Michael Kitchen, General Manager, Ivy Charging Network. "Through this partnership and the funding provided by Natural Resources Canada, we're ending range anxiety by providing reliable charging at convenient



and accessible locations on Highway 401 and 400."

"Automotive is a heritage business for Canadian Tire Corporation (CTC), and for 100 years, we have been proud to help Canadians move across our country. We're building on our commitment to provide convenient Electric Vehicle (EV) charging locations to make life in Canada better for our EV customers," said Micheline Davies, senior vice-president, Automotive, Canadian Tire Corporation. "By the end of 2022, CTC and its partners will operate one of the largest retail networks of EV fast-charging stations in Canada, with over 140 sites, including the EV fast-charging stations at 16 ONroute locations along the 400-series highways in Ontario."

"Our government is committed to supporting innovative, green infrastructure projects that bring Canada's transportation sector closer to a competitive net-zero future. These chargers built through the NRCan funding are helping us create a better and brighter future through greener transportation while meeting the evolving energy needs of EV drivers today and in the future," said Francesco Scobara, Member of Parliament for Vaughan-Woodbridge. 