



THE DIGITAL DAYS OF MARKETING

Pay-Per-Click's Role in the Automotive Industry

A MOTIVATED MARKETING WHITE PAPER



WELCOMING A NEW **AGE OF CONSUMERISM**

While the brick-and-mortar shops that line city blocks and suburban streets across America are built on a solid foundation, the only concrete aspect of today's marketplace is that it's constantly changing. Each day brings a new trend, a new craze, a new way of doing an old thing.

How consumers interact with brands has changed dramatically in recent years, mirroring – or perhaps, driving – technology's advancement. While consumers once sought recommendations for restaurants or hairdressers from their friends and neighbors, they now rely on the power of search engines and social media to find the information they need.

Knowing that consumers are searching for them this way offers insight into how car dealerships can best be found. Sure, they know they need to meet consumers where they are, but delivering the right message to the right audience at the right time is much easier said than done. With the marketplace becoming more and more cyber-centric, this challenge is best tackled through digital marketing.

PAY-PER-CLICK MARKETING'S PIVOTAL ROLE

Effective pay-per-click strategy is what sets the best brands apart, presenting itself as the solution to a problem: engaging consumers in an ever-evolving, demand-driven marketplace. Pay-per-click, to the surprise of some, encompasses much more than paid search. It also includes other digital platforms like display ads, social media and pre-roll. And since each of these avenues leads to a brand's website, the design and messaging featured there are crucial, too.

Keep in mind that consumers of the past primarily considered cost when selecting a brand, but today, customer experience weighs more heavily into the decision-making process. One study predicted that by 2020, customer experience will completely surpass product and price as the distinguishing factor between brands.¹

That's why automotive brands like yours are striving to communicate with potential buyers at each step along their purchasing journey, from first vehicle search to final purchase. Research shows that digital marketing is undoubtedly the best way to do this, but the finer details vary from one industry to the next. Here we'll discuss digital marketing's role in automotive advertising.

1. <https://www.superoffice.com/blog/customer-experience-statistics/>



PUTTING DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

The way consumers purchase vehicles has changed over the years. Shoppers are no longer wandering into dealerships, having done no preliminary research of their own. Today's tech-savvy shoppers can browse a car's safety ratings and reviews from the comfort of their homes - and most of them are doing just that before setting foot on the lot. In fact, over half of car buyers spend more than 10 hours researching possible vehicles.¹ And among web users, 59% of this research time is spent online.²

This research process often starts with a simple search. Perhaps someone in the market for a family-friendly vehicle is curious about the price range for SUVs in their area. Or maybe a potential buyer wants to know more about a sporty, new car model that just caught their eye in the parking lot. By typing a few words into a search engine, they'll have the information they're seeking almost instantaneously.

Consider this: 20,300 automotive searches, some like the ones just described, were performed every minute in 2017.³ That's over one million searches per hour. With an endless stream of content literally at their fingertips, today's shoppers enjoy access to information that their grandparents couldn't have imagined. And they don't just search. They trust the resources they find. Did you know that 95% of car buyers report some form of digital media as their primary influence?⁴

There's much more to the story than paid search, though. In 2017, video proved to be the best format for brands trying to earn their place in a shopper's "consideration set," the narrowed-down list of brands they're interested in.⁵

YouTube pre-roll presents a great opportunity for this, now that it reaches more 18- to 49-year-olds on mobile alone than any TV network.⁶ Automotive dealerships utilize pre-roll video for both branding and promotional purposes, relying on eye-catching graphics and high-quality footage to attract viewers' attention. When done right, video is an incredibly valuable digital tool for automotive dealerships.

Dealerships' mission to stay ahead of shifting shopper demand can be exhausting, though – especially when meeting monthly goals and getting cars off the lot doesn't leave much time to spare. That's where creative agencies can help, employing their industry knowledge and marketing strategy to keep dealers one step ahead of their competition.

1. www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/in/Documents/manufacturing/in-mfg-dtcm-steps-in-the-buying-process-noexp.pdf

2. <https://b2b.autotrader.com/again/pdf/2016-car-buyer-journey.pdf>

3. Google Automotive Retail Summit, 10/10/2017

4. Google Automotive Retail Summit, 10/10/2017

5. Google Automotive Retail Summit, 10/10/2017

6. Google Automotive Retail Summit, 10/10/2017



INTERCEPTING CAR BUYERS AROUND **EVERY VIRTUAL CORNER**

A few clicks, taps and scrolls are all it takes to get informed, which means brands must be present as consumers round each corner along their path to purchase. This path might include a few potholes and road blocks, but a strong pay-per-click strategy helps dealerships steer car buyers their way.

These buyers typically progress through five stages before a deal is closed. They start with wondering which car is best, then move into a consideration phase when they question if that particular vehicle is a good fit for their lifestyle. Finances are then factored in to assess affordability. Next, shoppers ask themselves if the advertised price is indeed a good deal. The last phase involves locating the best place to make the purchase.¹

On average, there are 24 touchpoints, or opportunities for brands to influence consumers, along the way. 19 of these touchpoints are digital.² Thanks to online research, many buyers are saving more and shopping less, with the number of average dealer visits dropping from five in 2005 to one or two in 2017.³

This proves that by the time they stroll onto the lot, the majority of buyers have a very good idea of what they're looking for. Many are even taking prospective purchases for a spin without their foot nearing the accelerator. Today's shoppers are watching "test drive videos" on YouTube - 54 million of them, compared to the 27 million actual test drives taken at dealerships!⁴

More than anything, these statistics provide the concrete evidence that the car-buying process has changed and will continue to evolve. Shoppers are arriving to the dealership armed with information, having already completed their diligent - and digital - research.

And when done right, pay-per-click helps to ensure meaningful interactions with a car buyer have already occurred before shoppers walk through a showroom's doors.

1. Google Automotive Retail Summit, 10/10/2017

2. Google Automotive Retail Summit, 10/10/2017

3. Google Automotive Retail Summit, 10/10/2017

4. Google Automotive Retail Summit, 10/10/2017



M2'S PAY-PER-CLICK PHILOSOPHY

With years of experience crafting pay-per-click and digital marketing strategies for automotive clients, Motivated Marketing has accumulated some best practices that are worth sharing. Our client list spans multiple industries, which means our experience is not only extensive, but varied.

As a full-service agency, we believe that strong digital strategy must complement traditional marketing. Our team embraces this holistic approach to tailor personalized strategies to each of our clients. We take the time to truly understand a brand's goals before determining how best to achieve them. Once a digital campaign is launched, we track its results carefully.

Transparency is a major part of our philosophy here at Motivated Marketing, which means we're open with our clients about what's working and what's not. That's not all. Because a theoretical understanding of digital marketing can only get us so far, our team studies the consumer trends that drive it. Working hard to stay up-to-date on industry developments, we're dialed in to your audience's needs and expectations. This translates into real-life results, whether it's calls to your dealership or a flood of car buyers in your showroom.

Is your brand ready to launch a digital campaign of its own? If you haven't yet adopted "nontraditional" marketing, you can be sure that your competitors have. Keeping up means going digital!

Whether you've been hesitant to dive into digital or your current campaign isn't maximizing your potential in the digital marketplace, get in touch! Give us a call at (843) 856-7322 or email info@motivatedmarketing.com.

m²