INTRODUCTION

This project suggests a marketing plan for Sellers Auto Group (SAG). The automotive industry has always been ten steps behind the rest of the retail world in terms of innovation and technological advancements. The goal is for Sellers Auto Group to be at the forefront of innovation and technological advancement and spearhead change in the auto industry. The marketing plan focuses on developing an innovative strategy that creates a completely digital transaction experience for customers. The opportunity for Sellers Auto Group becomes: how does SAG implement change and innovate in order to provide a greater experience for SAG customers, while maintaining its outstanding in store reputation? How does SAG use its willingness to adapt and dedication to technological competence to gain a competitive advantage over competitors? Based on research, findings, and consumer realizations, SAG will work to implement a year long marketing plan that completely restructures the group’s digital and online presence. The ultimate goal of the plan is to increase market share, competitive advantage, and brand loyalty for Sellers Auto Group.

TOP CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Too much time spent in dealership. A study found that after 90 minutes spent in the dealership, customer satisfaction began to decline rapidly (McParland, 2015). A consumer survey asked: Roughly how many hours did you spend in the dealership total? Results, shown in figure 1, that too much time is being spent in dealerships resulting in lower customer satisfaction.

Importance of online presence. A consumer survey asked: How important is it too you that a company has an online presence? The results, shown in figure 2, show that consumers find this very important. Today’s consumer expect a certain level of customer focus and personalization through digital channels, and car dealerships are behind in developing innovative strategies to meet this expectation (Ernst, 2011).

MARKETING PLAN – INNOVATION

Primary and secondary research supports the notion that many consumers are beginning to expect a completely digital transactional experience. Through analyzing both secondary and primary consumer research, three strategies were developed to form a complete digital consumer experience.

1. My Garage. “My garage” is a user profile that customers can create and sign into upon entering SAG’s website. “My Garage” is like “My Shopping Cart” on a retail website in that it stores recently searched items and wish lists. “My Garage” will also deliver information to consumers such as: promotions, recall information, and service reminders. Every SAG customer (and perspective customer) has a “My Garage” profile that is specific and tailored to meet their individual needs and preferences.

2. Online Appraisal. Promoting trade-ins can combat decreased loyalty trends as it urges consumers to cycle through cars faster and return to the dealership to sell their vehicle (LaReau, 2014). Currently, in order to receive a quote for a possible vehicle trade in, most dealerships require potential customers to bring their vehicle to the dealership for an in house appraisal and inspection. SAG will now allow the consumer to go through this process online. On their “My Garage” profile, consumers will see their current vehicle information and will be able to “request a quote now.”

3. Finalize the Deal. The final innovative development gives consumers the ability to complete time consuming paperwork online, instead of in the dealership. The most time consuming part of the car buying process is paper work. Online paperwork eliminates this time and means that the consumer can complete the entire car shopping process online and at their convenience.

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