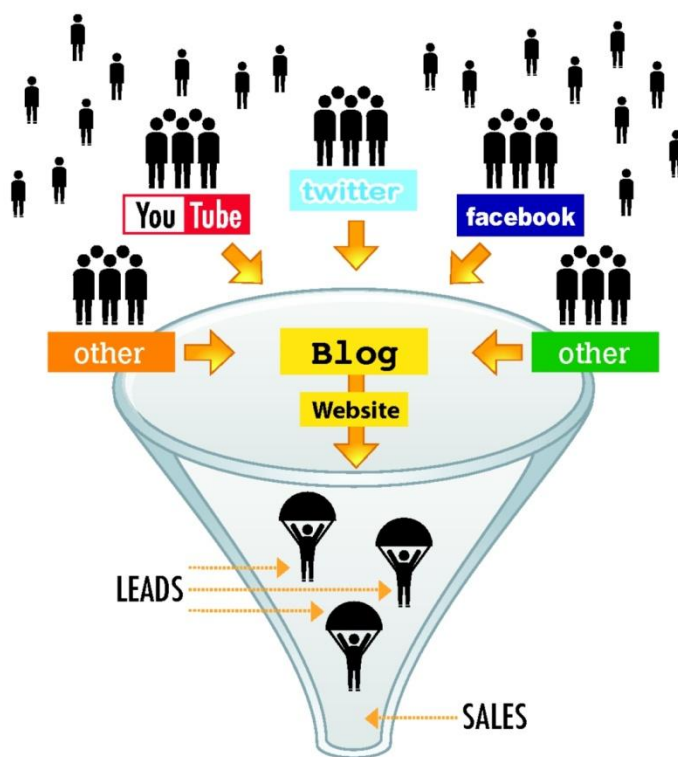


Feb 2012

# The Social Dealership

A Social Media Magazine For Auto Dealers

## Populating the Top of the Sales Funnel Through Social Media



← ROI

## Buying An Explorer Through Twitter

Written by a consumer. A customers perspective.

## 5 Content Marketing Tips

Designing your strategy for optimal influence.

## The Zero Moment Of Truth

Why being there is crucial to your sales.

# Letter From The Publisher

We're Dedicated To  
Both Auto Dealers And  
Social Media, Where We  
Marry Both Worlds...  
Perfectly!

Wow what a month this February has been, NADA, Valentine's Day, and Mardi Gras all have come and gone. One was a celebration of our auto industry, one a celebration of love and the other was a celebration of subjects we won't talk about here! How did you enjoy them? Did you share them of your social networks?

These are examples of events that create emotional responses out of people, events people get excited about, events people want to talk about! We say it all the time; we are looking to create a higher level of engagement with people in our community through social media that will lead to higher levels of passion for your business.

What are people in your community passionate about? Do you live in college towns like Baton Rouge or Columbia South Carolina that revolve around events related to the university? Do you live in towns like Portland Oregon that are very green and fitness friendly?

Find subjects that your community is passionate about and share quality content related to these subjects. I guarantee you will see an increase in engagement and you will be well on your way to creating brand ambassadors for your dealership!

Did you attend NADA? What are you most excited about in regards to the auto industry for 2012?

**Rob Hagen**



# In This Issue

5 Content Marketing Tips To Include In Your Social Strategy	4
Keep It Real	7
Bridge Social Gaps	10
The Zero Moment Of Truth About Automotive Social Media	11
Are You Keeping The Social In Social Networking?	14
How I Bought An Explorer Through Twitter And Email	17
Ask The Experts	21



# 5 Content Marketing Tips To Include In Your Social Strategy

By: [David Johnson](#)

Content is king. That's not the first time you've heard that, nor will it be your last. I do have a question though, why aren't more dealerships creating more content? One of the most effective and low cost ways to drive traffic is through the creation of relevant and engaging content. Content can be blog posts, videos, podcasts, status updates on Facebook, Tweets and much more. In this post I'm going to give you tips on what to include in your content marketing strategy that will help you to attract and influence more people to become your customers.

Keep in mind though, while reading this post, that it is but one part of your overall inbound marketing plan, a big part, but it is just one piece of the overall puzzle. Get this right and the rest will fall into place without much problem. So, are you ready?

## **Create A Content Creation Calendar**

That's right, plan! An editorial calendar will help you stick to your overall content marketing goal.

By creating and sticking to an editorial calendar you will limit the time scratching your head wondering what to write about. Also, you should continually add to the calendar as you move along. I like to stay a month ahead, that way I'm never fighting for something to write about.

Another idea is to download the Evernote app to your iPhone or Android device so that whenever ideas strike you can write a note to yourself to add it to the calendar. Of course you can use any app you like but I like the fact that Evernote syncs to both your desktop and the web, ensuring that no matter where you are you will have access to your notes.

Out of ideas? Read. Read as many in industry blogs and out of industry blogs as possible. Seek out the blogs of other non-competing dealerships for ideas. Also, remember that you can repurpose your content. What is a blog post this week can be a video a month or so later. Or even a slideshow, podcast, status update or even an image. In other words, one idea could be half a dozen

## **Optimize Your Content For Search**

When writing your titles make sure that you do a little research to figure out [what people are searching for in your local market](#). Then ensure that your key phrases are sprinkled throughout the body of your post or in the descriptions of your video or podcast.. Don't overdo it, be natural and stick to your topic. As an example you could write a post about finding a repair shop and title it, "5 Things You Need To Know Before Choosing A Repair Shop In Denver."

Be sure to include the name of the city, it will help to keep your content local. Notice how the title draws you in with a promised list of 5 things you need to know. That brings me to my next tip.

## **Create Interesting Titles To Peak Interest**

Think of your title as your headline, it's what people will see that will encourage them to want to click on your content in order to consume it.

I've always liked short lists, if you take a look at my blog you will see that I use the number 5 a lot, even in this article!

- [5 Steps To Connecting With The Movers And Shakers On LinkedIn](#)
- [5 Reasons To Aim For Social Depth Over Social Breadth](#)
- [5 Things You Need To Know BEFORE Designing Your Social Media Strategy](#)

I use 5 because it's not too long and it's not too short and gets people to act. In fact Two of the above posts were syndicated on SocialMediaToday.com and have over 20,000 combined views! If the titles were poorly thought out, people wouldn't have clicked on it, no matter how good the content was.

### Have A Call To Action

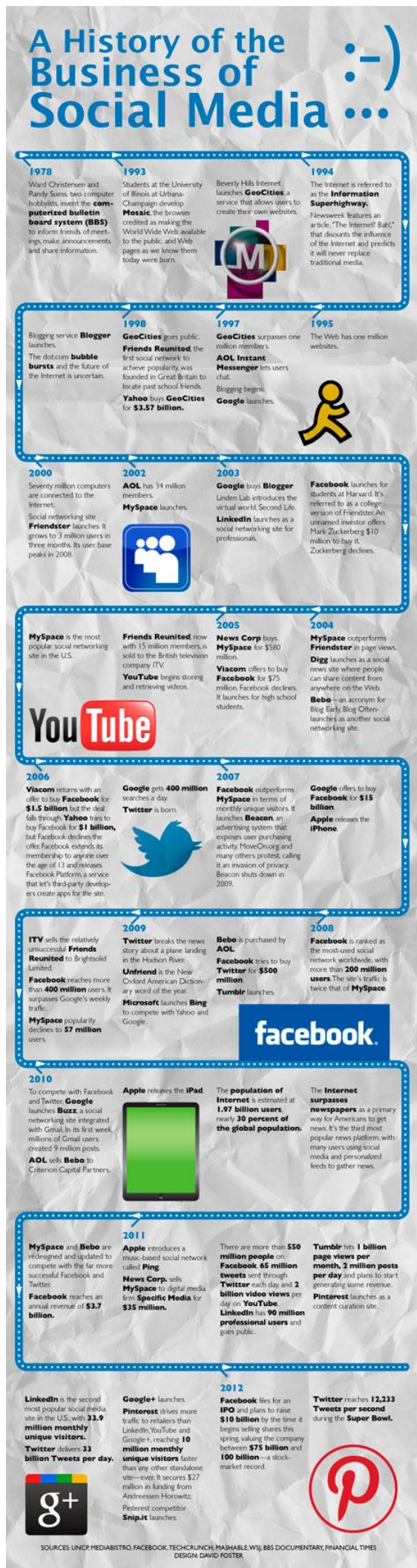
Everything you create should have some sort of call to action. If it's a picture that you post on Facebook, ask a questions about it to get people to respond. If it's a blog post ask people to leave a comment giving their opinion of something you said. If it's a video tell people to give you a call to schedule their next vehicle check-up. Whatever it is, ask people to act even if it's to check out another piece of content that you've created.

### Create A Downloadable eBook

Create something of value to get people to download so that you can add them to your email list. A few ideas:

- The 10 Irrefutable Laws Of Car Shopping
- 5 Ways To Spot A Bad Car Deal
- 7 Tips To Ensure That You Get Top Dollar For Your Trade
- 10 Maintenance Tips That Will Keep You Out of The Repair Shop

The list can go on and on, the idea is to create compelling content that people want to read. From there you can create a lead nurturing campaign to turn those people into leads, but that's for another post!



**NOT SURE  
HOW SOCIAL  
MEDIA FITS?**



**socialbyte** is the answer.

- **Reputation Management 24/7/365**
- **Compliant Pages**
- **5 Pricing Packages**
- **Creative Posts**
- **Dedicated Social Media Coaches**
- **Monthly Reporting**
- **Industry Leading Technology**

Call us for a free social media consultation!

**800-998-2910**

[facebook.com/socialmng](https://facebook.com/socialmng)

[@socialmng](https://twitter.com/socialmng)

[sharks@socialmng.com](mailto:sharks@socialmng.com)

**socialbyte®**



A Division of Dealer Product Services, Inc.

# Keep It Real

By: [Cathy Nesbit](#)

Strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal. Tactics are the means we use to get the result. The result, for example, being increased employee/customer retention, and the tactics we use to meet that goal can be different from what your tactics might be. I would first suggest that the best way to formulate a plan that can succeed is to formulate a plan that can be flexible if needed. We can't always foresee in January what may or may not work or be relevant by the end of year. I have lots of ideas that I would like to see take off, but if I'm too set in "my plan" to let it be the "best plan" then I have no business seeing it succeed. All these words I use, and I could've said "Give it wings". Though, that may have been too much cheese in your face. However, the result we desire remains the same...employee/customer retention.

As I discussed in the article last month, our focus will mostly be employee/customer retention. Also, we have other goals we want met too, but, for now, I'll just focus on strategies for employee/customer retention. I keep linking employee/customer retention because whether you know this or not they go hand in hand. If you think you are going to be successful in the realm of customer retention, while ignoring employee retention you are well mistaken.

First, it's all about building a terrific team. Evaluating the team you currently have and making sure those are the people you want to be your teammates. If not, make sure you get that team lined out! Keeping your outstanding employees is crucial to your success. Great employees don't want to work in a space that is

polluted with slackers or negativity. We keep hearing about reputation management and how vital it is to our success. Can you make your customers happy if you can't make your employees happy? It's like the 'ugly inside, ugly outside' adage. Mean people spread their ugliness. Kind people brighten others and spread positivity. It's the same with a business, you know some businesses you just hate having to go into(or have stopped) because the employees are rude, unhelpful, and could not care less about you.(I know right now you are thinking about this store. Now, let us all hope that store is NOT ours, huh?!) The employees that make us quit on a store aren't the guys who love their job & love coming to work every day!

How do we create a positive work environment? I think it's safe to say we can start with being positive! Having a good HR contact is a considerable step since we can acknowledge that at some point issues will arise. There has to be someone that cares to help resolve issues that come up. We also use social media outlets to promote all of our community giving & volunteerism. We have even had people on our facebook page mention that it's nice to win something on facebook, but the thing they truly love is how involved we are with our local community. We find opportunities to partake in helping the community whether it is a blood drive or Stuff the Bus Programs. If our employees are out there giving food for a food drive, snap a picture and put it on facebook then someone will see it & they will know that we care about our community. We try to be as involved with our community as possible. Yes, it endears us to our customer base, but mainly we just love our community & we want to give back anyway we can.

The sales & service staff takes every bit of training that they can fit into their year. They take pride in the knowledge & we take pride in posting our training #'s on the social media sites.

Public recognition for work anniversaries & birthday's is a marvelous thing to tag on

facebook. The employee is getting some celebrity love, and it's linked to our facebook page. We send cards to their home as a bit of private recognition, but everyone likes to be a facebook celebrity every now and again, right?! The more the local public knows what quality people we are the more opportunities they will give us to earn their business.

Of course, giving an employee fair pay & benefits is something that should go without saying, but I know some employers are diluted enough to ignore this altogether. So, please be fair with what you are willing to pay your employees. You don't want them to be your competitor's employee next month because you wouldn't give up an extra dollar or two.

Our sales manager, Scott, started doing competitions. He breaks the sales staff into teams and sets a goal for each competition. They have started doing the funniest 'loser' activities that I totally get to rock out on our social media sites. Who doesn't want to see some poor sap eating pork n beans from a can at a really nice steak restaurant?

We do everything we can do to remind our customer base that we are real people and that we are quality folks. One thing I must say before ending is, keep it real. No one likes fake people. You don't like fake people (I'm just guessing here). Please make sure, if you decide to delve into social media and community projects, be genuine. We no longer live in a time where price is what matters most; quality of service is what wins the sale. To have quality service, you must have a quality team. When we find a way to engage the customer base by having a quality employee base then we find a way to earn a chance, and all we can ever ask for is a chance. Getting the chance & using that chance to prove ourselves earns us increased employee/customer retention.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING MADNESS



“How can you squander even one more day not taking advantage of the greatest shifts of our generation? How dare you settle for less when the world has made it so easy for you to be remarkable?”

– Seth Godin, Seth's Blog





# We Don't Care What Our Clients Say About Us!

**Wanna Know Why?**



**Because *It's Doesn't Matter.* What Matters Is What Our Clients Customers Are Saying About Them!**

Unsolicited Comment



Mischelle Porter Reece

I became a fan when you had less than 200 friends... your page is "alive" and I check it daily!! You are doing an amazing job, and for the first time in my 38 years...I HAVE chosen..and will be LOYAL to Metro Honda, why? Because your fb is fun..interactive..and i feel like we ARE "friends"!!! And you have GREAT cars!! I will tell anyone who will listen...Metro Honda IS the only place I will buy a car in NC..and I love my odyssey with 130k thousand miles that looks and rides like brand new!!! Rock on MH.

Like · Comment · Share · 2 hours ago ·

**For Social Media Done Right Contact Next Generation Dealer Services!**

**Click To Contact!**

# Bridge Social Gaps

By: [Jae Chang](#)



Is your Dealership Social? Do your departments work with each other or stand alone? The smallest department has the opportunity to be the greatest bridge to help synergize your dealership. What other department truly touches every department than the Finance Department? Are you offering products that help the Sales and Service Departments? Does your dealership offer a True Value Proposition (TVP) that you are Branding? If you are adopting a Social Media Process without a TVP, you are wasting your time. Consumers today want convenience and something of value, something they can talk about and be social about. Why should someone buy and service from you? Once they can share the “Why”, then you know you have a loyal customer that will be an advocate. Customer advocacy is the ultimate goal.

In today’s consumer driven economy where Zero Moment of Truth is reality, how are you differentiating yourself? Products and solutions must focus on not just sales but building relationships. I have had many recent conversations with Dealers and GM’s where there is a common concern; unit profit, it is diminishing. With pricing mechanisms to “One Under” each other to appeal to consumers’ desires for the lowest

price (no thanks to third party sites), is this a race to the bottom? The consumer today is so easily, at a moment of discontent, swayed away from your dealership. Tear down the walls and start working as One Dealership. There is no reason for your customers to be treated differently from different departments. Empower your TEAM to make good decisions. If pay plans need to be modified, do it. The welfare of the Dealership depends on it. Have your managers perform a SWOT analysis (Strength Weakness Opportunities Threats) and get them involved and collaborate in building a culture. You need their buy-in. Determine who your competition is, research what they are offering, create a TVP. Challenge your current providers, ask your 20 groups, participate on social communities and review your offerings. The Finance Department can help deliver a great purchase experience and bridge that same customer to the Service Department. Focus on building a delivery process that wows. Be sure your delivery process includes meeting the service department. Your customers will come back to where they feel welcome.

Promote a culture of SYNERGY, without it no process will succeed.



“The goal of social media is to turn customers into your personal evangelist.”

- Shane Barker



# The Zero Moment of Truth About Automotive Social Media

By: [Brittany Elizabeth Richter](#)

The Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT) refers to the period of time that customers spend online conducting research before entering the dealership. It is important to show up during the ZMOT, showing off the best aspects of your dealership. ZMOT started with an e-book written by Google's Jim Lecinski in 2011 entitled Winning the Zero Moment of Truth.



When it comes to Social Media ROI it is important to note that it is not a linear concept. Social media is a necessary supplement to your other traditional and digital marketing efforts. When it comes to digital marketing there are many aspects in play that all work together to create a positive ROI, and social media is one of those players. Social media does not stand on its own, it is a single player on the digital marketing team. When executed effectively, it supplements the other efforts of your dealership: customer service, reputation, and advertising, to name a few.

So here's the deal: let go of that goal you have for a certain number of followers and instead, focus on getting the message out about what it's like to do business with your dealership, monitoring growth in Likes and followers along the way. Use your social media accounts to showcase your helpful, knowledgeable and friendly staff, your satisfied service and sales

customers, and your customer-centric coupons and promotions. Show your potential new customers and remind potential returning customers that it is fun, hassle-free and worry-free to do business with you.

How exactly do you do this, you ask? A working social content calendar.

Create a working social content calendar that is exactly that – working. Start with the calendar that I have outlined below and go from there. This calendar will help you test out best-practice strategies that have seen results to see if they work for your dealership. It will help you stay focused, making it easy to post on hectic days, and allow you to add new ideas as you think of them and as your social skill set becomes more advanced. Start here, continue to use the strategies that work, ditch the ones that flop. Add new strategies as you read about them, think about them yourself, or as you notice your competitors using strategies that work for them (yes, monitoring your competitors is a big part of social media).

## Example Dealership Working Social Content Calendar

### Monday:

- Photo: A happy new sales or service customer(s)
- Links: to your dealership's blog post / PR or special announcement with a photo

### Tuesday:

- Car-related tips: Ex: how to check fluids, how many miles between oil changes, etc.
- Photo: Post a photo of your employees doing something fun or funny – something car related! - and as your Facebook fans and Twitter followers to caption the photo.

### Wednesday:

- Photo: A happy new sales or service customer(s)

- Link or photo from the OEM about an award that one of your brands as received.

**Thursday:**

- Photo: Happy customers working together, with customers or with a new model

**Friday:**

- Keep it light and fun: Ask about plans for the weekend / talk about local sports teams / mention upcoming events going on at the store, community news
- Link to a local, non-controversial community event (car wash, bingo, charity event, grand opening of a new store, food drive, etc.)

**Everyday Strategies:** These strategies should be implemented daily as needed and are in addition to the ones outlined above.

- **Respond to all engagement:**
  - Like positive things fans comment or post
  - Share and re-tweet positive comments and @mentions
  - Respond to all negative: “Hi, (name of fan) we apologize for any inconvenience. Please contact (name of dealership employee) at (phone number) or via e-mail at (e-mail address)
- **Monitoring:** Competitors, Fans, OEM
  - Find your competitors' pages on Facebook and monitor what they are doing in order to stay head of the curve. Copy and adapt the strategies that work for them.
  - Keep an eye on what your fans are saying about you via social media by looking at your Facebook Page daily.
  - Keep an eye on the OEM and interact with them! Like their Facebook page and “Like” specific posts – even comment on their posts when it is relevant.

**Monthly Suggestions:** Again, at least one of these strategies, or another similar strategy should be implemented monthly in addition to the daily and weekly ones above.

- Featured employee of the month
- Featured sales customer of the month
- Featured service customer of the month
- Share something from an OEM page on to your dealership's wall. Be careful not to do this more than once a week MAX – your target audience can find that info elsewhere, they don't need it taking up your wall. Side note: On Twitter, re-tweeting this kind of information can be done every day.

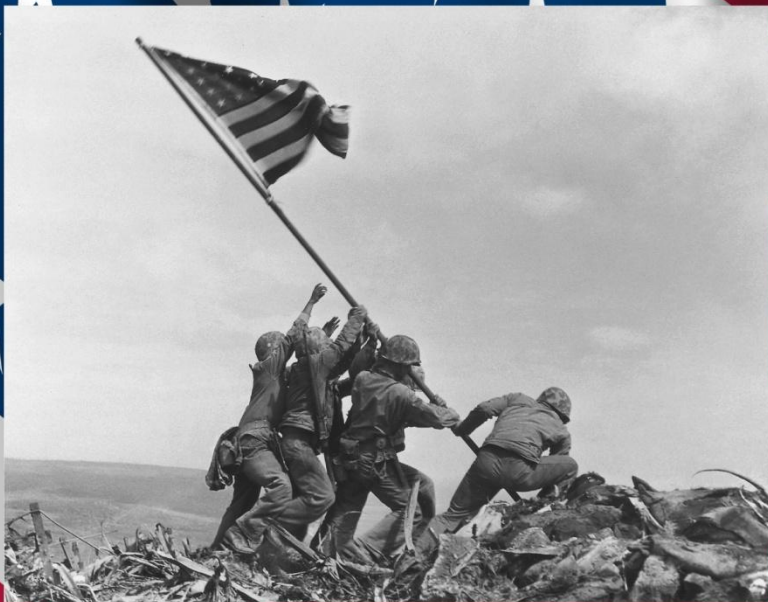
**Tips / Tricks for Posting:** The below is a list of things to keep in mind to help guide your posting.

- ASK for engagement: questions, votes, captions for pictures
- Relevance is key: make sure all content is relevant to the company and/or the surrounding community – you want to be remembered for your business (not a cat!)
- Remember to ask employee and customer permission before posting pictures
- Mix it up! Don't just post text – add photos and videos. How-to videos are GREAT for engagement and creating an incentive to keep them coming back!

As you learn more about social media, start to observe what works well for your dealership and your target audience, adapt your content calendar to match what you're learning. Once your calendar reflects your best, most engaging strategies, then no matter when a potential new or returning customer visits your social media pages, they will see all of your best posts.

# The Vets-Cars Group

Providing Premier Auto Dealers With  
An Effective Consultancy For Attracting  
And Serving The Military And Veteran Community.



A Loyal And Deserving  
Fifty Million Strong  
Consumer Demographic

**"Where Dealers Meet Heros."**

# Are you Keeping The Social in Social Networking?

BY: AJ Ager

If the answer was to just build a website and then sit back and wait for your millions then everybody you get putting pickles on your Big Mac would own a yacht. Your office, your store, your website, your inventory, its all good for your business but nothing if nobody knows about your business. So you have decided to have Social Networking help you get your message out to your consumers. You have heard of the high ROI and the relatively cheap investment. The problem is that you have forgot what makes Social Media what it is...the SOCIAL part of it. Just by getting starting a Facebook page for your business doesn't mean customers will come beating down your door. Look at it this way, getting into Social Media is like hitting the town courting for a significant other. You aren't going to get any attention unless you do some flirting. Remember the advice of some great pick artists when you are using Social Networking.



## Keep Flirting

This is a numbers game. The more people you put your message out to, then the more people

will respond. It is that simple. Hit on enough girls/guys, somebody is bound to buy what you are selling. The better the message the better the results. Just showing up and standing somewhere is not good enough. Start interacting with your customers. Get email addresses from your current customers and ask them to friend you on Facebook. This will spread throughout their friends especially if you are interacting on their page. Email your customers with Youtube Videos of interest. Business is not for the shy or the lazy.

## Keep Communication Balanced

One-way conversations never lead to good things. You can add people to your Social Media Pages, but just putting Ads on your page and spamming them will get your message shut off in a heartbeat. Comment on their posts, ask for feedback on your posts, and tag them with pictures on your page. Remember that people love to talk about themselves so get them talking. Engage the dialogue and make them think of your business as 'theirs'. Have you ever noticed how people get personal with radio stations? People refer to certain stations as 'My Station'. Radio learned long ago that the most valuable word you can use when talking to someone is the word 'You'. Engage your base with conversation and get them talking about themselves and do this with all new customers. When a customer considers you a friend they become loyal and repeat customers.

## Use Humor

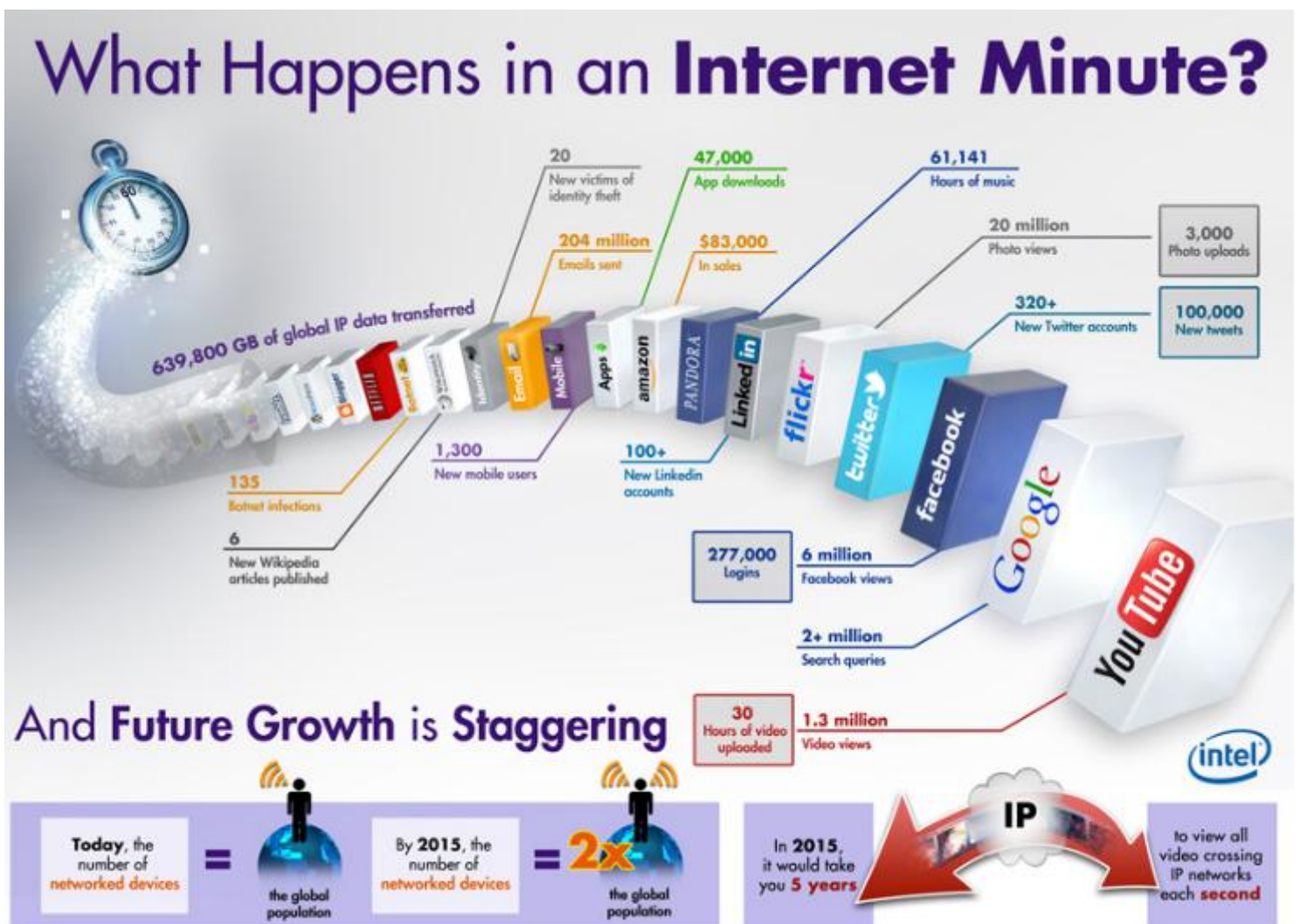
Everybody loves a clown. Find a way to advertise your business in a funny way. Don't be afraid to be cheesy or afraid to push the envelope. Sometimes offending people gets you the attention you want. Obviously sometimes it doesn't, but try to be aggressive. Put together funny videos on Youtube and link them on your site and emails you send out. Most of us send out well over twenty emails a day. Put these videos on the bottom of you emails. If someone wants to view it they will, and if not it hasn't taken too

much of their day up. Be charming and humor is the first step to charm.

### Get Off the Wall

Stop being afraid of rejection. When you go to a dance you will never talk to someone if you stand against the wall. You will never meet new people being scared to talk to new people. You will never get new customers being afraid to fail sometimes trying to get them. Be aggressive. I recently got a tattoo to remind me of one thing, "Fortune Favors the Bold."

*A.J. Ager is the Finance Director at Ferguson Buick GMC in Colorado Springs. He is the founder of Colorado Credit Zone, Possessed Hand Productions, and an Award Winning Filmmaker.*



# David Johnson's Persuasive Concepts

*The auto industries leading blog on automotive social media*

At PersuasiveConcepts.com you can learn about social media, inbound marketing, lead generation, influencing repeats & referrals and much more! Best of all... it's **FREE!!**

## Regular Blogger On SocialMediaToday.com

5 Steps To Connecting With The Movers And Shakers On LinkedIn 12,742 views & Counting!  
5 Things You Need To Know BEFORE Designing Your Social Strategy 8,887 views & Counting  
The Most Powerful Part Of Social Media Your NOT Using 12,418 views 7 Countin

FREE Email Alerts

Click Here

Never Miss A Post!



Located In the  
Sidebar





# How I Bought a Ford Explorer via Twitter and Email

BY: [Collin Kromke](#)

In an earlier post titled [I'm Buying a 2011 Ford Explorer in Madison, WI. Who Wants my Business?](#), I noted that I was in the market for a 2011 Ford Explorer, and that I was turning it into a case study. I posted this on Twitter a couple hours prior to the blog post:



I'm buying a 2011 Ford Explorer. This tweet is the start of the process. Who wants my business in the Madison, WI area? #Ford #SUV

21 seconds ago via web ☆ Favorite ↩ Reply 🗑 Delete 🔄 Buffer  
from Sun Prairie, WI

I was able to find three local Ford dealerships on Twitter – [@KayserFord](#), [@MiddletonFord](#) and [@CapitolFordKia](#) (which has since been sold). I expected one of them to earn my business, but only if they chose not to sit around the dealership on a Friday afternoon waiting for me to walk through the door. As [Chris Brogan](#) said in his article titled [Buy a Car Off the Internet?](#)

*“The people who LISTEN for business beat the people waiting around for business to find them.”*

**Two replies**

Several hours after the initial tweet, I received two Twitter replies. The first was a direct message from [Middleton Ford](#). It didn't contain a contact name, email address, or any other information that would help me continue the conversation, so I replied via DM asking for the name and email address of the sender.

**Replying to me via DM was a mistake** on the part of the salesperson at Middleton Ford. It did nothing to show that they are responsive and engaging on Twitter. I was the only one who saw their reply. To the rest of the world, it looked like they were ignoring me.

The other reply came from [@MikeRobards](#), tweeting from his personal account on behalf of [@UptownMotors](#).



This one caught my attention

I have to admit I wasn't very excited at first about dealing with a dealership in Milwaukee. It's an hour away from Madison, and I really preferred to give my business to a local dealership. I'm also not a huge fan of the reply coming from Mike's personal account rather than the dealer's account. Much like the DM from Middleton Ford, it looks to the rest of the world like [Uptown Motors](#) isn't responsive or engaging on Twitter.

I liked what Mike had to say, though, and really liked having a **name and a face** to associate with his very well written @reply. I replied publicly, telling him I'd be in touch, and I started putting together my wish list for the vehicle I wanted. I also posted the following:



Still no word from [@CapitolFordKia](#) or [@KayserFord](#), so it looks like [@middletonford](#) and [@UptownMotors](#) get the first crack at my business.

17 Jun via web Unfavorite Reply Delete Buffer  
from Sun Prairie, WI

I sent a DM to [@MikeRobards](#) requesting his email addresses, because it would be impossible to communicate my needs 140 characters at a time. My hope at this point was to communicate privately with Mike via email. Later that night, I emailed both Mike Robards at Uptown Motors and the salesman at Middleton Ford with my list of specs.

## Day Two

The next morning (Saturday) before 10 am, I received an email reply from Mike at Uptown Motors, and we were off to the races. **We exchanged 10 emails** (5 each) that day, all of which were sent from and read on my Blackberry while I sat in a lawn chair at my daughter's softball tournament. **By 3:30 pm we had reached an agreement on a price for a 2012 Ford Explorer Limited.**

Mike was well aware of my preference to do the entire deal without talking on the phone or visiting the dealership, so he agreed to give me a preliminary appraisal of my trade based on photos I would provide by email.

When I asked Mike how he found my original tweet, he said he found it by searching on TweetDeck for the keyword 'Explorer'. He explained that he tries to "listen for opportunities". He also admitted that he **probably got a little lucky** as well!

## Sometimes you make your own luck

While I was negotiating via email with Mike all day on Saturday, I got the first email from the salesman at Middleton Ford at 12:30 pm. All it said was

*"I have a full plate today. First thing Monday I'll have all the pricing for you. Have a good weekend."*

Oops. I hope he had the sale of a 2012 Ford Explorer Limited on his full plate that day, because his response guaranteed he wasn't going to get my business.

## It gets better

On Monday morning (three days after my initial tweet) I finally heard from [@KayserFord](#) for the first time. Here's what the salesman at [Kayser Ford](#) had to say, and my response:



Also on Monday I received an email from someone at Middleton Ford. The salesman had her send me a scanned document for a 2012 Explorer Limited with my required specs and a price written on it. Mike Robards from Uptown Motors had probably asked me at least 20 questions during our email exchange two days earlier, and this salesman just scribbled a price on a vehicle invoice and had someone else scan it and email it to me. **Still too busy to put any effort into selling me a car, and probably upset that I wouldn't do business his way by coming into the dealership for a test drive.**

## Trade-in

Five days after reaching an agreed price on the 2012 Explorer, I provided Mike at Uptown Motors with a link to an online gallery containing 71 photos of my trade-in. After a little negotiation, we reached an agreement on the trade value exactly one week after agreeing on the price of the Explorer. All that was left to do was to place the order for my new Explorer.

## Done deal!

Two weeks to the day after my initial tweet, I scanned a signed contract and credit apps and emailed them to Mike. I also left him a voice mail

message with my credit card information for the down payment. They ordered the vehicle, and I took delivery 7 weeks later. **That was my first visit to Uptown Motors, and my first time actually talking to Mike Robards and meeting him in person.**

### **Highly recommended**

If you're somewhere within a reasonable driving distance of Madison or Milwaukee, WI, **Mike Robards and the crew at Uptown Motors in Milwaukee get my highest recommendation.** Believe it or not, this was **Mike's first sale**, and I'm pretty sure both he and the dealership learned a lot about the potential for selling cars just by paying attention, listening and engaging on social media channels, and by demonstrating a willingness to accommodate customers like me who don't want to buy the way they might prefer to sell.

### **Here's how you can reach Mike Robards**

Twitter: [@MikeRobards](https://twitter.com/MikeRobards)

Work phone: 414-771-9000 Ext. 103

### **Here's where you can find Uptown Motors**

Web: <http://uptownmotors.com>

Twitter: [@UptownMotors](https://twitter.com/UptownMotors)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Uptown-Motors/215207364816>

# **Our Readers Have A High Digital IQ**



**Contact Rob Hagen @  
855-70-Media**

# Ask The Experts

"While planning your social media strategy for 2012 are you putting more emphasis on sales or fixed ops? Why?"

If you have not jumped on the social media bandwagon it is now or never! So many companies have expanded their market with the use of Facebook, Twitter, Wordpress, etc. It's exciting to see how social media can reach so many people in the general area. Looking back at the past two years Jack Maxton Chevrolet has used social media, we find ourselves reflecting on how much we have grown and how far we need to go. This year our focus is on Mobile Marketing. We want to target the people with smart phones because they are the ones doing everything online, from reading their friends latest tweets to shopping for a car. Another idea that we are focused on is why people are following us. If people like a post of a cute picture you put online but not the exciting information you have about your product, you have hit the wrong market. We have put some of these ideas into action and are getting a great response.

**Heather Todd**, *Web Marketing Strategist*  
*Jack Maxton Chevrolet*

-----

If you have not jumped on the social media bandwagon it is now or never! So many companies have expanded their market with the use of Facebook, Twitter, Wordpress, etc. It's exciting to see how social media can reach so

many people in the general area. Looking back at the past two years Jack Maxton Chevrolet has used social media, we find ourselves reflecting on how much we have grown and how far we need to go. This year our focus is on Mobile Marketing. We want to target the people with smart phones because they are the ones doing everything online, from reading their friends latest tweets to shopping for a car. Another idea that we are focused on is why people are following us. If people like a post of a cute picture you put online but not the exciting information you have about your product, you have hit the wrong market. We have put some of these ideas into action and are getting a great response.

**Diane Anderson**, *BDC / eCommerce Manager*  
*O'Brien Automotive Family*

-----

While creating our social strategy we like to focus on the total reputation of the dealership, without a real focus on either fixed-ops or sales. In fact, we spend more of our time interacting and getting to know the community as a whole and a not a whole lot on pitching what it is we do. of course, because we are a dealership people know that we sell and service automobiles. That's not say that we don't bring up our sales and service special because we do.

**Kris Childs**, *GM*  
*Metro Honda*

**If you would like to participate in our Ask The Experts article in next month's issue, email Rob Hagen at [RobH@NextGenDealer.com](mailto:RobH@NextGenDealer.com)**

# Five Tips For Your Dealership's 2012 Social Media Strategy

By: [Rob Hagen](#)

Whether you're a small one point dealership or a big group, you need to have a social media strategy for 2012. Here are five easy tips to help you get 2012 rolling!

## 1. Claim Your Name Everywhere

The social media world is no longer limited to Facebook and Twitter. You'll want to stake your claim on Google+ and LinkedIn with a company page as well. Make sure you are taking advantage of any directories available on the websites of any professional associations you belong to, as these valuable links link back to your website help build your credibility both with potential customers and the search engines.

Even if you can't commit the resources to updating a Google+ or LinkedIn page, at least get them started so that you have the link and more relevant results for your company show up when a potential client is searching for you.

## 2. Do a Month-By-Month Plan with Clear Goals

Come up with a clear goal for what you want to do with social media. Do you want to help customers, make more sales, drive more people

to your website or your service department, or a combination of all four? Then come up with a plan to meet those goals month-to-month and assign the proper resources to it. If you want to make more sales using Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, make sure your sales force is trained in social media tools early in the year.

## 3. Find a Way to Measure Results

Planning is futile without a way to measure results. Get familiar with Google Analytics and Hootsuite. Google Analytics lets you track visitors to your site for free. For example, I can see how many visitors came to my site from LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. Google recently revamped Analytics to include real-time tracking data. Google Analytics let you see how many visitors came to your website from Twitter, but you can't specifically see which campaigns drove them there (at least not yet; Twitter's analytics tool isn't likely to roll out fully until mid 2012). For beginners, Klout is a good way of measuring how effective your social media efforts are, with a number and practical suggestions for improvement on a week-to-week-basis.

Hootsuite is the best free tool for managing multiple social media platforms, with a professional version available at \$5.99 a month if you need to monitor more than the five different profiles allowed on the free version. While there is no Google+ support yet, users are pushing hard for it.

You could log in to Hootsuite to monitor multiple accounts across various channels, but not with the same level of detail.

## 4. Don't Be Afraid to Outsource

At a small or midsize business, people power usually comes at a premium. It's easy to let your internet manager, sales people or service writers wander off into social media land. However, these people are much better at doing what you hired them to do: sell products or services, and help customers. This is where outsourcing comes in.

Ask your Web design firm either to quote you on social media services or recommend someone who does it. When it comes to hiring for this

position, you'll want to go with someone referred to you since it is too easy for anyone to hang out a shingle and call themselves a social media consultant. Ask which companies they've worked for, what their results have been, and how they measure results--essentially questions they should answer easily if they've done the job correctly.

[Next Generation Dealer Services](#) offers this to their dealer clients but there are also many other good companies out there. One word of caution I would lend to you, make sure who ever is handling your social media keeps the personal touch. The whole reason people go to social media platforms is to be social with people, not computers.

#### **5. Add Your Social Media Links to Online and Printed Collateral**

Once you've got your social media profiles set up and launched, make sure that you're adding your Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ pages to business cards, brochures, fliers, and any other printed materials. Make sure that links to all of your social media profiles are on your own website and any other Web properties your company may run. Make sure to create a vanity URL on Facebook so it is easier to remember when sharing.

In the end, if you are making any kind of an effort on social media where you weren't making one before, you will see results. Just make sure to measure results so you can evaluate and use the data to plan for 2013. In future editions, we will be diving into the topic of tracking your results in much more detail.