



Susan Givens sales & training solution

# CUSTOMER-CENTRIC SELLING:

## Drive Engagement to Boost Sales

The automotive industry is increasingly seeing a shift from product-focused to customer-centric selling. Where does your dealership fall on the spectrum? Look at your sales process from the customer's perspective. Does your sales team just go for the close, or do they help buyers find the vehicle that's *truly* right for their needs? The latter approach can have a profound impact on customer satisfaction and long-term retention.

An essential aspect of customer-centric selling is engagement, right from the moment the

customer walks into the store. Today's iPad selling systems harness technology to more effectively engage customers throughout the sale, by providing tools that help identify and address the buyer's specific needs. There are three key touch points of engagement:

**The greeting** — Customers are excited by innovative and interactive technology. Using an iPad to start the conversation can help to break the ice, lower defensive barriers and get the customer engaged right away. Suggesting that customers enter their contact information directly into the iPad at the appropriate time is a great way to get them involved.

**The presentation** — There is an industry-wide trend towards more personalized sales interactions. Use a needs analysis as a starting point and tailor the presentation accordingly, taking advantage of an iPad's flexibility to customize the pitch. iPads can also provide quick and easy access to timely and relevant information, with instant answers that can keep the well-researched customer more engaged. Build transparency and trust in the sales relationship through credible, objective information and third-party reviews that don't ask the customer to rely solely on the sales consultant as the source of information. And, with the current explosion of features and options, it is more important than ever to simplify the complexity. Make it easy for your customer to evaluate the vehicle under consideration with apples-to-apples comparisons versus:

- Other models or trims
- Competitive vehicles
- Their trade-in vehicle

**The sale** — iPad selling systems have been shown to reduce transaction time, which is strongly associated with higher customer satisfaction. The ability to share videos and e-mail brochures directly from the iPad also helps to maintain the "wow" factor. You can add value by equipping customers with videos that can enhance understanding and help them set up essential technologies (such as Bluetooth and HomeLink).

According to John Connelly, president of Acura Columbus, "Our iPad selling system enables us to hire salespeople who are tech savvy and more customer oriented, bringing the dealership to a higher level of quality. It keeps all of the information consistent and professional." Jim Hughes, co-founder of IntellaCar, the iPad selling system used by Acura Columbus, said, "Giving customers what they want enhances engagement and, ultimately, boosts sales."

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