How an Omnichannel Contact Center Helps Car Dealers Earn Consumer Trust

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Gaining consumer trust has always been a priority for businesses. Now that shoppers have so many ways to access information and make purchases, trust is downright mission critical. Granted, that mission isn't always easy for car dealers.

When car dealerships use an omnichannel contact center, they provide faster, more efficient, and higher-quality interactions with car buyers, and this increases satisfaction, loyalty, and referrals.

Car buyers need to trust they're getting the best deal, trust the dealership to take care of them after the sale, trust that the vehicle will perform as advertised, and trust it to keep their families safe. That's a lot of trust to earn — but an omnichannel contact center can help change the equation. Here's how:

The Trouble with Trust

For the past 16 years, Gallup has conducted an annual survey, asking Americans how much they trust 22 occupations. Car salespeople consistently fall at or near the bottom of the list. In 2017, only 10 percent of respondents had high or very high trust in car salespeople,
While 39 percent ranked their trust levels low or very low. Yet in a recent survey of 400 dealership leaders, nearly 70 percent said their locations had earned a high level of trust, as reported by Auto Dealer Today.

While some of these dealers are overestimating their relationships with customers, others might be right. Even if people don't trust a particular profession or industry, they often trust certain individuals in that profession or companies in that industry. When dealerships earn customer trust (and just as importantly, keep it), they also earn a reputation that sets them apart from the competitors, and the brand loyalty payoff can be huge.

To improve customer loyalty, dealerships must improve the customer experience, and that increasingly means delivering a buyer-driven omnichannel experience.

> What happens after the deal is done matters most — not only in terms of customer loyalty and repeat business, but also in terms of customer reviews and referrals that lead to new business.

**4 Benefits of an Omnichannel Contact Center for Dealerships**

A cloud-based omnichannel contact center integrates the traditional voice call center with chat, email, and social media. This enables dealerships to:

**1. Make Customers Feel More Respected**

Today's savvy shoppers want meaningful, authentic experiences, particularly when it comes to automobiles. They want to be assured of the dealership's motives — to feel that they are valued, not just their wallets.

However, the customer experience at far too many dealerships goes like this: The salesperson is extremely helpful during the buying process. But after the sale, the customer becomes someone else's problem.

When customers call into the dealership with a question — about the lease, the warranty, a service issue, or anything else — they have to hope the right person answers the phone. Otherwise, it's like a game of hot potato — being passed from one person to another in search of someone who knows the answer. That experience basically says: "We don't respect your time and we don't respect your business."

On the other hand, a robust cloud contact center matches customer inquiries to the most appropriate agents, who always have up-to-date customer information right in front of them and are available via any channel. That experience says: "We are here for you — on the day you make a purchase, and every day after, via whatever channel you prefer."

**2. Prove the Interaction was a Good Use of the Customer's Time**
Omnichannel flexibility can be a big time-saver for busy customers. Whether they're at work and don't have time to wait on hold, or at home with noisy children making it hard to hear a phone conversation, chat might be the better option. If they're chatting with customer service on the computer and suddenly need to be mobile, the ability to switch seamlessly from chat to phone also makes the conversation more convenient.

Of course, customers don't just want quicker answers; they also want those answers to be insightful and from an expert. A well-implemented cloud contact center leverages developer-friendly APIs to integrate data from CRM and other customer databases and systems. That means agents have access to all the information they need in one system, so they can provide quick but thorough answers or immediately patch the customer through to someone who can.

3. Demonstrate the Brand's Commitment to Quality

A vehicle is a big, important purchase. Customers are deciding which dealership to give their money to and which car brand to entrust with their family's safety. If there's ever a time when consumers value quality, this is it.

To earn consumer trust, dealerships must deliver not only a quality product, but also a quality customer service experience. Omnichannel contact centers certainly boost customer service. This proves the dealership is polished, professional, contemporary, and responsive — all hallmarks of a quality customer experience.

Contact centers can also be a way to demonstrate the brand's commitment to the quality of its products. For example, when there are parts recalls on certain vehicles, the manufacturer generally sends customers a notice in the mail, which is easy to misplace or put aside and forget about. However, by having contact center agents call, text, or email customers who've purchased affected models, dealerships also take accountability for the problem and for getting it resolved more quickly and efficiently. That's the type of commitment to quality that customers can trust.

4. Demonstrate That the Customer and Brand Share the Same Values

An omnichannel experience paired with excellent customer service shows that dealerships value their customers. It can also help brands demonstrate that they value what the customers value — convenience, fairness, relationships, seamless communication, personal responsibility, truthfulness, and even technological innovation.

Of course, brands can run commercials or send out marketing emails saying (or implying) that they value these things. But everyone knows that people are usually on their best behavior when they're trying to impress, whether it's during a first date or a business deal. What happens after the deal is done matters most — not only in terms of customer loyalty and repeat business, but also in terms of customer reviews and referrals that lead to new business.

*Ready to improve customer communication — and customer loyalty — for your dealership? Learn more about Vonage retail solutions.*