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Significant Automotive Industry News for Dealer Principals, General, Sales, & Service Management of Dealer Operations



Frontline Ready

This Week: Scott Rainville



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Scott Rainville is a seasoned business professional with experience in the automotive and technology industries. He has over 16 years experience in project management, systems development and strategic planning at various levels of corporate enterprises.

Tell us about your background; how did you get involved with Sean Bradley and Dealer Synergy?

I met Sean approximately three years ago when I was working as a BDC Director at an area Toyota dealership. At the time that Sean came into our dealership, I was actually on the sales floor and we were selling maybe 15 cars per month. Within three months, Sean had that up to 60 cars per month. Our department grew from three Internet coordinators to five coordinators along with three Internet sales managers. When we implemented the BDC and utilized Sean's processes, we went from sales of 60 cars per month to 110 cars per month.

Most importantly, the thing that Sean and I were able to work together on was promotions. We created a strategy to transition from conventional advertising to digital advertising. That is really what set the stage for what is the next evolution of Dealer Synergy, which is our movement from a consultant and training company, to a company that is really being able to help dealers develop a complete digital strategy that touches every area of the dealership.

BDC's were tried ten years ago, and a large reason that they failed was because the technology wasn't there for the dealership to take ownership of the customer. The databases for the mining weren't as strong and the tools to get the reports were weak. With the tools that are available now, you can really consolidate a lot of the expenditures and duplication that is out there. Part of our strategy is a methodology that we call DIME. DIME simply stands for Design, Implement, Manage and Evolve. It is more than just a simple methodology; it is a continuous improvement process that allows you to evaluate your dealership and improve the areas that need the most help.

Who is in the middle to make the "I" in DIME work? Is that something that is going to be a challenge to you?

Dealer Synergy is not two people, we are actually about twelve people. About half of our team is in the analysis area. It is our belief that you can't manage what you don't understand. To that end we have a monthly analysis program. We go into all four areas and we act as a remote business development or Internet sales director. We are looking at the ILM, the Internet lead management, or the customer retention management tool to see not just who is making the calls and how many, but what is actually being said. We are looking at the notes, we are listening to recorded calls through call monitoring systems, and we are preparing reports, targeting areas for additional training. We bring all of those things to a dealership and help them stay more connected to their customers. Once they see what is actually happening, improvements or changes are implemented to improve the long term performance. Training is critical, but so is the follow up of all the tasks that go on behind the scenes.

What do you see for Dealer Synergy in the next year and a half?

Dealer Synergy is getting involved in some exciting new areas. We have a special finance lead development initiative. We are partnering with Kaizen Multimedia to bring video training to the marketplace that is specialized for Internet sales. We are partnering with some technology companies and in discussions to get custom designed reports and processes that actually have been built on our best practices and information that we have gathered from our business partners and industry experts like J.D. Power and Associates and The Cobalt Group.

Let's talk about marketing Dealer Synergy a little bit. How do you and Sean plan on marketing your programs?

We have a multi-level approach called our mutual fund strategy. We don't have all of our money in one basket. Many of the articles that you see in the different magazines written by Sean are part of that strategy of putting something out there in hopes of piquing someone's interest. A big part of our strategy is that we offer anyone who contacts us a free 30 minute strategy session. During that strategy session, we will talk about one particular area that a dealership would like to talk about, or we will talk about all four key areas and go through the dealership and explain to them what they need to do on their own to get their program to the next level.

It is not a one size fits all type of solution, and we know that. That is why the strategy sessions are so critical. Finally, we do have events like our Synergy Sessions, which is a group effort of many different companies coming together. The power of two is greater than the power of one.