

Staying Abreast of Internet Evolutions

SEO versus VSEO



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Most dealers are still struggling to try to understand regular search engine optimization and pay per click, but here are the facts:

- Between 87 and 97 percent of Americans go online before they ever step foot in a dealership.
- On average, your OEM leads close at 6 percent.
- Third party leads typically close at 8 percent.
- Over 70 percent of the traffic third party Web sites generate originates from search engines.
- Dealers' Web site leads close at 16 percent.

You cannot ignore the Internet. If you want to sell cars, it makes sense to be on the Internet. With numbers like 87 to 97 percent of potential car buyers going online, almost every prospect that walks into your dealership is an Internet customer to some degree. If you want to be involved in the Internet, how are

you going to do it—with OEM leads, third party providers and aggregators, or focus on driving traffic to your dealership's Web site? Numbers don't lie. It makes far more sense to drive traffic to your own dealership's Web site. But how? SEO or SEM?

Here are some more facts to consider:

Traditional search engine optimization (SEO) takes at least four to six months to provide any true results or value. This is because each search engine is different and has different algorithms, which are rules or criteria of ranking. Once a Web site, focus site, micro site, landing page or any other organic SEO campaign is created, it has a process. The Webmaster submits the site or pages to the different search engines then it goes in a queue. There are so many Web sites and SEO campaigns happening simultaneously, that it takes time for the engines to get to your campaign and properly index or rank the site. As you can see, it is not as simple as just submitting the site.

Google says that only half a percent of people go past the first page of results when researching something on a search engine. Translation: if you are not on the first page of a search engine, you are invisible!

Pay Per Click or SEM is also not the best idea for a tier-one initiative. Once you pay the broker fee to your vendor to buy the keywords and run your campaign, and after you deplete your monthly budget for SEM or Pay per click, you have nothing to show for it. In other words, if a prospect does a search and your budget is depleted, you do not get any ranking or exposure.

Not all Internet search is the same. Google and several other popular search engines have switched over to Universal Search. One of the complexities of this type of search is how it ranks the different types of media—things like text, images and video. Video keywords, descriptions and tags place higher in Universal-based search engines than the text you have embedded in your Web site.

In the past, if you wanted to see or find videos on a search engine, you had to go to video search engines like You Tube, MySpace Video, AOL Video, Yahoo Video and Google Video. Now with Universal Search, you can find videos along with text search results on the first page. In fact, you can go to

Google.com and search for a dealership and if they are utilizing a video search engine campaign, their videos will appear.

For example, log onto www.google.com and type in "Special Finance Indiana." You are going to see multiple listings on the first page with video. All of the listings are for the same dealership. Click on the link that says "You Tube." It takes you to a video testimonial and special finance commercial. Here is another example; type into regular Google – not Google video – "Hatfield Toyota." You are going to see a thumbnail on the first page of Google, as well as several other video listings.

If you have a video search engine optimization (VSEO) campaign in place, you will yield tremendous results. One of the best features of video search is that it generates almost instant results. Unlike the process for ranking a text Web site, which can take months, videos rank in a matter of days, sometimes hours. That is a lot better than waiting four to six months for your Web site text to get indexed and ranked.

Video search engine optimization is the wave of the future. Dealers who are engaged in VSEO are reaping tremendous profits, while the dealers that are not involved are still wondering why they are not selling as many cars as they want to and should be selling. **ADM**