

# AutoSuccess

THE #1 SALES-IMPROVEMENT MAGAZINE FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE PROFESSIONAL

Even in This Economy

## Bill Dube

 **HYUNDAI**

Attributes More Than  
72 Percent of Its Entire  
Dealership's Business  
from its Internet Sales  
Department...

And NO  
Conventional  
Advertising

With Help From

 **Dealer**  
synergy

3834 Taylorsville Rd., Building A, Ste. 1B  
Louisville, KY 40220

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
FARGO, ND  
PERMIT 684

Scott Dube,  
Dealer Principal  
With  
Todd Cole,  
Internet Director  
Bill Dube Hyundai



An Interview by  
Susan **Givens**



Scott **Dube**



Sean V. **Bradley**

## Even in This Economy Bill Dube Hyundai Attributes More Than 72 Percent of Its Entire Dealership's Business from its Internet Sales Department... And NO Conventional Advertising

*AutoSuccess* would like to congratulate Bill Dube Hyundai, located in Wilmington Massachusetts on their tremendous success. This modest single-point Hyundai dealership in New England is delivering over 72 percent of the dealership's entire business from its Internet Sales department with virtually no conventional advertising.

During normal times this achievement might not get much attention, but given the current state of the economy, this is an outstanding achievement. Then when you recognize this is not a Toyota or Honda store and it's located in a tier-two market, the results become even more startling. As a matter of fact, this past December (2008) Bill Dube Hyundai delivered more units out of their Internet department than they did the previous December (2007) *out of their entire dealership.*

While our industry is seeing some difficult times, we believe it important to show you that it isn't impossible to make progress in your sales growth. The results you achieve will depend a lot on your expectations. Are you a "glass-is-half-full" or a "glass-is-half-empty" person? Why are some dealers still selling vehicles with a modest drop off and others taking major hits in their sales volume?

There are dealers buying up stores and expanding their dealer groups, and grabbing bargains from dealers who see no future in auto retailing. This month we wanted to focus on a different kind of a dealership. A dealership that is proactive and willing to change traditional ways of thinking. Their perspective: "Failure is not an option." It's refreshing to see a dealership commit to a course of action, execute on a plan and see it through to its success. Bill Dube Hyundai, a tier two product in a tier two market has literally defied all logic and reasoning and has outperformed many larger dealerships with more money and resources.

Bill Dube Hyundai is another Dealer Synergy success story. Dealer Synergy, an award-winning training, consulting and technology company has achieved international recognition for the profound effect they have had on the automotive retailing community. They have taken dealership after dealership from just average or below-average results to a level of tremendous success. Many of their dealer clients have been nationally recognized for their success in Automotive Internet Sales and Business Development — more so than any other training company in the industry.

*AutoSuccess* recently had the opportunity to sit down with both Scott Dube, dealer principal of Bill Dube Hyundai and Sean V. Bradley, founder and CEO of Dealer Synergy. We wanted to find out why and how they have achieved a high level of success in their fields.

**AutoSuccess:** Scott, tell us about your store and background.

**Scott Dube:** My father, Bill Dube, bought a Toyota dealership in New Hampshire in 1975, and bought a Ford dealership in the same town in 1981. Then in 2004, we acquired this underperforming Hyundai franchise in Wilmington, Mass. The store had some reputation issues and we have jumped in with both feet to improve the store's performance and image.

**AS:** What have you been doing to improve the dealership?

**SD:** We really focus on customer satisfaction and retention of every customer. We don't shoot for a home run on every deal but rather focus on making a good profit and keeping the customer coming back again and again. I am very hands on and always in the dealership or easily available to customers and staff. All our dealerships have family members running them, so there's always a Dube available to talk to if an issue arises. We put that extra special touch on all our deals. I have a good crew of people, but it takes a while to put that crew together and culturally bring them to your point of view.

**AS:** How has the current slowdown in the industry affected your dealership?

**SD:** Actually, it's been a real positive for us; our volume is up, between 60 to 80 percent over last year.

**AS:** That's impressive! How did you accomplish that?

**SD:** During the last quarter of 2008, everyone was talking themselves into a pretty deep hole. There was bad stuff going on, to be sure, but even the worst-case scenarios being portrayed in the media were only business being off by 20 to 25 percent. We knew some dealers were off 30 to 50

percent, so we thought the time presented a real opportunity for us in the market. By maintaining a targeted focus and deciding that failure wasn't an option for us, we could pick up that difference between what the industry was going to be down and what people were talking themselves into.

For the last half of 2008, we just refused to participate in the slowdown and we continued to improve our business. In 2009, it's sort of the same thing, only the stakes have been raised a little bit. Even as positive as we wanted to be, the end of 2008 was hard for a lot of people. We essentially doubled our new car business in December and again in January. We weren't necessarily able to maintain the same level of profitability as in boom times, but we were certainly better off than we would have been if we had participated in the 30 and 40 percent declines people were recognizing.

I credit a good deal of our success to Dealer Synergy. We got up and running with them last September and at that time less than 20 percent of our business came from the Internet. By December, 72 percent came from online sources. We also incorporated a customer loyalty/rewards program using Visible Customer and that is showing great promise too.

**AS: Was this the first time you tried to put a focus on Internet sales?**

**SD:** No. We'd been down this road five times before, and in July, I got really tired of that. We'd been through two people in a really short period of time, and I knew I had to do something; I knew I was leaving deals on the table. We started looking around and I talked to several different companies, and was most impressed with Dealer Synergy mainly because of their aggressive follow-up and their willingness to engage in conversation about what they'd do right away to help us.

**AS: How did their relationship with you evolve?**

**SD:** Dealer Synergy asked what my goals were and really talked to me about what I was trying to accomplish, and then crafted a game plan to get me there. They were able to rough out a budget with me and get me an idea of what it was going to cost and what I could expect from it. I also asked them to help with the staffing portion of building our Internet Department. They provided assistance in writing the employment ad and in interviewing the candidates. They also oversaw the hiring and orientation of the people who were going to work in our BDC.

**AS: Describe the process of creating your Internet department.**

**SD:** Essentially, we built a new department from the ground up. We had no employees for this department. From one point of view, it was perfect. There were no preconceived ideas or bad habits to break. We had five brand new people who were going to come in and do it the way we wanted to do it. I made a commitment from the beginning not to "Frankenstein" the process, that is take one piece of advice and ignore another. I was making a pretty substantial commitment, and my initial goal was to hold (Dealer Synergy CEO) Sean V. Bradley accountable if it didn't happen, and in order to do that, you have to do what the guy says. I had spent enough time and enough due diligence to put my confidence in him and say "I'll do what you say, and hire people to do what you say."

**AS: And how did all that turn out?**

**SD:** I was very pleased. We had no way to know what the Internet department was going to do, and I've been very pleasantly surprised with the effort Todd Cole, my Internet director, has put in, and the results he's been able to generate. We implemented a website from TK

Carsites that improved search optimization for us and that along with Todd's efforts have really impressed me. I see us continuing to steadily grow that department. We have a goal that's targeted around vehicle sales, and the BDC or the Internet department is there to support those vehicle sales. As long as we can continue to meet those numbers and generate new opportunities, we'll continue to add people to meet those opportunities.

Todd's been an integral part of building this thing and making it happen, and the daily discipline of actually seeing that the vision gets implemented. My management style is to design the vision and then find people to implement that vision. We have great people in our Internet department, but without the support of Dealer Synergy, it would be that much more difficult to measure, manage and maintain that department.

I've got to credit our general sales manager, Said Bousbaa, with part of that success, too. The Internet department's job is to get people to show up. Once they do, it's really his job to make sure that we deliver on our promise. All those things that people were informed about our dealership have to come true, or else we are what they fear the most. It's his responsibility to ensure the customer experience is what we said it would be. That's a huge job and he does great.

**AS: Where do you see this industry going in the next year, or the next five years?**

**SD:** It's clear that a lot of people are going to talk this industry down for a long time, and I'm not sure who wins in that equation. The talking heads on TV and the politicians and some industry leaders really seem to be putting a negative spin on the industry. I guess it really depends on how quickly the consumer regains confidence, both



clockwise from top left:  
Sean V. Bradley and Karen Uriarte of Dealer Synergy  
Todd Cole, Internet Director at Bill Dube Hyundai  
Todd Cole and Scott Dube with their Internet team



in the economy and in their own personal lives. Hyundai is offering its Hyundai Assurance program, and that really helps with build some confidence with prospective buyers know they can give back the vehicle if they lose their job.

Our industry is cyclical. We're seeing some bad numbers now, but my family's been in the business a long time. My father can attest to the fact, and reminds us very often, that this isn't as bad as it was in the early 1980s, when we had sales that dipped like this and we had interest rates in the 20 percent range. We're not facing that kind of problem right now. In five years, we're very optimistic. It will have turned around, and we will have gone through a process where we will have reduced the amount of competition we have. There will be fewer dealers, and hopefully those of us who make it through this challenge are going to come out stronger on the other side. When times return to more a normal economy and lending environment, we will prosper.

I'd like it to be over right away, but the reality is we probably needed a little bit of an adjustment. It's going to cause us to run a much more efficient operation, and the entire industry is going to have to clean it up a little, and tighten up things, and it's probably healthy to do that. Hopefully, it doesn't have to be catastrophic for us to learn that lesson.

#### Interview with Sean V. Bradley

**AutoSuccess:** Sean we have spoken to Scott Dube and he has shared his experience about working with Dealer Synergy. His results aren't unique are they?

**Sean V. Bradley:** Over the last 10 years I have continually honed my craft, and every year more and more dealers are benefiting from the lessons I have learned. Dealer Synergy has achieved some incredible results with dealers over the years, and some of the ones recognized for their achievement using our systems and procedures are Nelson Mazda in Oklahoma, Willis Honda in New Jersey, and Peruzzi Toyota in Pennsylvania. Every one of them was featured in a cover story in either *AutoSuccess Magazine*, *Digital Dealer* or *Auto Dealer Monthly*.

**AS:** How do you replicate these results at each dealership?

**SVB:** First off, we recognize that every dealership situation and market is different so we complete a needs analysis to clearly identify

their goals and the status of their current situation. Also we recognize that you need a holistic approach and that the Internet Department does not operate as a separate company, but a department within the dealership and everything between departments must work smoothly. I read an article recently that compared a dealership to an "eco-system" where things are interdependent. I think that is exactly what we have in dealerships. If you bring in a consultant and they make changes just to the Internet department or BDC area and do not look at how they interact with other processes in the dealership, the likelihood of long-term success will be compromised. We provide a customized solution that insures the entire eco-system works in a healthy fashion.

**AS:** What other services differentiate you from your competitors?

**SVB:** Coming back to the eco-system analogy, one of the major differentiators is our ongoing support. We are not backseat cheerleaders who say, "Here it is; go do it." Dealer Synergy provides ongoing support and mentoring to insure they stay on track and focus on results.

We coach, monitor phone calls, perform auditing functions of services and the Web site, provide analyst reports, make mystery shopper calls, provide ongoing phone training and a host of other services. This helps to ensure that the dealership stays focused on the process and that the team is held accountable for following their routine every day. We know of no other training organization that provides this complete service for their dealer clients.

**AS:** Are you able to get your message home to the managers during your in-store visits?

**SVB:** While we are able to make a major impact during our on-site training we recognized early on that a more comprehensive solution was required. After studying all the options and channels available we developed our Internet Sales Director Immersion Program. These are held regularly throughout the year near our Philadelphia location and incorporate a three- and/or five-day deep dive into the inner workings of an Internet and BDC department. Todd Cole from Bill Dube Hyundai attended one of these events and he attributes much of his knowledge and success to information he learned about during that week of training. What's also very exciting about this course is the information from FranklinCovey. Dealer Synergy is the only automotive training company certified by Franklin Covey Management and Organization Solutions Group. This means we bring all the dynamic principles of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* to the participants in our Immersion Training. That along with our training information makes this incredibly valuable. General managers attending have found it very rewarding.

**AS:** Any thoughts you want to share in closing?

**SVB:** We have proven again and again that our system works and those dealers who commit to it really like the results. The key word here is *commitment*. We have spoken to some dealers interested in our program and we could tell by their comments they wanted a few pieces, but weren't committed to the entire eco-system program. We chose to walk away from those opportunities because we knew they would not succeed in the long term. Dealer Synergy likes to focus on dealers who recognize that success is within reach if they are willing to jump in with both feet and stay the course.

For more information about Dealer Synergy's Immersion Training, visit [www.InternetSales20Group.com](http://www.InternetSales20Group.com), or [www.dealersynergy.com](http://www.dealersynergy.com).

Sean V. Bradley is the founder and CEO of Dealer Synergy, a nationally recognized training and consulting company in the automotive industry. He can be contacted at 888.814.0409, or by e-mail at [sbradley@autosuccessonline.com](mailto:sbradley@autosuccessonline.com).



clockwise from the left:  
Sean V. Bradley, founder and CEO of Dealer Synergy  
Scott Dube, Dealer Principal and Todd Cole, Internet Director at Bill Dube Hyundai  
Sean V. Bradley and the Dealer Synergy team