

Driving Next-Generation Vehicle Retailing Success

How AI-powered omnichannel engagement is
transforming the customer experience

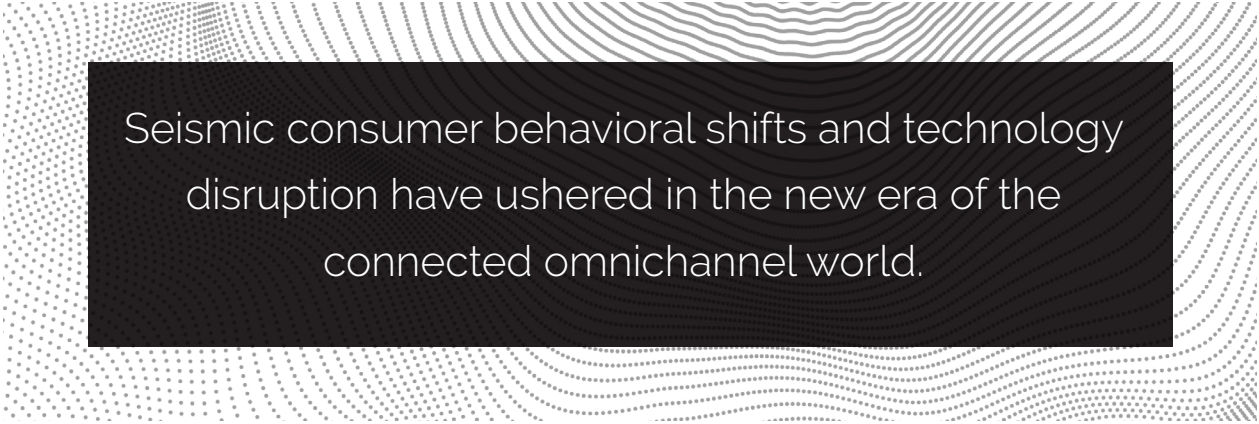
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The New Customer Experience

The new era of the connected omnichannel world has begun

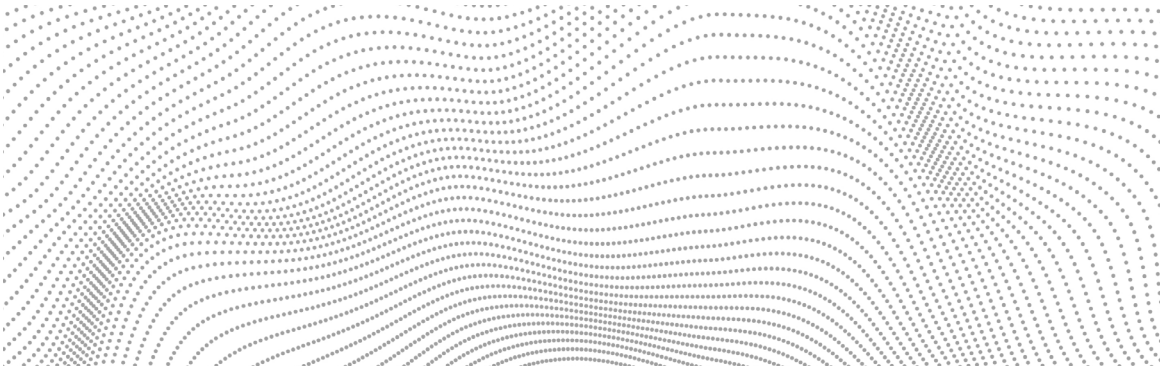


Seismic consumer behavioral shifts and technology disruption have ushered in the new era of the connected omnichannel world.

Most of the automotive industry is still focused on traditional linear car shopping and the old “sales funnel” approach, with the assumption most shoppers will begin by engaging with TV or online advertising. From there, they would evaluate OEM and website options, narrow down their options, engage with a few dealer websites or in-person sales personnel, and go for a couple of test drives. Only then would the shopper buy at a dealership.

That model is no longer fits its intended purpose. Spurred on by the pandemic’s impact on digital adoption, its death is accelerating and the hard lines between online and offline are disappearing. No retail sector has been left unaffected by this transformation. To capitalize on this change, the automotive industry must pivot away from a prescriptive and linear approach where awareness, consideration, purchase, and retention are siloed in specific channels, consideration is left up to OEM websites, and where conversion is irrevocably tied to the physical dealership. However, as with world-class retailers, businesses with a physical presence can harmonize and leverage the expansive possibilities of online channels in ways that digital-only companies can’t.

The irony is that given the considered nature of vehicle purchases, the high-cash outlay, and the long buying cycle, no industry is better positioned to leverage the omnichannel experience than automotive retail. In many industries, shoppers increasingly expect little to no difference between the digital and the physical experience. Neither should the automotive industry.



Omnichannel Engagement: The Cornerstone of Retailing Success

As digital tech has evolved, so have consumer perceptions of what is possible and expected. A consumer can order a product from Amazon via smartphone, track its transit progress, and with the same device watch via video doorbell app as a FedEx driver places it at their door just a day or two later. This kind of seamless service fuels consumer expectations of “right-now” responsiveness and frictionless personalization from all types of retailers. Automotive should be no exception.

Omnichannel can be defined as seamless and effortless, high-quality customer experiences that occur within and between contact channels (*Frost & Sullivan*). Businesses orchestrate the customer experience across all channels so that provides integration and consistency. Omnichannel anticipates that customers may move back and forth repeatedly between touchpoints as they progress to a resolution. Complex and fluid, there must be no loss of continuity in the customer’s journey from the first touch, to the showroom, to the Service drive.

Carvana, CarMax, Lithia’s Driveway.com, General Motors’ new CarBravo and others offering online auto retailing are getting plenty of attention. Yet less than 10% of industry sales are true digital purchases where a customer checks out online and takes delivery at home. However, while they may not leverage full Digital Retailing, most shoppers in many industries (including automotive) are comfortable **deciding** online and spending most of their shopper journey in digital channels. The truth is that all vehicle sales involve significant digital engagement. In automotive retail, prospective buyers can spend well over 80% of the shopping journey online and have approximately 900 digital interactions over the course of the research and buying process (*Cox Automotive, Google*).

In other words, digital engagement **is** retail engagement, and its impact is not confined to online channels. A dealer’s ability to optimize engagement across digital channels will directly impact sales and revenue growth and—the bottom line.

Dealers should think of their website as the dealership’s front door and the primary (and sometimes only) showroom which consumers are interacting with repeatedly, well before they ever set foot in a physical showroom. Every possible online touchpoint or digital communication is an opportunity to provide relevant value-added content, interactivity, and engagement. Auto dealers can satisfy customer needs by activating personalization in every channel so customers can complete the next step of their shopping journey or revisit touchpoints freely, resulting in a superior overall customer experience and fewer missed opportunities for both OEMs and retailers.

The Auto Dealer's Advantage

Employing digital engagement is not simply a matter of deploying new digital tools or improving existing ones. Comprehensive end-to-end engagement includes the website, social channels, email and SMS texting, the showroom, the F&I office, the Service department, parts and accessories, and more. From the first website visit to vehicle delivery, service, and subsequent vehicle purchases, automotive dealerships have an advantage digital endemic businesses can't match: the physical showroom and knowledgeable in-store personnel.

While much of the purchase journey takes place virtually, an auto dealer's physical presence and staff can play vital roles along the way. Many buyers still prefer to deal directly with actual humans in dealerships that put a focus on the customer experience over high-pressure sales. Physical dealerships can also optimize engagement within an omnichannel strategy by evolving away from the "hard-sell" approach and toward prioritizing excellent and personalized customer experiences. Knowledgeable product consultants can deliver personalized information and recommendations with the shopper's preferences and interests already in hand.



"...automotive dealerships have an advantage digital endemic businesses can't match: the physical showroom"

Digital Engagement: The Fifth Pillar of Dealer Operations

Most vehicle retailers are already using the four pillars of modern dealer operations: a website, a CRM system, a DMS platform, and Digital Retailing. Integrating these platforms to work seamlessly with each other and with offline touchpoints (i.e., the physical showroom, phone conversations, email, texting, and other sales and service interactions) enables dealers to effectively create delightful omnichannel shopper experiences. Digital engagement can be the “fifth pillar” of the dealership ecosystem that connects and informs existing systems and processes by:



Working as the hub of the dealership ecosystem, informing other platforms with firsthand behavioral data gleaned from shopper and customer interactions with engagement tools

Activating every touchpoint with intelligent applications using automation technology

Harmonizing the multiple phases in the customer journey so they feel continuous with no loss of shopper information

Enhancing (not replacing) the dealer’s existing systems, people, and processes

Begin with Digital Merchandising

Dealers need immersive and interactive merchandising across every touchpoint to maintain engagement, beginning with their digital showroom. Dealerships see up to 20x more traffic on their website than they do on the physical lot, and as we've seen, shoppers spend well over 80% of their journey online. Factor in that 88% of car shoppers use the internet as the primary research tool in their shopping journey (*Autotrader, Kelly Blue Book*) and the conclusion is clear. Retailer websites, their vehicle detail pages (VDP's) and all other digital touchpoints that feature inventory are critical to engaging, retaining, and converting shoppers.

In today's digital-first world, a shopper's likelihood to purchase is directly related to their level of online engagement. Although most dealers know that online engagement is a key indicator of shopper interest, there has historically been little data on the impact of digital merchandising on actual sales. To quantify this relationship, Polk Automotive Solutions (an IHS Markit Company) partnered with Impel to compare the consumer behaviors and purchase rates of nearly 4 million anonymous online shoppers representing over 60,000 vehicle purchases across more than 200 dealership websites. The findings were clear: Shoppers with the highest levels of engagement purchased at more than 2x the rate of unengaged shoppers. And those who engaged with digital merchandising tools on dealer websites purchased at up to 134% higher rates. Simply put, a dealer's ability to engage and retain prospective buyers online with digital merchandising is the core driver of lead conversion and purchase rates. In particular, dealers should focus on four key areas with the most impact.

- Imaging
- Merchandising
- Marketing
- Customer Data Activation

Imaging

Poor photo quality, inconsistent photography, stock or missing images, and distracting or cluttered backgrounds can quickly turn an interested shopper into a lost opportunity. Vehicle retailers should ensure 100% photo coverage of all available inventory with high-quality VIN-specific imagery, using repeatable image capture processes and tools. Forty percent of consumers would be willing to buy a vehicle without ever seeing it in person based on the images they viewed online – and multiple quality images can boost engagement over 15x vs. stock photos (Cox Automotive, 2018, 2019). Close-up photos and images of value-added features increase shopper trust and build confidence.

Dealers should also consider background editing and image enhancement when limited by space, cluttered environments, or constrained by OEM requirements. The more robust solutions can help turn photos into studio-grade images, insert dealer backgrounds, eliminate noisy backgrounds, and provide consistency to SRP pages.



Enhanced imaging



Repeatable image capture



Image cloning

Merchandising

But how do smart dealers keep shoppers' attention? By keeping them immersed and engaged throughout the buying experience with interactive content. According to recent findings by Google, 95% of online shoppers use search, with 61% of them accessing videos or interactive content in the process. Other research shows that consumers who watch product videos or engage with interactive content are as much as 85% more likely to purchase (Vidyard, Millward Brown).

Digital merchandising solutions that can deliver immersive 360° walkarounds, panoramic imaging, and video merchandising significantly increase engagement – particularly if they encourage self-exploration and highlight key vehicle details with feature tags and close-up images. Exploration and high-quality imagery are particularly critical with used car inventory, and providing condition reporting that transparently documents each unit's blemishes and imperfections is essential. Additionally, using interactive multi-media content to showcase each vehicle's most valuable

features is a massive improvement over today's long and cluttered feature lists, which often confuse shoppers and make them leave dealer VDPs to conduct additional research. Lastly, auto retailers can harness the power of digital channels to effectively educate prospective buyers on their value-added F&I products early in the shopping journey, well before the customer ever sets foot in the physical showroom.



Marketing

The name of the game is optimizing the effectiveness of retail marketing efforts while minimizing wasteful spend, so dealers should prioritize data-driven and personalized performance-based solutions. Dealers can leverage intelligent conquering and retargeting platforms that distinguish between casual visitors and active in-market shoppers, segmenting potential buyers by level of readiness based on engagement behaviors. By integrating marketing platforms with behavioral data from digital merchandising interactions, retailers can target prospective buyers with customized creative ad units, promotions, or offers based on their demonstrated preferences and buying signals.

Effectively driving engagement across an omnichannel experience that smoothly integrates physical and offline touchpoints can represent a significant dealer competitive advantage that levels the playing field against digital giants like Carvana, CarMax, and other online marketplaces.

A screenshot of a Mercedes-Benz of Austin advertisement for the 2020 Mercedes-Benz GLE 350 AWD 4MATIC. The ad features a silver SUV on a rotating platform. Below the car, the model name and price are listed: "2020 Mercedes-Benz GLE 350 AWD 4MATIC® \$65,199". Four feature highlights are shown in a grid: "Magic Sky Control" (interior view), "4MATIC® All-Wheel Drive" (chassis view), "Burmester® Surround-Soundsystem" (speaker grille), and "Head-Up Display" (dashboard view). A "View now" button is at the bottom.

Customer Data Activation

Each digital engagement application can capture every shopper (and customer) interaction, producing a treasure trove of first-hand behavioral data and insights dealers can access to improve everything from the omnichannel experience to inventory decisions, the physical showroom, lead management processes, and dealership operations. With the right analytics engine, customer intelligence can inform every online and offline touchpoint to increase personalization and conversion.

However, to truly unleash the power of engagement and data-driven personalization across the entire dealer ecosystem efficiently at scale, vehicle retailers need next-generation automation and AI technology.

Unleash the power of engagement
and data-driven personalization with
next-generation automation
and AI technology.




Next-Generation AI Powers Omnichannel



A Brief History

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is quickly becoming the chief enabler of always-on engagement and the primary integrator of the omnichannel experience. Before delving into what conversational AI is, a brief review is in order. Historically, Artificial Intelligence refers to any task a computer can perform that is commonly associated with humans. For instance, learning, reasoning, problem-solving, or using language. While the concept of “mechanized thinking” has been around since the 1700s, the pivotal moment that defined modern AI happened in the 1950s when Alan Turing developed his “imitation game,” commonly known as the Turing Test. The test pits an “human interrogator” against two unknown competitors: a human and a computer. The interrogator asks each a series of questions designed to figure out which is which. Turing himself hypothesized that by the 70s, computers would be sufficiently advanced to fool the interrogator and “pass” the Turing Test. By the 1960’s, experiments with basic conversation bots like ELIZA and PARRY showed that even simple question-and-answer algorithms in response to human inputs had the potential to bring immense change.



Recently, the field of Artificial Intelligence has seen massive breakthroughs, with one of the most significant being natural language processing (NLP). This field encompasses linguistics and AI’s ability to analyze and process human language.

Digital engagement is retail engagement, and its impact is not confined to online channels. A dealer’s ability to optimize engagement across digital channels will directly impact sales and revenue growth — and the bottom line.

Conversational AI couples NLP with another powerful component of AI: Machine Learning (ML). This technology trains a machine how to learn by adapting and improving its models with every interaction. AI technology that utilizes machine learning analyzes data and automatically improves its model over time without human programming. The combination of NLP and ML is what allows AI to speak conversationally with consumers. The AI technology available to automotive retailers today is miles ahead of where it was just a few years ago.

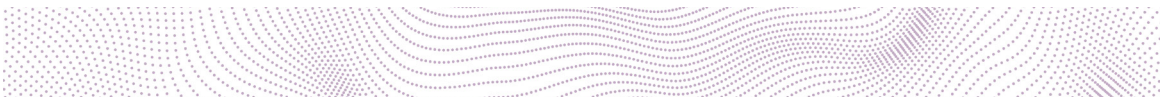
Netflix is an excellent example of the power of AI, heavily leveraging AI to personalize the user experience for over 220 million subscribers worldwide. When consumers watch a program or movie, the suggestions Netflix makes are not pre-programmed recommendations, but a result of intelligent, purposeful choices made by AI technology based on a wide array of behavioral data. Powerful AI algorithms analyze subscribers' viewing history, preferred genres, ratings, program interaction behavior (including pausing, rewinding, and search), and how that data compares to other subscribers with similar tastes and preferences. Netflix explains: "In addition to knowing what you have watched on Netflix, to best personalize the recommendations we also look at things like the time of day you watch, geographic location, the devices you are watching Netflix on, and how long you watch." Netflix can effectively process and analyze this behavioral data to continuously improve their experience for each subscriber at scale using AI ML technology.



An Industry Perfect for AI






The vehicle retail industry is particularly ripe for personalized AI-powered omnichannel experiences given the long buying cycle, the array of touchpoints, and the ever-increasing variety of vehicles and features. The more considered and costly the purchase, the more need for always-on engagement, VIN-specific responses, and personalization. Auto responders and last-generation AI technologies are not enough, as they tend to create more frustration than value.

The combination of consumers spending more time online and continued inventory shortages have increased the number of dealers consumers submit online leads to — and the number of channels dealerships must pay attention to. This creates an opportunity for auto retailers to differentiate their experience from CRM cookie cutter templates and auto-responders. However, it also presents a formidable challenge: how to effectively respond to, track, and manage the increasing number of leads across multiple sources. Delayed response times, incomplete replies, and inconsistent follow-up can mean missed opportunities, and labor constraints or high turnover can exacerbate the potential issues due to short-staffing and limited training or experience.



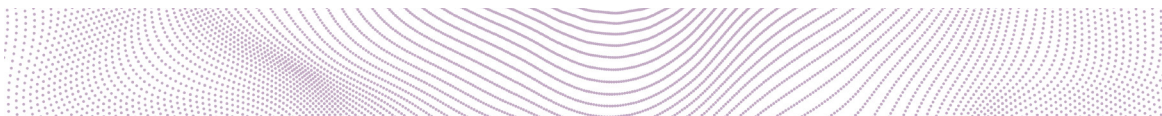
Lost Leads = Lost Business Now and Later

With many consumers working in jobs with or industries with irregular hours, after-hours leads have become a common occurrence. Research indicates that as many as 50% of dealership leads can come in after hours (*Impel*). That may be the only time that many of them can respond and engage enough to get to an appointment stage. A significant amount of potential business gets lost in the cracks immediately after the shopper's initial contact, right near the top of the funnel (*FourEyes*, 2022). Generally,

-  • 6.5% of incoming calls from sales prospects are missed
-  • 11.7% of sales leads do not make it into the CRM at all
-  • 23.5% of dealer leads are flagged for not receiving follow-up within 24 hours
-  • 65.4% of returning qualified leads experienced delayed follow-up with the majority delayed by one week or more
-  • The average car dealership close rate is only 12.5%

Altogether, 41.2% of the average dealership's qualified leads are mishandled, meaning calls were missed, follow-up was delayed, or lead inquiries weren't logged to the CRM. And most qualified leads (leads that are confirmed to be in-market for a car, filtering out bots, wrong numbers, service inquiries, and other non-sales leads) are form submissions. In a hot market, it's easy for sales personnel to dismiss a few dropped leads as inconsequential when units are selling before they arrive at the dealership. However, poor lead management has a cascading effect of consequences: In addition to the lost business opportunity (which is significant in a tight competitive market), negative word-of-mouth can quickly spread, particularly on social media, dealer rating sites, and online marketplaces. Each lost lead is a missed opportunity to establish a great customer experience and relationship which can help secure a dealership's future pipeline.

The challenge for vehicle retailers is providing an instantly responsive, consistently engaging, and continuously personalized experience in every channel at any hour of the day or night that maximizes shopper and customer retention.



Always-on Engagement

The true power of AI becomes apparent when it is integrated into all a dealership's processes and channels, including digital merchandising, CRM, DMS systems, and analytics platforms. By leveraging first-hand behavioral shopper data generated by engagement with multi-media applications and inventory data, a vehicle retailer can drive previously unimaginable levels of personalization, interaction, and continuity across channels with conversational AI.

For example, a dealership can activate an array of digital merchandising solutions such as 360° interior and exterior views, narrated video merchandising, feature highlights, and more. In addition, they have access to a comprehensive content library of OEM-endorsed vehicle features for the brands in their inventory. Robust conversational AI platforms can integrate with the dealership's inventory feed, content library, and digital engagement tools. These applications capture each shopper's VDP visits, model and feature interactions, dwell time, and all other demonstrated behaviors. The AI draws from this first-party shopper data and the retailer's inventory feeds to personalize outreach, answer detailed inventory questions, and continue to engage shoppers conversationally while guiding them further down the sales funnel.

AI can help infuse digital, phone, email, and in-person interactions with consistent personalization so that every touchpoint seems like one continuous, fluid, and up-to-date journey. **That's a driver of delight that increases shopper and customer engagement, conversion, and loyalty from the first call or click to ongoing service appointments.**

Rather than reducing the personal touch, conversational AI can increase personalization and the resulting engagement throughout the shopping funnel while freeing up sales and service staff to focus on closing leads, nurturing high-value customers, giving in-showroom prospective buyers a white-glove experience, and other higher-order activities that can increase productivity and effectiveness.

Gabriella / Service AI

9:05 am

Hello Antonio,

Thank you once again for purchasing the 2021 Cadillac XT6 from Vera Motors.

We recommend that your vehicle have its first scheduled maintenance. If you would like to set up an appointment using our service scheduler, click [HERE](#). Or simply reply with your phone number, and a member of our service team will contact you.

As a Vera customer, you have access to our complimentary concierge pickup and delivery service, which can be scheduled using the same link as above.

Gabriella G
Client Service Assistant

Antonio / Service Customer

Please call to schedule 555-547-4841
Antonio Pontigo

Gabriella / Service AI

9:16 am

Thank you!
Our Service Advisors will contact you.

Gabriella G
Client Service Assistant

Gabriella / Service AI

2:05 pm

Hello Antonio,

I wanted to find out if you have received all the information you needed from our Service Advisors.

Has someone contacted you yet?

Gabriella G
Client Service Assistant

Antonio / Service Customer

2:30 pm

Yes and we have the service scheduled for tomorrow. Thank you Antonio Pontigo

Conversational AI Beyond the Front End

The omnichannel experience doesn't stop at the pick-up or delivery of the unit. The efficiency and effectiveness of digital engagement powered by conversational AI technology should be applied to every major department of dealership operations to drive a smooth and personalized experience for every customer that interacts with dealership post-sale, be it F&I, parts and accessories, or the Service drive.

AI-powered F&I Processes

The average attachment rates for Vehicle Service Contracts (VSCs) sold at the dealership are less than 50% (NADA). That's because many consumers simply aren't ready to commit to additional products after making one of the most expensive purchases of their lives. And while F&I can comprise approximately 50% of a dealership's gross profit, it's often responsible for a large part of the customer frustration and dissatisfaction with the buying process. In addition, F&I can't be rolled into payments once a deal is closed – and the business office is way too busy to follow up after sale.


During the shopping journey, dealers can leverage AI to answer service plan, extended warranty and protection questions, or provide product recommendations using contextual data such as geography, engagement behavior, and dwell times to educate the shopper at relevant points well before they set foot in the showroom. The prospective buyer is primed and interested before their arrival, and the F&I manager has data on-hand to personalize the conversation with the consumer.

However, educating customers on the value of vehicle service contracts doesn't have to end at the dealership. In fact, the weeks after a purchase may represent an even more opportune time to merchandise protection products for many vehicle buyers. Real-life micro-moments driven by weather events and day-to-day activities help many consumers appreciate the peace of mind that comes from an additional layer of protection. Post-sale AI automation could help recover lost opportunities by engaging and converting shoppers after they leave the dealership while in the comfort of their own home.

Toyota of Keene

Hi David,

We hope you're enjoying your new 2021 Toyota RAV4! At Toyota of Keene, we want to ensure you keep on enjoying it for years to come. That's why we're offering you the option to protect your 2021 Toyota RAV4 for one low monthly price.

 2021 Toyota RAV4 LE SUV
VIN: 2T3F38FVWC251185

Choose The Protection Package That's Right For You

Vehicle Service Contract	Tire & Wheel Protection
Repairs can be expensive when your factory warranty expires. Protect your wallet from costly repairs down the road with a vehicle service contract.	Road debris, potholes and other obstacles can damage your wheels unexpectedly. Get greater peace of mind on every journey with tire and wheel protection.
REPAIRS AS LOW AS \$99/month	REPAIRS AS LOW AS \$19/month
GET MY PRICE	GET MY PRICE
LEARN MORE	LEARN MORE

By continuously mining DMS records after the sale to identify customers who didn't purchase vehicle protection products, AI-powered automated outreach could deliver timely and relevant communications and offers that educate shoppers on the value of supplemental protection plans.

AI at Your Service

Most dealerships don't have the time nor the resources to focus on proactive business development for their service operation, and service employees may lack the sales-oriented skillset to do so effectively. Dealerships often struggle to retain customers (especially without a sales introduction to the service department) and lose service revenue to competitors like quick-lube operators and independent repair shops. OEM marketing partners or other outsourced vendors are often very expensive. But the opportunity is too large to ignore: Seven out of every 10 customers go elsewhere for service, yet 74% of car buyers whose vehicle was serviced by the dealership of purchase are likely to return there to purchase their next vehicle.

AI can provide a cost-effective, fully automated communication platform that enables dealers to drive more service appointments without the need for human intervention. Conversational AI technology that's integrated with a dealer's DMS can continuously mine vehicle purchase and service records, targeting prospective customers at key points throughout the ownership lifecycle with personalized content that drives customers to the dealership's online calendar to schedule appointments. Automated notifications and service department handoffs could ensure that service managers are able to speak with customers who are actively engaged or require additional assistance.

AI in Action Now

Early virtual assistants such as Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems (like the ones you encountered when you called the customer service number for a bank or utility) were dismal in the absence of a human response. The same can be said for most of today's chatbots. But Conversational AI is dramatically changing the landscape of what's possible, markedly improving dealer responsiveness and customer satisfaction around the clock by leveraging intelligent automation to enhance the experience while optimizing productivity and efficiency.



Many dealers are already using some form of AI in their operations, and those that do say they are finding it effective. CDK Global's 2021 survey of dealers who are adopters of early technology reported that 68% of respondents are using AI now "or plan to in the future."

The Deloitte AI Institute's 2021 report unveiled the most compelling ways businesses can use AI today and in the future. Chief among them were:

- **Transformed engagement:** Changing the way people interact with technology, enabling businesses to engage with people on human terms rather than forcing humans to engage on machine terms.
- **Cost reduction:** Applying AI and intelligent automation solutions to automate tasks that are relatively low value and often repetitive, reducing costs through improved efficiency and quality.
- **Speed to execution:** Reducing the time required to achieve operational and business results by minimizing latency.
- **Reduced complexity:** Improving understanding and decision making through analytics that are more proactive, predictive, and able to see patterns in increasingly complex sources.

Deloitte Digital's recent study on the impact of Conversational AI on enterprise business found that global AI-derived business value is expected to grow by an average of 30% annually and that "organizations can significantly increase their conversion rates when using Conversational AI in sales processes." Furthermore, Deloitte has recently stated that "AI platforms have evolved significantly. Today's conversational AI can reliably achieve high customer marks for billing support, authentication, FAQ responses, and even technical support. [It] can also be used to aggregate information about individual customer experiences (e.g., products, usage, error messages), proactively diagnose problems, and troubleshoot products, addressing costly challenges that hurt customer satisfaction...a flawless experience with a conversational AI agent can feel like magic."

This is why the healthcare, retail, and financial services sectors have led the business world in adopting AI and implementing a digital-first omnichannel consumer model. It improves revenue, operational efficiency, and profits while enhancing the customer experience. Even in the mundane rituals of daily life, AI has become ever-present. If you use Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant, you are interacting with conversational AI.



Conversational AI Works with Humans

As we all know, buying a car or specialty vehicle is a sizable investment, with an average buying cycle of 45 to 90 days. An advanced conversational AI platform can help usher shoppers through the early and middle stages of the journey, giving them a personalized, human-like experience and handing off ready-to-buy shoppers to the sales team while continuing to engage visitors that are in earlier stages of the process. AI can also automate business development outreach or post-sale F&I or accessory retailing, bringing in dealership personnel when a customer makes an appointment or engages with an offer. That's why AI automation can significantly enhance BDC, Service and Business Office productivity, and efficiency considering the number of off-hours leads a dealership receives, the high number of touches often needed before leads respond, and the appointments and sales it can generate without human intervention.

Further, Conversational AI platforms can integrate into dealerships' IMS and DMS systems, responding to most VIN-specific vehicle make, model, feature, and option questions. The AI can also gather data on shopper interests, preferences, contact details, and capture trade-in or condition information, which ensures the BDC, sales, or service agent can seamlessly continue the conversation in personalized fashion. By integrating with dealership CRMs, AI can automatically schedule appointments while updating lead details in real time, further improving staff efficiency and productivity by eliminating repetitive low-value tasks. The AI can also intelligently hand off shoppers to a human sales rep to facilitate live phone-based dialogue and in-person meetings. Lastly, dealerships can task the AI to engage in persistent lead follow-up with varied approaches until they re-engage, further freeing up valuable staff to focus on higher-value work.

David / Customer 8:50 am

I'm interested in your Certified 2019 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 LT w/ All Star Edition listed for \$35,495.

Kelly / Sales AI 8:51 am

Hi David,

The 2019 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 LD you are looking into is available at the moment.

You might have some more questions - I'm happy to help.

When will you be available to stop in and take a look? We can also have a quick call if you confirm that (586) 707 6371 is the best number to reach you.

I look forward to helping you.

Kelly
Customer Service Representative

David / Customer 8:58 am

I would like to set an appointment for 6 pm if I can today!?

Kelly / Sales AI 9:00 am

Okay David,

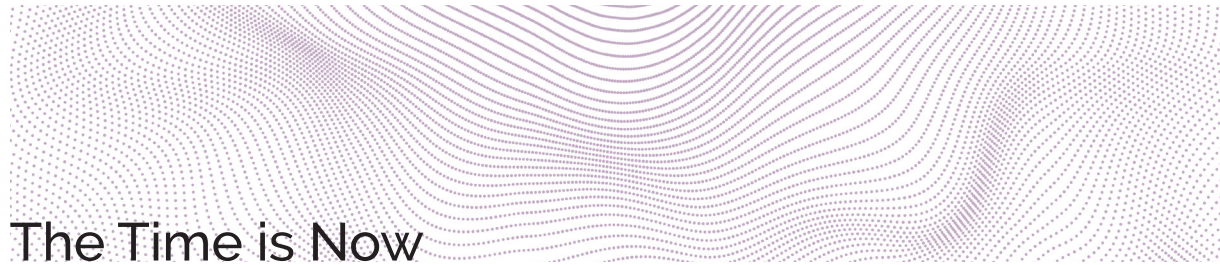
I am scheduling an appointment for 07/26/2021, 6:00 PM. One of our available salespersons will be happy to assist you the moment you come to the dealership.

Please let me know in case you want to schedule it for a different time and I'll change that.

We are located at 3372 W. Highland Rd, Highland, MI 48357.

Best Regards,
Kelly
Customer Service Representative

In essence, AI in the dealership ecosystem is an additional team member, albeit one who never sleeps, never takes vacations, and can work 24/7 to help employees working during regular business hours do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. Conversational AI doesn't replace employees. Rather, it empowers humans do what they do best by augmenting team capacity and effectiveness, leveraging automation to increase productivity.



Engagement is the key to successful automotive retailing in an omnichannel world. The most successful retailers and consumer industries are unifying the customer experience into one continuous, fluidly orchestrated journey, often in categories with much lower investment thresholds and shorter buying cycles than automotive.

The vehicle retail industry has the potential to lead transformation in shopper and customer engagement by creating seamless, consumer-centric omnichannel experiences. Digital engagement is the fifth pillar that connects dealership systems and processes, and a robust next-gen conversational AI platform can process and analyze shopper behavioral data to deliver personalization at scale across every touchpoint. By integrating and harmonizing digital channels with offline touchpoints like the showroom, phone conversations, email, SMS texting, and in-person interactions, dealers can create an effective omnichannel operation. Importantly, auto retailers shouldn't stop at unit sales: The very same capabilities should power every department, from the F&I Office to the Service drive —and more.

AI will fundamentally transform dealership operations in every department. Don't lose valuable time — remember that creating an AI-powered omnichannel shopper and customer journey takes time. Dealers should begin today.

