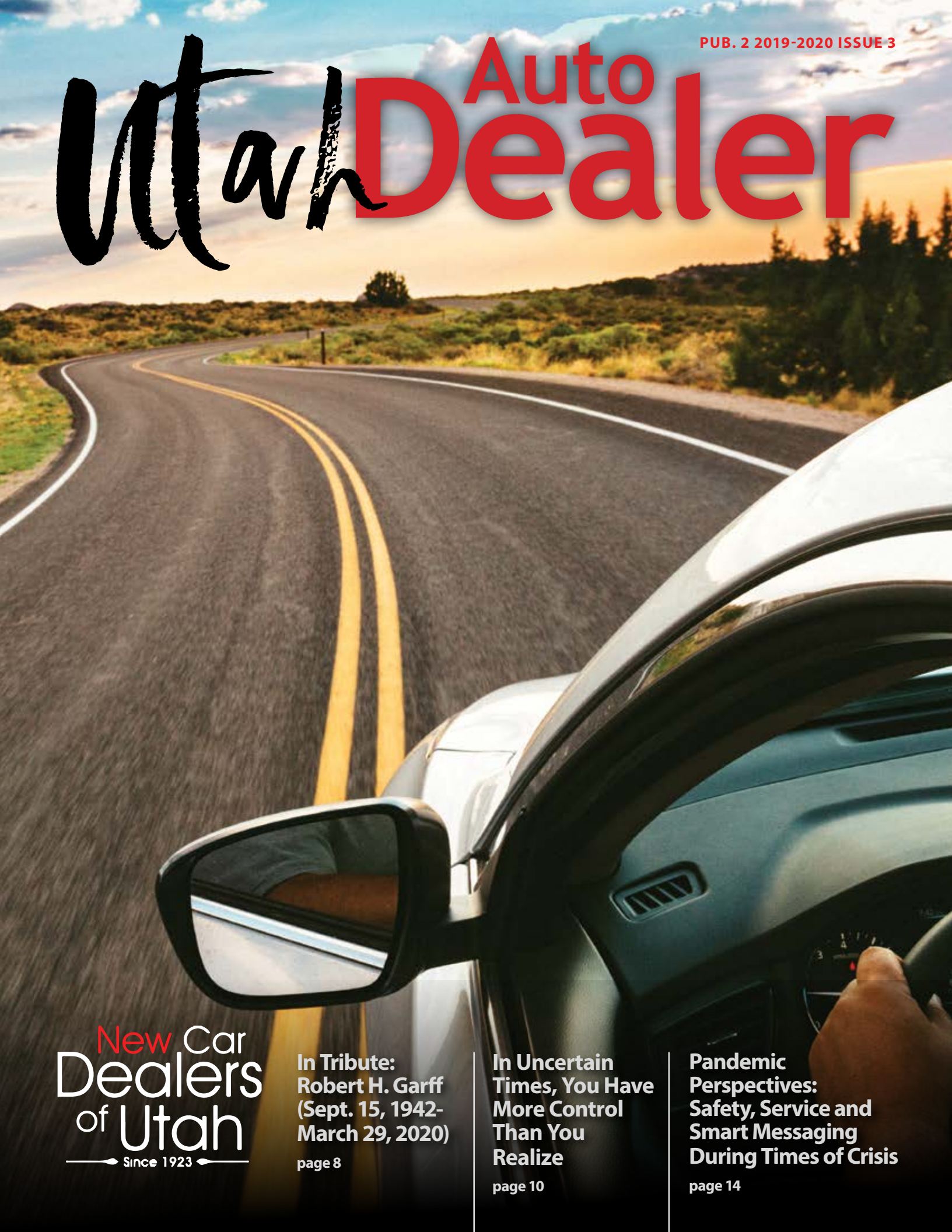


Utah Auto Dealer



New Car
Dealers
of Utah

Since 1923

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March 29, 2020)

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Transformation and Thriving

Craig Bickmore, Executive Director



Companies that *change* may survive, but companies that *transform* thrive. Change brings incremental or small-scale adaptations, while transformation brings great improvements that ripple through the future of an organization

— Nick Candito



Do you feel unsettled by everything that is currently going on? It's no wonder if you do. Many of our dealers are facing unprecedented obstacles, and they are working to ensure the survival of businesses that provide livelihoods for many people.

While this is the time for us all to be mindful, it is also a time for action. A crisis like the one we're currently experiencing requires quick thinking at a time when no one knows what will

happen next. However, making the right decisions has never been more critical.

Our industry has been called upon to change, and I do not doubt that the dealers will answer the call by transforming.

Dealers are handling many concerns right now, and it's difficult to know where to prioritize time and resources. One way to choose is to consider what is truly important to your dealership. Most dealerships are watching out for people

right now — employees, customers, vendors and partners.

The priority is keeping employees safe and well. We must also communicate with existing customers. Some of them won't be buying or servicing a car right now, but they will appreciate being updated on any changes to your business operations. You should also update other stakeholders regularly, so they know you are still in business and have an idea of what to expect from you.

Everyone has been bombarded during the past few weeks with information about COVID-19. Even though everyone wants to know what's going on, sometimes there is just too much information at one time. The result is information overload.

Information overload can cause us to miss out on important news. Sometimes it can cause us to believe potentially harmful misinformation. For instance, an MIT study performed in 2018 found that false news travels faster than accurate news on social media.

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The business landscape is changing at a rapid pace. New government regulations and guidelines are frequent right now, and you need to evaluate each one to determine how each change will affect your business.

To understand and follow new legislation and changes, business owners will need to monitor news from the local, state and federal government daily. Most importantly, make sure you're getting your information from an official source. These sources include bank representatives, accountants, and other professionals in your network, such as your association's leaders. We're here to help and are continually working to make sure that you have useful information so you can make correct decisions.

Nothing like the current crisis has ever occurred during most people's lifetime unless they are old enough to remember the 1918 influenza pandemic. Even then, though, the scale of the current crisis is unprecedented. But remember: we have good news as well as bad news. The crisis will end, and people will move forward feeling empowered. Entire communities are drawing together, too. The empowerment and connection we feel will benefit dealerships.

On a personal note, the industry lost a force of good earlier this year, when Robert Garff passed away from COVID-19. Bob was a great man; he served, and he led with grace, joy and humility. He was a friend and mentor to many — including me — and he will be missed. ◀



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To make sense of all the conflicting information dealership managers receive, they need to take the time to evaluate whether the articles they're reading have been fact-checked and are from a reliable source.

Significant changes combined with uncertainty can cause intense emotions. That's as true for business leaders as it is for everyone else. They have to navigate their personal lives, and they also have to do their best for their employees and customers.

Think about the saying, "You can't pour from an empty cup." When a crisis continues for too long, it leads to burnout, and once someone gets to that point, they can't help anyone else until they take care of their own needs. That's why small-business owners must carve out time to recharge and take care of themselves.



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In Tribute: Robert H. Garff (Sept. 15, 1942-March 29, 2020)

Robert H. Garff, like his father Ken Garff, believed in listening. The company website for the Ken Garff Automotive Group has a page specifically called We Hear You. The title is emphasized by the image of an ear on the "About Us" page. As the website explains, all businesses are about people. Although the Ken Garff dealership does sell and service cars, its relationships with employees and customers are what the company has focused on.

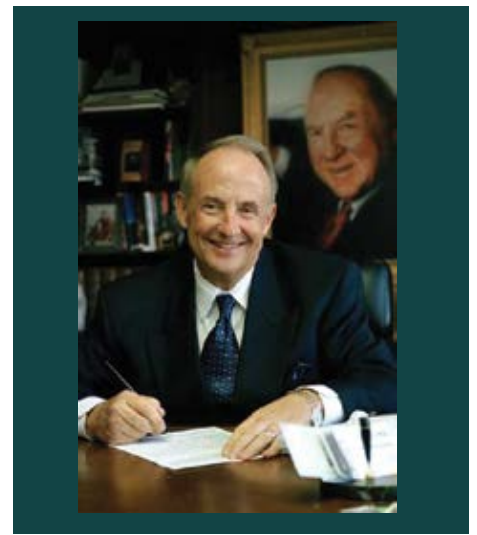
Listening to people, and building trust-based relationships, and hard work are what made the Ken Garff Automotive Group a success. The company was founded by Ken Garff in 1932. That wasn't a great time to start a business; it was during the Great Depression, which began in October 1929, hit its lowest point in 1933, and ended in 1939 when World War II began. Despite that difficult beginning, however, the company is currently ranked nationally as one of the top 10 automotive companies in the U.S.

Utah has more than 20 Garff dealerships, and there are more than 50 Garff dealerships in six states: California, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, Texas and Utah.

There's one thing you won't ever see at a Garff dealership: huge inflatable gorillas. Instead of focusing on making people do a double-take when they see the lot, the Garff dealerships have chosen to focus instead on creating and maintaining excellent relationships with people.

Bob built an excellent educational foundation for his work in the dealerships. He earned a B.S. in accounting and followed that up with an MBA, both from the University of Utah. He succeeded Ken as CEO of the group when Ken retired and was succeeded in turn by his son John Garff. Bob was chairman of the board of Garff Enterprises until his death. During his career, the company became almost 10 times larger than it had been when he began working.

In addition to being a successful businessman, Bob and his wife Kathi were determined to strengthen the community. They created the Success in Education Foundation and also started a program called the Keys to Success. Bob helped pay for an executive education building that is part of the David Eccles School of Business, and also contributed to a Ken Garff Performance Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium that was initially scheduled



to be ready for the 2021 season. That project has been on hold since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, while everyone figures out how to navigate the current logistics, but the intent is to build it as soon as it is reasonable.

Megan Maybee, the director of internal communication at the Ken Garff Automotive group, only worked with Bob for a year before his passing. Still, his death left her feeling as though she had lost a family member because of the way he treated her during that year. "He was an amazing human being who treated everyone well regardless of how long he knew them," she said. "He genuinely loved and cared about people, appreciated input and was supportive."

Dana Geddes, director of employee experience at the Ken Garff Automotive group, worked with Bob for a large part of her career, and she agrees with Megan's assessment. "I have never met anybody who genuinely cared about people the way Bob did," she said. "He was always asking about how you were doing or how your family was doing. For example, my father died a couple of years ago. Bob called me to give his condolences and make sure I was doing OK. His sympathy, and the knowledge he was thinking about me, meant a lot. After Hurricane Harvey, Bob said that the company had to take care of people. The company paid to have more than 20 homes rebuilt for employees and gave money to the people who were affected to help them recover. He always took care of his employees." (Hurricane Harvey was a Category 4 hurricane in



Bob was remarkable for his deep love of people, and for emphasizing the importance of putting family first. He had a gift for making everyone feel as though they were his favorite. He liked to pound his fist on his heart and then move his fist toward someone else as if to say, “My heart to your heart.”



August 2017 that affected people in eastern Texas, Louisiana and southern Arkansas. Some of the Garff dealerships are in Texas.)

The last time Dana saw Bob was at a meeting held at the end of February 2020. The company CEO, Brett Hopkins, was meeting with human resources leadership that day, including Dana Geddes. The meeting was about how to approach COVID-19, but no one knew yet how big an impact the coronavirus was going to have. “Brett said, ‘Bob has to leave but wants to talk to us first.’ When Bob came into the meeting, he said, ‘I have to tell you, I need you guys to do me a favor. Promise me that you will keep our employees and our customers safe.’ He was teary-eyed and was very genuine,” said Dana. “I touched his arm and said, ‘I promise, Mr. Garff, we’ll take it seriously.’” After the meeting, he left for Palm Springs, and he contracted COVID-19.

Megan said, “His comments in that meeting show you the compassion and care he had for his employees.” Dana added, “He was always looking out for his employees. It was a huge comfort to work for him because he wanted to keep us safe and take care of our families. That was the last time I saw him. It was pretty amazing.”

Dana also talked about Bob’s love for life. Bob organized a bike tour in Palm Springs for all the company’s general managers. He and his wife Kathi went on the tour because they loved biking and the outdoors. They wanted the managers to learn about the country there and the environment.

Bob was remarkable for his deep love of people, and for emphasizing the importance of putting family first. He had a gift for making everyone feel as though they were his favorite. He liked to pound his fist on his heart and then move his fist toward someone else as if to say, “My heart to your heart.” At the same time, Bob was a private man. “We don’t know even half of what Bob did because he didn’t want the accolades or the publicity,” said Dana. “Bob just wanted to give back. He wanted to pitch in and help out. He didn’t just talk about it. He lived it.”

One of his favorite programs was something called Drivers of Excellence at every dealership. Each month, employees at each

dealership would nominate someone as a Driver of Excellence for living the values of the company. Although the program is a little like an employee of the month program, the thing that made it different was that you didn’t have to be a top earner to get the award. At the end of the year, the company picks one person at each dealership from the year’s monthly winners. The company invites these winners and their plus one to go on a trip to an exclusive resort in Mexico. In 2019, there were about 106 people there from the dealerships, including Dana. Bob’s wife wasn’t able to go that year, but Bob decided to go anyway. He said, “I have to let those employees know how much they mean to me.” He was there the entire time by himself. Everyone who attended the trip lined up to get a picture with Bob and say thanks. It was as if he was a rock star there.

When asked about Bob’s greatest strengths as a businessman, Dana said, “He wasn’t afraid to be different, and to be forward-thinking and to think outside the box. He was steady and consistent. You never saw him panicked, riled, losing his temper, or freaked out about what to do. I never, ever heard him raise his voice. It still hasn’t hit me that he’s gone. He was the best. He created such an amazing foundation for us as we move forward. All we have to do is what he taught us to do, and we will be just fine.”

Dana sees a clear legacy from all three generations of Garff leadership. Bob’s father, Ken, was the pioneer who laid the framework of the company. In turn, Bob’s greatest legacy was his ability to care about people genuinely. He was a fatherly man who wanted to take care of people, and people responded to that by working hard for him because they knew he had their best interests at heart. That made it possible for him to make the company substantially bigger. Bob’s son John, who is currently leading the company, can make smart decisions and (when necessary) make hard decisions, too.

When thinking about Bob’s life, Dana said, “Our brand is that we are striving to be different. He was different, but what a great world it would be if we could all be like him: seeing the best in people, being kind and suspending judgment.” ◀



In Uncertain Times, You Have More Control Than You Realize

Daniel Burrus

Traditionally, when an individual or organization fears change, it has something to do with digital technology disrupting their status quo. Will something autonomous replace my job? What if something is created that puts me completely out of business?

Aside from digital transformation, another wave of fear comes from new, fast-moving competition and the threat of loss of relevance and market share.

I have discussed at length these fears and many more, and how to become more anticipatory, paying attention to the Hard Trends that are shaping the future

both inside and outside of your industry, how to see disruption and change before they strike, and most importantly how to identify and act on the opportunities they represent.

Few would have thought in the early stages of 2020 our economy would be in a downturn, we would be instantly converted to remote work or, unfortunately for some, laid off, and we would be quarantined to our homes due to a global pandemic.

Real-World Dystopia

Whether you're in business or not, ever since the Great Recession about a decade ago, it seems the majority

of individuals will not admit to their tendency to sleep with one eye open on the economy. This "hope for the best but expect the worst" attitude can be useful, but it can also be dangerous, both for your health and well-being and for your entrepreneurial ability to see and act on the many new opportunities disruptive change presents.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has, to a great extent, suppressed our positive, innovative mentality as a species, and has sent many of us into a primordial tailspin of trying to get back to the way things were — the status quo. Due to fear, we are finding ourselves in



a real-world dystopian society, where individuals buy in bulk unnecessarily, prepping for the end of the world.

The pandemic will end and we will recover to another new version of normal. What if we made the new post-pandemic normal much better than what we had before? Is this possible?

It sure is, if we get past the fear and reacting to the next disruptive problem and become anticipatory, using the power of disruptive change to create a better tomorrow for all.

Keep in mind that while times are highly uncertain in an all-encompassing way,

this global disruption on a massive scale is also creating new ways to have a positive, significant impact on the present and the future.

Going Remote, No Matter Who

A global pandemic, shutdown, and quarantine are very similar to digital disruption: They know no boundaries and will disrupt every industry there is. However, what this pandemic disruption is showing us is that many organizations are quickly shifting to reposition their workforce to new roles or remote roles by digitally banding together and working efficiently from a distance.

It is easy to consider going remote when you have a desk job or a career that is already rooted in flex-time industries. However, what about those that don't have it as easy?

Virtual reality and augmented reality (VR and AR) are two technologies that have started gaining traction in recent years, given the exponential changes of the Three Digital Accelerators of bandwidth, computing power and processing power, which I have discussed since the early 1980s. Now more than ever, we can see industries — which ordinarily are unable to go remote because they were based on the need for a customer to be physically present — figure out ways to provide a remote customer experience.

An incredibly outside-the-box example can be found by way of museums, zoos, and even theme parks going remote. Monterey Bay Aquarium and Walt Disney World have gone remote using livestreaming video and a form of virtual reality applications like Google Street View, so guests who had to cancel their vacation can still “walk through” Disney World with their families for something to do.

If Walt Disney World, an in-person entertainment giant with visceral experiences, can find a way to go remote, imagine the remote possibilities in several other industries around the world.

Innovation Is Needed More Than Ever

While our worlds may seem to be in a period of indefinite stasis, the world and peoples' needs don't stop. A Hard Trend most people take for granted is that there are more than 500 cycles that continue, such as the sun setting tonight and rising tomorrow, the stock market going down and going up, and the pandemic beginning and ending.

If you have followed my writings, you know that I want us all to become positive disruptors, creating the disruptions that need to happen to make the world a better place for all.

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Being a disruptor during times like these might sound contrary to what people want. However, when you're a positive disruptor, you choose significance over success, focusing much less on you and what you have done, and more on what you can do for others in a significant way.

When you look for ways to elevate your significance in times like these, you can find new ways to change your community, your state, your nation and, if you think big enough, even the world for the better. I can't think of a more needed time than right now. Ask yourself: What can you and your organization do now that would have a significant impact on others?

Stop looking at this economic and social slowdown as a time to wallow in the disruption of your status quo. It is also a free pass to innovate as much as you can! An identifiable Hard Trend based on the science of cycles is that the pandemic will end and the market and economy will bounce back. So, in the meantime, focus on the positive difference you can make and

what you can disrupt positively — what you can do now to make a difference by helping others. The needs are massive and so are the opportunities to make a significant difference!

Looking for Opportunity in Helping Others

Consider this: Perhaps your organization has shifted to remote work with ease, whereas a customer of yours in a similar industry is struggling and falling behind. Is there a way to help them now? What if, in this unusual time of need, you didn't charge them for the help? Would they remember that generosity in the future?

This pandemic has inadvertently leveled the playing field; therefore, no one is safe from disruption, and this global disruption is happening a lot faster than digital disruption. We're all in the same boat, so one major way to innovate is to find ways to help your customers through this in ways you haven't thought of before. You're thinking too small if you are thinking of offering them a discount on your product or service. It's better to look at their desperate needs now and ways that help them stay afloat, which in turn might help you stay afloat.

This concept isn't solely constrained to business and customer relationships. This touches on the topic of thinking about your employees who rely on you. You may be in business as a unified organization, but an employee now working remotely with kids at home and having to now think in terms of profits and losses in their personal life has unmet needs as well that you need to think about and act on. As you work to keep the doors open, what are you doing to take care of your own?

Let's return to the entertainment industry with an example of the National Basketball Association shutting down during this crisis. While it is no secret that owners, players, and team affiliates will be financially okay during this situation, the workers at the snack bars, restaurants, and merchandise stores will feel a major financial impact, if they can survive at all. However, many teams have stepped up and donated portions of their salaries to cover the losses the service employees will feel while out of work, which in turn incentivizes them to continue to work for

the stadiums and gives them a sense of belonging to the organization.

That has already created a positive change throughout the rest of the NBA, as other teams follow suit and help their fellow man and woman when in need. This positive disruption is spreading to other sports faster than any virus!

Anticipation Will Get You Through This

Hard times will pass, but the Hard Trend in times of complete uncertainty is that a new day will dawn with new opportunities to make a significant difference unfolding with it. There will be a tomorrow, so what are you doing to anticipate, innovate, and seize the opportunity it brings with it? Are you using this pandemic to be a positive disruptor or will COVID-19 close your business' doors for good? It doesn't have to.

As my good friend W. Mitchell, who has been through several major accidents, says, "It's not what happens to you. It's what you do about it." The way I see it, COVID-19 isn't our biggest problem; it's

what we are doing or not doing about it. Those of you who have read my latest book, *The Anticipatory Organization*, know one of my principles is this: Take your biggest problem and skip it. The real problem for your business isn't the virus — it's how you are reacting to it. Don't panic. Focus on defining the real problem both you and your customers are having and use the certainties found in *Hard Trends* to reveal a solution.

There will be a future after the pandemic. If you are anticipatory, pre-solving predictable problems before you have them and becoming a positive disruptor creating the transformations that need to happen, you will find the future is bright. ◀



Daniel Burrus is considered one of the world's leading futurist speakers on global trends and disruptive innovation. The New York Times has referred to him as one of the top three business gurus in highest demand as a speaker. This article originally appeared in the April 2020 edition of *The Statement*, the official member magazine of the Maryland Association of CPAs, and is reprinted with permission.

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Pandemic Perspectives: Safety, Service and Smart Messaging During Times of Crisis

Michael C. Keenan, Keenan-Nagle Advertising, Inc.



At this writing, the coronavirus pandemic continues in full swing, multitrillion-dollar relief packages are en route from our federal lawmakers, and small businesses from Maine to Malibu are hunkered down, feverishly working to balance safety and service for their customers, co-workers and community. Not exactly another day at the office.

Thankfully, common sense — that increasingly rare element of human nature — is richly embedded in the small

business owner's DNA, and it helps to chase the shadows of uncertainty during times like these. Few decision-shaping algorithms have ever trumped common sense. But for those searching for more programmatic practices to help sustain both safety and service during times of crisis, here are some recommendations from our marketing professionals.

Keep Your Communications Plan Framed but Flexible

Painful as it may be, the coronavirus experience has delivered some valuable

lessons for America's small business operators. Not the least of which is to have a well-framed emergency communications strategy in place and ready to deploy at a moment's notice.

Understand that no plan will be perfect. All require on-the-fly content adaptations to address ever-changing news, policies and crisis circumstances. So, stay flexible on the messaging. But it is vital to have the core framework, tools and technology ready to roll out rapidly. Be trigger-ready.



Time Is Trust

We all saw how fast this COVID-19 crisis blew up. When the crud is flying at the fan, there's no time for the usual meetings and rounds of approvals prior to production and dispatch. Being one of the first out there in the market with a meaningful message also serves to keep you first in minds and hearts — not to mention in future decisions on consumer spending preferences. Whether your market has a multimillion population or a handful of hamlets, it's still a neighborhood. Neighbors talk (especially with today's social media channels) and have strong memories. They don't quickly forget about the caring words, advice and perhaps some financial latitude offered promptly by a foul-weather friend. Time may be money when the sun is shining, but in a crisis: **time is trust.**

Showcase Your ONLINE Products

Nobody likes a business that exploits emergency situations. But let's face it, during times of homebound isolation, you can make a lot of local lives better if more customers (and prospects) had your online sales services at their fingertips. So, don't be shy about marketing them.

In your communications — traditional print and broadcast, or tightly-targeted digital media — frame the appeal by the fact that *"You finally have enough time to learn how easy it is to shop*

online with us ... so let's do it!" Clinging to paper transactions is often motivated by fear of change. Even the biggest technophobes will see the wisdom of 24/7 access once they get past their underlying apprehensions and give it a shot.

To mollify resistance points, stress the fact that it's easier than many folks initially thought, given your simple step-by-step sign-on pathway — there's no rush, no "timing out" and no chance of personal embarrassment. To convey the ease of your online inventory review, inquiry process and phone connections to a knowledgeable, empowered sales rep, do a simple video that shows people the step-by-step process. Hopefully, you have such a process and it is streamlined without any of the "gotchas" that red-flag online visitors quickly. Online visitors are TVcentric, to begin with, so don't ignore video power. It doesn't have to be a Francis Ford Coppola production. Just a straightforward three or four-step walk-through of your online experience. Scroll a number at the bottom of the screen that they can call (during regular business hours) for friendly human help from your own online advocate. If you don't have one, get one — even if it's you. A little hand-holding is an incredibly powerful opportunity to start a conversation and customer relationships.

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The first part of the message is obvious — we all have to stay connected through our wealth of digital tools to continue doing our jobs and serving our customers.

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Blanket Online Security Concerns, Especially During Times of Unrest

Security is another resistance point for the non-online set, especially during times of social unrest. Address this head-on with a one-sided handout sheet and an identical web page. Content should center on bulleted points that hammer home the fact that your online service is built with best-in-industry security technology: local service, world-class security. Even if your front-end web presentation is basic, most businesses have strong back-ends from larger organizations with multiple firewalls, particularly for transactional functionality. Adapt some of their super security techno facts to this purpose. If you need help shaping up this message, get outside marketing professionals on the project. You will be asked about security. Have this tool ready to blanket concerns from prospects. Win their trust and online utilization volume will follow. Sure, many of us are “kick the tires” businesses, but the process starts online and that trend will only increase in the future.

For Employees: A Motivational Team Message

We’ve all seen the famous, stiff-upper-lip British message that exhorts readers to “Keep Calm and Carry On.” It was produced to motivate the English population to stay strong in spirit during what became “The Blitz” bombings of London during World War II.

Given the war we are currently engaged in with an insidious viral enemy, we offer a version of that message for small business employees, many of whom may be sequestered at home: *Stay Connected and Carry Through.*

The first part of the message is obvious — we all have to stay connected through our wealth of digital tools to continue doing our jobs and serving our customers. The second part is a gentle reminder that, despite the change in the work environment,

performance expectations remain high and, now more than ever, it is important to “carry through” on all work responsibilities. It ain’t a snow day, kids — there’s real work to be done.

A simple messaging device can serve to galvanize employee spirit and focus on the tasks at hand. There are many creative directions to fit the unique culture of any business. Whatever your team’s rallying cry may be, it is valuable to have a succinct motivational message that can bring people together as a united force determined to overcome a common, formidable challenge. Remember the Alamo.

Three More Crisis Communication Absolutes

1. **A centralized communication hub** (Landing page/dark site): It’s vital that all of your outreach efforts are presented separately from your standard web content so people can quickly find only information conveyed within the crisis context and timeframe — specifically, what your business’s current policies and practices are, and how to connect.
2. **Ongoing and up-to-date messages** (email, social media, etc.): Don’t make customers and community members come to you; continue the outreach and gain new social media and email followers by providing regular, relevant communication.
3. **Focus your advertising efforts** (Digital advertising, OOT, pre-roll video, etc.). Make sure that your messages are showing up where the audiences are during the shelter-at-home mandate — online. Budgets are tight, so make sure your media spends are tracked with analytics to ensure ROI. ◀

Michael C. Keenan is the president and CEO of Keenan-Nagle Advertising, Inc. Based in Allentown, Pennsylvania, with an integrated team of creative, media, web, analytics and client service professionals, the Keenan-Nagle firm has been in continuous service since 1954 and is the longest-serving advertising/marketing agency in Pennsylvania’s Lehigh Valley region. For more facts, visit www.KeenanNagle.com or call 610-797-7100.

Life in The Fast Lane

Four Trends in Utah's Auto Dealership Architecture

Gerrit Timmerman, Principal, Curtis Miner Architecture

Everyone can see the trends in the automotive industry by watching a car commercial. Gone are the days where buyers are excited about power windows and locks. Today, new buyers are motivated to buy a car with Bluetooth sound systems and lane assist technology. But what are some of the trends in Utah's automotive dealership design?

1. Maximize Customer Touch Points

One big design trend is to use space around the dealership to make the customer experience as pleasant and comfortable as possible. With "customer touch points," service technicians

and salesmen have multiple settings in which they interface with clients. These types of showrooms are focused on keeping the customer happy. The showrooms are designed to create a positive experience for the customer so they keep coming back. From the comfortable sofa where they can watch their favorite movie while snacking on popcorn to the well-lit and well-appointed showroom, these spaces are designed specifically to feel warm and inviting. Customer touch points build customer loyalty: making the dealership so appealing that it's the obvious choice for a service appointment and for the next car purchase.

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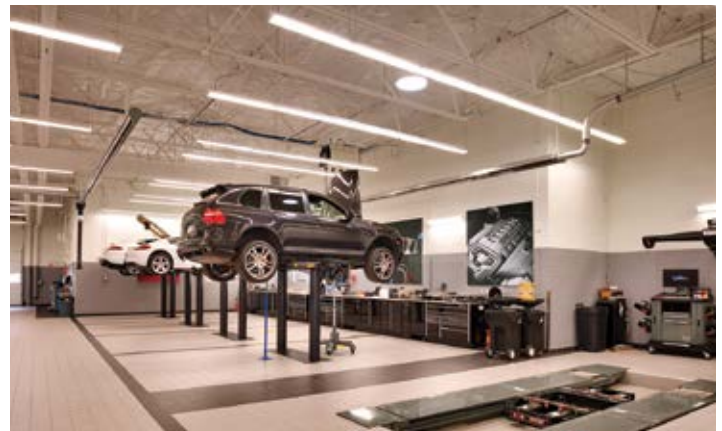
Dealers are taking note of market trends as hybrids and electric cars become mainstays on today's roads. Electronic volt (EV) chargers are appearing at many dealerships. Dealerships charge electric cars during routine service, a “free” benefit for their client.

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continued from page 17



A disjointed space was transformed into an open visual corridor with a customer theater room as the focal point at Ken Garff Honda Salt Lake City.



Skylights at the Porsche Audi service center in Lehi keep the space well-lit and inviting.

2. Happy Mechanics

The showroom needs to be state of the art for the big-ticket items, but dealerships can also be very profitable with vehicle services. Valuing the service staff with clean locker rooms, bright restrooms, and a beautiful, well-equipped and comfortable automotive shop is a great way to keep morale high and maximize employee retention. For example, high speed doors were specified at Ken Garff Chevrolet to help maintain a more consistent temperature; the technicians appreciate the cool air in the summer and heat in the winter. More emphasis on the shop is great business for mechanics, and by extension, for dealerships.

3. EV Chargers

Dealers are taking note of market trends as hybrids and electric cars become mainstays on today's roads. Electronic volt (EV) chargers are appearing at many dealerships. Dealerships charge electric cars during routine service, a “free” benefit for their client. How does a dealer keep a customer for life? If they have an EV charger at the dealership, a customer who is out and about may swing by for a charge because that is where they bought the car. It helps engender customer loyalty. Some dealers are very progressive, doubling the amount of chargers they currently need to anticipate future demand.



Two EV chargers, front and center at Ken Garff Chevrolet in American Fork.

LED lighting at Ken Garff Volkswagen in Orem provides better illumination and reduced energy costs for the showroom.

4. Energy Efficiency

As energy costs go up, dealers are looking for ways to reduce their overhead. Solar panels on dealership roofs are becoming more common. Most dealerships are seeing large, upfront costs as a no-brainer when the long-term savings is so great. LED retrofits help dealers sell more cars, since brighter lights and prominent displays generate better sales. ◀



For more information, contact Gerrit Timmerman, principal at Curtis Miner Architecture (CMA), (801) 769-3000 or gerritt@cmautah.com. CMA is a Utah full-service commercial architecture firm. Our automotive team specializes in new dealerships, car wash facilities, body shops, additions and remodel projects.



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Back to Business Recovering From COVID-19

A NADA Dealership Lifeline Webinar

Although the U.S. economic climate is now far different (and far worse) than anyone expected at the beginning of the year, the ability to pivot and adjust to the current situation has never been more critical. Restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are loosening up in the U.S., but the crisis is still fluid. If states see an increase in diagnosed cases, then the country could go back to shutdowns across the continental U.S. In the fall, experts are warning people to expect a second wave of disease. Although scientists are working hard to create a vaccine, no one knows when (or if) they will succeed.

Early results are promising, which is good news, but you have a dealership to run, and you can't afford to wait for the scientists. The first goal is to survive. If you can accomplish that much, what can you do to maximize your efforts so your dealership can be as profitable as possible?

NADA has launched a Coronavirus Hub at nada.org/coronavirus to help dealers. Instead of in-person training, NADA is also working on a series of Dealership Lifeline Webinars. A webinar about how to create a plan to reopen your dealership took place on May 15, 2020. (To access the webinar, visit nada.org/comprehensive-planning-for-re-opening-form/.) The webinar was taught by Ian Grace, Senior Manager, Partner Performance, who works at automotiveMastermind.

When times are good, paying attention to maximizing your resources may not matter. You may not need to care about what you missed as long as you still have plenty of sales taking place. But that is not the current market. As Ian Grace pointed out, now is the time to make sure you don't miss any opportunity to make money, because those missed opportunities will determine whether you can stay in business. Do not neglect them.

You may have furloughed staff. Going forward, you are going to need enough staff so that each department can work efficiently, but you might want to consider staggering shifts. Be sure that whatever you do is compliant with health recommendations.

As you work to motivate your team, you will want to make sure that all employees are doing the same things:

- Practicing social distancing
- Wearing masks and (in some cases) gloves
- Not shaking hands with potential customers
- Rearranging work areas to allow more room than was allowed previously

You will also want to review sales quotas, goals and pay plans. What used to be realistic a few months ago may not be reasonable now. Adjust accordingly.

That done, turn your attention to your customers. Communicate with customers on all external touchpoints, but focus on the ones that are most likely to reach them.

- Schedule an event such as an email blast to tell them what your plans are.
- Don't neglect the obvious. You want to attract people who are driving by. Now might be the right time for some balloons on the lot.
- People are often at home now, which means this is an excellent time to send direct mail, such as magazines, to customers.
- Radio advertising may not be effective since people are not driving as much.
- Television is more limited because of what isn't happening in the sports world; people are most likely to watch sports on live television, but since that has shut down, they are less likely to see your ads.
- Your chances of reaching potential customers are better with digital communication.

Customers will want to know whether they can buy a car safely from you. They will want to know about any process changes you are making to eliminate or reduce the need for in-person contact.

- Update your website, if you haven't already, to include information about COVID-19 as it affects your dealership and any special offers you can give them to encourage them to buy.
- Make 60-second videos that walk them through the dealership and show them the safety measures you are putting into place. Show them free masks and hand sanitizer at entrances, as well as the way you have rearranged the dealership. Tell them how you are cleaning customer lounges and bathrooms and any other protective measures you are taking, such as disposable seat covers and EPA-approved cleaners.
- Give everyone the VIP treatment as much as possible when it comes to picking cars up and then returning them.



This year has become a difficult one for selling automobiles. As you ramp up your efforts to sell, review every aspect of your business for thoroughness, efficiency and excellent customer service. The fundamentals of hard work, attention to detail and service have always worked in the past, and there's no reason to think that they won't continue to work now.



- Continue to do what you can to make it easier for people to get things done without visiting the dealership.

Most dealerships have worked hard to offer online sales during the COVID-19 shutdown, which means online sales jumped forward three to four years more than would have been the case without the shutdown. That jump is not going to reverse itself. Many business activities that used to require in-person communication can and should move to video conferencing when possible. People can buy cars in person, remotely, or some combination of the two. The F&I manager, for example, can talk to the customer by phone. Also, service advisers can offer customers video calls for initial diagnostics.

Other important steps are as follows:

- As you prepare to open up again for business, you will want to conduct a physical inventory of every vehicle on the lot. All dealer tags need to be accounted for.
- Update pricing based on current MMR and used car values.
- Analyze current and incoming inventory and decide whether you need to adjust pricing to match market demand.
- Review the leases that matured during the closure. Many OEMS extended leases, but you need to understand what the situation is for each lease.
- Schedule deliveries for vehicles sold

during the shutdown.

- Go through the DMV paperwork. Make sure to replace temporary registration with permanent registration.
- Look at who reached out to you during the closure. Now is the time to start reaching back.
- If you paused data-mining software, relaunch it.
- Consider investing in telecommunication software.
- Put your business development center to work.
- Make sure your loaners are accounted for, washed and fueled. Think about adding to them.

The service department was probably open during the shutdown. Service departments have always had an important role to play in taking care of customers and building brand loyalty, but that is even more important than it used to be. They present a new way of doing business at both ends of the company, front and back.

This year has become a difficult one for selling automobiles. As you ramp up your efforts to sell, review every aspect of your business for thoroughness, efficiency and excellent customer service. The fundamentals of hard work, attention to detail and service have always worked in the past, and there's no reason to think that they won't continue to work now. ◀



Q&A With Ian Grace

of automotiveMastermind

What are your thoughts about the auto industry and COVID-19?

I've been in the industry for the lion's share of my career. No one has seen anything like COVID-19 before. It has been an unforeseeably trying time and has changed us in a way that I think is forever. Many of us expected to see a move away from traditional brick and mortar stores towards more digital engagement on what we thought was a horizon of 12 or 15 years. This pandemic and the absence of a vaccine during this Carmageddon has forced us to leap forward three or four years into that future as we wait for a vaccine to feel truly safe. The model going forward, at least for the near future, is going to be on the internet and digitally based. People will be talking by phone, not walking the lot in person as often as they were doing before. We will have to be more transparent as we won't always be able to meet in person. The winners will be the dealers who are willing to be flexible and adapt to the new environment, which includes meeting the demands of new consumer behaviors.

If you were a car dealer today, what would you do?

I would be doubling down on all the proactive forms of communication that I can use. Automotive technologies such as Market EyeQ by automotiveMastermind can empower sales staff to:

- Make informed calls to customers.
- Send direct mail pieces that are microtargeted based on

consumer needs.

- Market through personalized email.
- Make social media posts.
- Use digital retargeting. For example, if you sent direct mail to the people on a list, utilize the same list to market digitally on social media.
- Enhance the dealership's website.

I would put my time and resources toward any form of proactive communication I could to my customers, so I am not waiting for them to come to the lot. While consumers are hungry to buy cars, they may not be too excited about physically walking through the door. That means creating my own traffic and reaching out to existing and potential customers and not waiting for the phone to ring or door to swing.

What are your thoughts about recovery? How long will it take and what will it look like?

That's a tough one. A lot of what we are seeing will be based on when states open up, dealership inventory, individual state policies, and consumer confidence and response. In the next 90 days, it will depend on what states are doing on an individual level. In New York state right now, sales are by appointment only. Once dealerships are allowed to open, the next question is whether they have enough inventory because inventory has

been delayed. With that said, now is a good time for dealers to focus on their pre-owned inventory and move what they can from that lot. Also, we don't know right now whether there will be a second wave of the pandemic. I recommend that dealers put together two sets of plans, one for the next 30-90 days and a second for the next 90-180 days.

Dealer plans should concentrate on the following:

- 1. When their state fully opens things up
- 2. The individual state policies toward auto dealers
- 3. Inventory availability
- 4. Consumer confidence and response
- 5. Contingencies should there be a second wave of COVID-19 in the fall or winter

If you could give the dealers any good news, what would it be?

I talk to dealerships and dealer relations managers around the country every day. Many dealers had a better May 2020 than they did in May 2019. Stores that are willing to adapt, and have adapted, are not only doing well and surviving, they are also thriving. When someone can out-sell year over year, that is very encouraging to hear. Despite everything that is going on, I am hearing about real successes on a micro level throughout the country. As I mentioned before, consumers are ready to buy cars again — you just need

to meet their new demands of convenience and personalized experiences before the competition does.

Would you condense your experience in advising dealers into three pieces of advice?

My work for automotiveMastermind has taught me the following:

- 1. Proactivity is king. Don't wait for your customers to come to you or the lot. Reach out to them.
- 2. Embrace digital transparency on your website.
- 3. Be willing to accept the fact that things are changing and be ready to adapt to those changes.

Do you have any parting thoughts?

Things are potentially forever changed in our marketplace, but that doesn't necessarily need to be a bad thing. Evolution can be a good thing. It provides opportunities. If you embrace those opportunities, you will find success. ◀



Ian Grace has nearly 20 years of experience in the automotive industry. He began his career back in 2002 working in retail automotive sales, management and finance for five years. From there, he went on to work in indirect auto and consumer lending for 10 years before joining automotiveMastermind as a Dealer Relations Manager in 2017. In his current role as Senior Manager, Partner Performance, he and his team are responsible for optimizing partner performance and retention. Ian lives in Pittsford, New York, with his wife Courtney and son Tanner.

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The 35-Point Checklist You Need For Reopening Your Dealership

As dealers prepare for the day that they can reopen their showroom doors post COVID-19 shutdowns, many may feel uncertain about where to begin. As a follow-up to our 36-Point Checklist If Your Dealership is Mandated to Close, we have compiled a comprehensive checklist to run through if you receive approval to open your showroom back up for business. We encourage you to create your own action plan using these suggestions now, so that you will be ready to take quick action when the time comes.

Inventory Management

- Conduct a physical inventory of every vehicle
 - New, used, loaners, trade-ins, lease returns and customers' cars with open repair orders
- Ensure all dead batteries are charged, vehicles are clean and ready to drive off the lot
- Pull your new, used and wholesale vehicle inventory against current Manheim Market Report (MMR) and used car values
 - Consider what to keep and what to get rid of, and adjust pricing accordingly

- Analyze current inventory vs. incoming inventory to determine how supply/demand is going to impact marketing pricing
 - Reach out to dealerships trying to get rid of inventory to increase your supply for pent up demand
 - Ensure all dealer tags are accounted for

Sales Team

- Conduct sales meetings to sure up your team and help set expectations
 - Communicate any immediate operational changes
 - Be sure to answer any questions your team may have to set them at ease
- Ensure your team is ready to tackle any challenges (and opportunities) ahead
 - Ensure salespeople understand the need for a more empathetic approach when communicating with customers
 - Consider additional phone and sales training
- If paused, re-launch any data/equity mining technology software and marketing

- Review deals sold prior to the shutdown and update the website with any new incentives that became available
- Schedule deliveries for vehicles sold during shutdown
- Ensure all DMV paperwork has been sent out for cars delivered prior to shutdown
 - What deals need registration data confirmed by the state?
 - Who is driving on unregistered temporary tags?
- Conduct a Contracts in Transit (CIT) review and determine what contracts have been paid to the dealer and which are still outstanding
 - Collect any outstanding stipulations for unfunded deals
 - Determine if there are deals where paperwork needs to be re-signed
- Follow up on any outstanding payoffs on trade-ins
- Follow up on DealerTrack, RouteOne, or captive unapproved deals, holds and/or comments
- Conduct follow up calls to any sold customers who took delivery before closing

Prepare for a Successful Re-Opening

- Plan a “Re-opening Sales Event” and create an email blast to your customer base
- Communicate re-opening on all external channels
 - Create clear messaging about the new ways of doing business and how it impacts customer experience
 - Ensure website, social media, and all third-party sites have your updated hours
- Consider balloons or other eye-catching decor outside to draw attention to your re-opening

Sales Department Relaunch

- Focus on reigniting your sales team and aligning your strategy
 - Create a sales bonus/contest for units sold to get the team motivated and re-engaged
 - Drive a culture of appointment setting, consider setting spiffs on appointments that show
- Review and consider modifying your current sales quotas, goals and

- pay plans
- Review all leads that came through in last 60 days
 - Send them a personalized email that store is open
- Review what leases were scheduled to mature during the closure
- Ensure alignment on socially distant customer interactions
 - Staff wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, not shaking hands, etc.

Setting Up the Service Department

- Ensure you’re prepared to accommodate service customers in the new dealership experience
 - Offer VIP treatment with services such as vehicle pick-up and drop-off
 - Take stock of your telecommunication and technology needs
- Have your BDC begin service dials prior to opening
 - Ensure as many service appointments are scheduled/confirmed
 - Consider offering service specials to drive traffic and promote re-opening
- Institute video calls with service advisors for initial diagnostics and evaluations to boost consumer confidence
- Expand precautionary measures, such as vehicle disinfection before re-delivery and utilizing disposable seat, floor mat and steering wheel covers
- Review any open or unaccounted for transactions and receivables
 - Review parts receivables and consider putting some accounts on COD
 - Review warranty receivables
 - Audit and review age of open repair orders
 - Consider lost opportunities such as overdue open recalls — consult with OEM, CARFAX, etc.
- Ensure all service loaner cars are accounted for, washed and fueled

Human Resources Considerations

- Create a plan to bring back furloughed staff
 - Ensure when you reopen that you’ve got enough staff to run

- each department
 - Consider running staggered shifts to account for demand
 - If necessary, alert HR vendors for staff’s return
- Communicate and ensure the sales staff fully understands draw/draw payback scenarios
- Ensure your HR team is fully up to speed on the changes to state/national employment laws

Facility Management Considerations

- Communicate reopening plan and date to all in-store and third party vendors
- Start having virtual meetings the week before with each department
 - Assign a list of high priorities to each department to start on Day 1 of reopening
- Ensure you have adequate supplies to serve the volume of impending business
 - Take stock of cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment and protective materials such as steering wheel covers
- Prepare for the return of physical sales inside the dealership
 - Ensure all bathrooms have been cleaned and are adequately stocked
 - Consider offering free gloves and masks upon entrance
 - Place hand sanitizing stations throughout the dealership
 - Replace all refreshments with individually packaged/sealed snacks

While dealerships reopening their showroom doors is a positive sign, the market is and will remain financially vulnerable for some time. The ability to identify customers with the highest likelihood to purchase a new or pre-owned vehicle with the message of either potentially lowering their payments or saving them from penalties or fees will be well-received. Now, more than ever, it is important that dealerships have the right tools to re-engage their teams quickly and sell cars more efficiently. ◀

For more information from automotiveMastermind about resources related to COVID-19, go to their website at <https://resources.automotivemastermind.com/auto-dealership-covid19-resources>.

Accelerating Digital Sales

Gabe Garroni, Senior Vice President of Sales, Ally Insurance



Nationwide and in West Virginia, dealers are shifting to digital auto sales—ready or not.

It's a big change from a traditional dealership structure that encourages departments to operate in silos, sometimes causing coworkers to compete with each other instead of

the store across the street. As dealers work to simplify operations in today's environment, it's smart to take a closer look at how digital resources can seamlessly link different steps of the sales process through a single point.

Dealers who do it right in the next few months could be well-positioned

to succeed in the long term. To successfully update your dealership's approach, be sure to keep the following top of mind:

Make a strong virtual impression

You wouldn't let the cars in your showroom be unwashed or parked haphazardly. Make sure your website reflects the same clean, organized look a customer would expect from a physical dealership.

Start by conducting an online audit to get a sense of how your dealership is displayed virtually. A quick Google search will provide a good idea how customers are viewing your products and services. Verify that search results are accurate and up to date. Are your hours of operation and staff photos current? Do you have promotions listed on a "specials" tab? This is a good time to update it with service and F&I specials.

Integrate F&I and sales

Traditionally, F&I was a specialized department. But, as car shopping moves online, savvy dealers are aligning F&I with the remote sale and digital process.

Income from F&I as a share of profit has been steadily rising as more dealers realize its potential. Data from NADA shows that the income from F&I departments accounted for 25.5% of total profits on sales in 2018, up from 24.9% in 2017. You may not be able to physically walk your customer over to the F&I or service departments, so it's important for every salesperson to be comfortable explaining the benefits of financing and protection products. Just like online vehicle inventory, F&I products should be promoted on your website for customers to research and compare.

“

A quick Google search will provide a good idea how customers are viewing your products and services. Verify that search results are accurate and up to date. Are your hours of operation and staff photos current? Do you have promotions listed on a “specials” tab? This is a good time to update it with service and F&I specials.

”

Stay connected while socially distant

According to JD Power, more than 40% of Americans are reporting their financial situation has been at least somewhat hurt by the Covid-19 crisis. Customers aren't feeling good, mentally or financially, which means it's more important than ever to maintain the personal touch via virtual communications.

Personalize communications so shoppers know they're interacting with a human and not a computer. Thank them for choosing your dealership and compliment their choice

of vehicle. Respond to their specific questions promptly and offer opportunities to “test” the vehicle through different mediums. Find out whether your customer prefers email, phone, text or video chat conversations. These are just a few ways to make customers more comfortable with an unfamiliar process.

Making your customer feel at ease in your digital environment should remain one of your top priorities and requires some creativity. Take this time to focus on your people and make meaningful shifts that will help ensure your dealership is positioned for success in any situation. ◀

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Thank you for the wonderful ride. RQN is saddened by the passing of longtime friend and client Robert H. Garff. Bob was not only a great businessman, but provided countless positive contributions to our community. Alongside his wife, Kathi, he founded the Success in Education programs, which encourage young students to achieve their potential. Please join us in supporting the Success in Education programs and honoring Bob's legacy.

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