



# Dealer Insights:

How To Use Online Listings  
To Increase Profitability

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## The Digital Revolution Has Reshaped How Customers Find and Purchase Vehicles

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As a dealership owner or manager, embracing this change is no longer optional — it's essential for survival and growth. Let's dive into how you can harness the power of online listings to boost your profitability and stay ahead of the competition.

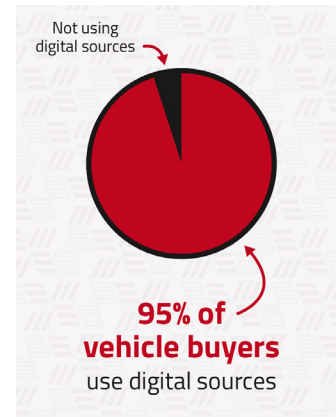
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# // THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CAR SALES

## The Digital-First Approach

Gone are the days when customers would spend their weekends hopping from one dealership to another. **Today's car buyers** are digital natives, armed with information before they ever step foot on your lot. A staggering **95% of vehicle buyers** use digital sources for information, bypassing dealerships as their starting point. Even more telling, **twice as many** automotive consumers begin their research online versus at a dealer.



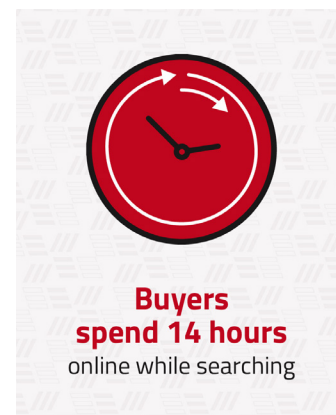
## Time Spent Researching Online

The depth of online research is significant. Car buyers spend an average of **nearly 14 hours** online during their search. This extensive digital exploration means that by the time a customer reaches out to your dealership, they're often well-informed and further along in their decision-making process.

## What This Means for Dealerships

This shift presents both challenges and opportunities. While you may have fewer walk-ins, you now have the chance to make a stellar first impression online and guide potential customers through their buying journey from the comfort of their homes.

To capitalize on this trend, ensure your online presence is robust and user-friendly. This means having a responsive website, active social media accounts, and, most importantly, detailed and **engaging online listings** for your inventory.



# /// REACHING QUALIFIED LEADS ONLINE

## The Power of Visual Content

In the digital marketplace, content is king — but visual content wears the crown. High-quality photography, engaging videography, and immersive 360-degree virtual tours are no longer luxuries; they're necessities. Here's why:

- Three out of four car buyers watch videos before visiting a dealership. ([PorchGroupMedia](#))
- The watch time of "test drive" videos on YouTube has grown by more than 65% in the past two years. ([Google](#))
- 56% of auto shoppers said they could be convinced to buy a car from a 360-degree video without having to test drive the vehicle in person. ([Google](#))



## Beyond Pretty Pictures

While stunning visuals are crucial, they're just the beginning. Detailed vehicle information, comprehensive condition reports, and engaging descriptions are equally important in **attracting and converting leads**. These elements provide the substance that backs up your visual presentation, giving potential buyers the confidence to move forward with a purchase.

## Tools of the Trade

To create these comprehensive listings, consider leveraging specialized tools. Inspection services like [C.A.R.Score](#) can help you generate detailed condition reports, while AI-powered tools like [StoryBuilder](#) can assist in crafting engaging vehicle descriptions. By providing this level of detail upfront, you're not just showcasing your inventory — you're **building trust and credibility** with potential buyers before they ever interact with your sales team.

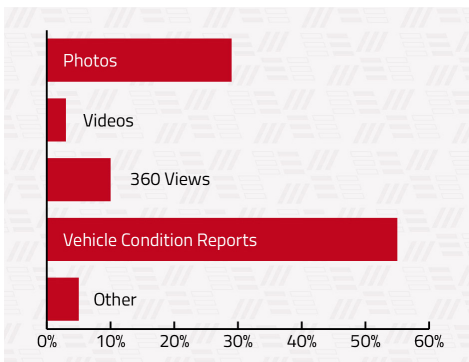
# /// TURNING USED INVENTORY FOR HIGHER PROFIT

## Building Trust Through Transparency

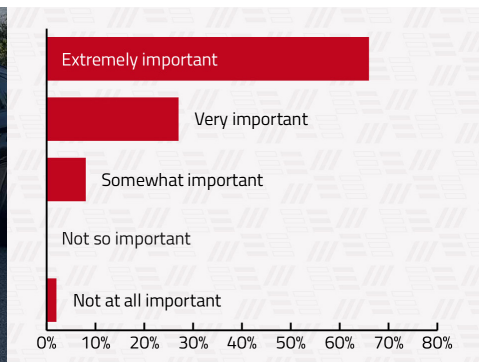
In the used car market, transparency is your greatest ally. By showcasing vehicle condition transparently, you can build trust with potential buyers. When customers see honest, detailed information about a vehicle's condition, they're more likely to trust your dealership. Additionally, a comprehensive condition report allows you to **command higher prices** for well-maintained vehicles and explain pricing for those that may need some work.

## Speeding Up the Sales Cycle

Transparency doesn't just build trust — it also accelerates the sales process. By providing all necessary information upfront, you reduce back-and-forth communication and help customers make decisions faster. When customers arrive at your dealership, they're already well-informed about the vehicle's condition, streamlining the sales process and reducing time spent on in-person inspections.



What is important when viewing vehicles online



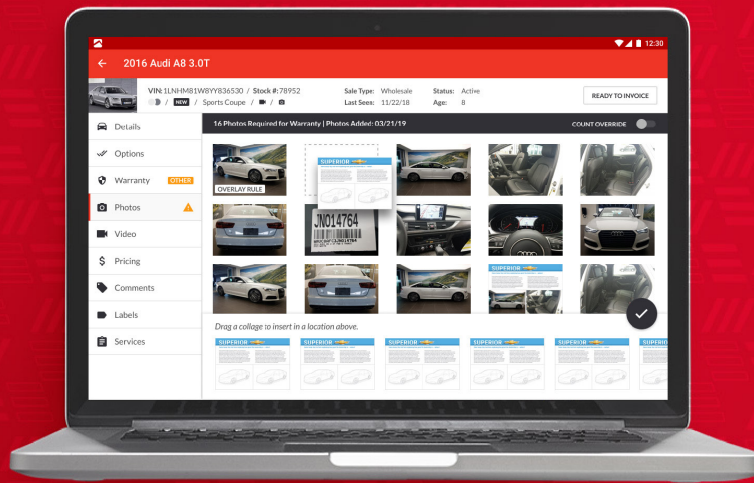
Importance of vehicle condition in buying decisions

## Navigating Volatile Used Car Prices

With used car prices remaining volatile in 2024 (the average **used car listing price** sits at \$25,571), it's never been more important to effectively communicate the value of your inventory.

Tools like C.A.R.Score can help you create detailed, standardized condition reports that set you apart from competitors who offer vague or limited information. Remember, the goal is not just to sell cars, but to sell them profitably.

By providing comprehensive information, you're more likely to attract serious buyers who understand the value of what you're offering, potentially leading to higher profit margins.



## /// STANDING OUT FROM THE COMPETITION

### Creating an Immersive Online Experience

Want to stand out in a crowded digital marketplace? Creating a superior **online shopping experience** is crucial. Emphasis on the “experience” part of that.

Implement **360-degree tours** for every vehicle in your inventory. This technology allows customers to explore cars as if they were on your lot, increasing engagement and trust.

Leverage AI technology to create unique, informative descriptions for each vehicle. This ensures consistency in your listings while highlighting the key features that matter most to buyers.

### The Importance of Professionalism

Invest in high-quality **photography** and **videography**. Remember, your online listings are often the first impression a potential buyer has of your inventory. Make detailed condition reports easily accessible. Our **consumer survey revealed** that vehicle condition reports were considered the most important merchandising asset while viewing a vehicle online.

### What Car Shoppers Really Want

Our research shows that car shoppers **prefer vehicle images** with background clipping and branded overlays. This not only makes your listings look more professional but also reinforces your dealership’s brand and legitimacy. By implementing these elements, you’re not just listing vehicles — you’re creating an online showroom that rivals (and in many ways surpasses) the in-person experience.

# /// CREATING EFFECTIVE DIGITAL MERCHANDISING STRATEGIES



Photography



AI & Technology



Mobile View



Videography

## Optimizing Your Photo Gallery

Provide between **10-20 high-quality photos** per listing. This range gives shoppers a comprehensive view of the vehicle without overwhelming them. Include images of important vehicle options like sunroofs, infotainment systems, and advanced safety features. Our survey showed that these details are very important to car shoppers.

**10-20**  
high quality  
photos per listing

## Leveraging AI and Advanced Technologies

Use AI-generated descriptions to improve engagement by ensuring each listing has a unique, detailed description that highlights key selling points. Implement 360-degree virtual tours to provide an immersive experience that can significantly increase the time shoppers spend engaging with your listings.

**33%**

of research  
time is on a  
mobile device

## Mobile Optimization

Remember, the average automotive shopper spends 33% of their research time on a mobile device. Ensure your listings **look great and function well** on smartphones and tablets. This mobile-friendly approach is crucial for capturing and retaining the attention of on-the-go shoppers.

## The Video Advantage

Create walkaround videos, feature highlights, and even virtual test drives to cater to the 75% of car buyers who watch videos before visiting a dealership. These videos can provide a more **dynamic and engaging presentation** of your inventory, helping potential buyers feel more connected to the vehicles before they ever see them in person.



# /// CONCLUSION: SELLING SMARTER, FASTER, AND EASIER

The digital transformation of the automotive industry presents an unprecedented opportunity for dealerships to reach more customers, turn inventory faster, and increase profitability. By leveraging professional digital merchandising services, you can create a compelling online presence that sets you apart from the competition.

Remember, in today's market, your online listings are often the first and most crucial point of contact with potential buyers. By investing in high-quality digital merchandising, you're not just showcasing your inventory — you're building trust, providing value, and creating an experience that can turn browsers into buyers.

## Take the Next Step: Get Inventory Merchandising Support From the Experts

Ready to revolutionize your online inventory presence? Contact [Dealer Specialties](#) today for a personalized consultation on how our digital merchandising services can help you reach more qualified leads, turn inventory faster, and stand out from the competition.



GET IN TOUCH