



DealerSocket's CRM and Auto/Mate DMS Power Auffenberg Chevrolet Buick GMC to Banner Quarter





Forced shutdowns due to COVID-19 negatively impacted many dealerships, but for Auffenberg Chevrolet Buick GMC in Farmington, Mo., the pandemic had little impact. In the second quarter of 2020, the dealership posted significant year-over-year increases in unit sales and profit per retail unit – gains General Manager Barry Pannett attributes to a newly streamlined sales process and the solutions provided by DealerSocket CRM and Auto/Mate DMS.

Problem

Heading into the second quarter, the general manager thought sales would be terrible. Fortunately, businesses in Missouri were only required to shut down for a short time. “If anything, we were positively affected by COVID,” says Pannett, who oversees five salespeople who sell an average of 50-70 vehicles per month.

While traffic remained steady, Auffenberg struggled to obtain enough used inventory to satisfy customer demand. To offset this challenge, Pannett focused on improving the sales process for new vehicles. “I’ve always preferred new and prided myself on the profitability factor of new,” he says. “I believe you can make money on new cars, but you have to ask for the money.”



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General Manager
Auffenberg Chevrolet Buick GMC

Solution

To help streamline the sales process, Pannett turned to DealerSocket's CRM, which his team has been using for a little over a year. Pannett says the group considered three CRM providers before making the switch to DealerSocket in April 2019 — a decision in which every general manager at each location had a voice. As a GM who wears a lot of hats, Pannett says the CRM's ease-of-use is what won him over. DealerSocket's acquisition of Auto/Mate less than a year later increased the value of that decision even more.

"I think the acquisition is a positive change," Pannett says. "I like how DealerSocket and Auto/Mate talk, and when we make a deal, DealerSocket pushes it into Auto/Mate in a nice, streamlined process. Things like that make our lives easier."



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Mobile CRM

The CRM's mobile sales app allows Pannett's sales team to respond to leads from anywhere, anytime. He insists on responding to every lead almost instantly, regardless of when that lead lands in the CRM. "I get all of the leads so I can stop the clock with GM. Then I re-assign those leads," he says. "We don't take days off here. If a customer submits a lead on a Sunday, someone has to respond. So, the mobile app is nice because everyone can use the tool remotely."

Email Campaigns

Pannett has tapped into DealerSocket CRM's automation tools to deliver timely, relevant marketing and lead follow-up activities. He's also customized his campaigns for every vehicle model and all types of general inquiries. For leads, he schedules emails to go out one, three, and five days after initial contact. "The campaigns are personalized, and they really help to get the customers re-engaged. Probably 75% of people actually respond."

Home Dashboard

Pannett's favorite tool in DealerSocket's CRM is the customizable dashboard, which he configured to provide quick snapshots of key metrics, appointments, leads, and sales — all on a single homepage. "Since I'm really focused on lead response time, I like to track that," he says. "Today, my lead response time is one minute, but my month-to-date average is 12 minutes, 28 seconds. That's good, but I think it can be better, so that's something to work on." Pannett also relies on the home dashboard to monitor store visits, demos, phone "ups," and completed tasks.

Desking

One of Pannett's key strategies to keep profitability high is to work every deal from full sticker price. To desk deals, he relies on DealerSocket's new Desking tool — a highly customizable feature within the CRM that DealerSocket introduced in 2020. "I really like the Desking tool because it allows me to pencil deals the way I've handwritten them for 20 years, but it looks much more professional," he says. "If I handwrite something, it's coming from me. If it's typed on a worksheet, it is what it is; there's something psychological about it. It's amazing how many customers look at the worksheet and don't even ask for a discount."

Reporting

To track his progress against goals, Pannett relies on Auto/Mate's DMS for reporting functions. "I like to print all the recaps through Auto/Mate, so when a deal comes to my desk, I log in all the information and print it off on a nice little deal recap form."



Pannett also likes the way Auto/Mate provides several different ways to look up information in its Sales & Finance module. "I find it easier to look things up in Auto/Mate than in other sources," he says. For example, reports such as how many deals were sold in the second quarter of last year and average grosses. Pannett also uses reports to help his sales team strategize. "When previous customers come in, it's easy to pull up that customer's name and see how we worked the deal the last time. This capability makes it easy to game plan on how to best work the new deal."

The Results

In the second quarter of 2020, Auffenberg Chevrolet Buick GMC posted the following:

10%

INCREASE IN UNIT
SALES YoY

29%

INCREASE IN TOTAL
RETAIL PROFIT YoY

12%

INCREASE IN AVERAGE
FRONT-END PROFIT

Despite a temporary shutdown due to COVID-19, Pannett's focus on streamlining his store's sales process delivered significant increases in unit sales and total profits. He attributes his success to time-tested sales techniques and having the right tools and support.

"The DMS is great, and the CRM is great, but it all comes down to the basics," he says. "Garbage in, garbage out, and if you're not using the tools that are in front of you to help produce results, shame on you. At the end of the day, it comes down to my sales manager and me making sure we inspect what we expect."

With DealerSocket's acquisition of Auto/Mate, Pannett looks forward to the new features and improved integrations that will come as a result. "Between the sales floor, the customers, to finance and the actual delivery, I would say that putting these two systems together definitely brings it all together. It's already created a smoother, more professional experience for everyone."



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