Article

AXLE Delivers a Turnkey Car Buying Center Experience Which Dealers Love

Increasing Consumer Direct Used Car Purchases

PASCHGROUP

A Turnkey Car Buying Center Experience

One of the benefits of being a member of the Automotive CXO Network is the opportunity to collaborate with peers who operate or manage dealer groups with 10+ rooftops. Last year, one of the common concerns of CXO members was the need to increase consumer direct used car purchases with one requirement: the strategy must generate profitable deals.

As the facilitator of the CXO Network, I did some research and invited Derek White, CEO of E-Drive Auto, to speak at one of our three annual CXO Summits. Several of our members decided to build a custom buying center platform using Derek's AXLE platform which is hosted on a unique URL and will help them create a local brand experience.

As many of these AXLE buying center projects are now live, I have some data to share with members of my newsletter.

I will be highlighting two success stories today in the hope that you will be inspired to invest in an intentional consumer direct model. Before I share the data, I have come to realize that many dealers have not considered a more intentional, aggressive, and profitable strategy to acquire low mileage, local used cars.

Does your dealership have an **intentional** used car buying strategy?

Intentional Buying Strategy Defined

My friend and CXO Member, David Long, has been a leading advocate for developing consumer direct buying processes. He has traveled around the U.S. to help dealers establish the internal processes to run an efficient acquisition strategy once a lead comes into the dealership. What was missing, from my perspective, was a dedicated, highly optimized website, separate from the dealer's website, which has only one purpose: buying cars from consumers.

For many dealers, their used car acquisition strategy consists of a few banners on the website that direct a consumer to a single page on their website.

Visit any dealer website, and you will likely find in the menu a page that says, "Value Your Trade" or "Sell Us Your Car." What is on their dedicated trade evaluation page? Many dealers simply have an "iframed" instance of Kelley Blue Book software which fails to pass my test of an intentional strategy. Others may have an interactive trade tool like TradePending, but the software's performance can be hindered by pop-ups and plug-ins that reside on the dealer's website.

Make Your Buying Center Its Own Experience

Here are a few reasons why dealer website solutions miss the full opportunity that a dedicated buying center offers:

1. Any iframed tool makes it difficult (or practically impossible) to see which marketing sources resulted in a conversion. This means that dealers can't increase trade leads cost-effectively through marketing.
2. The design and workflow of the trade software is highly templated and does not allow full A/B testing. This limits the dealer's ability to test new ideas to increase conversions.
3. Most trade tools do not have integrated real-time chat or AI assistants that might make the trade process convert at a higher rate. A fully customized buying center has no practical limitations.
4. Having one or two pages on a dealer's website dedicated to buying cars misses the mark for building a long list of customer testimonials and related content which can help build local search relevance using SEO strategies.
5. The dedicated URL of an AXLE buying center can be used in radio commercials, billboards, and many visual media outlets. A deep-linked page on a dealer's website does not have the recall that a custom URL has.

AXLE Technology Delivers Buying Opportunities

Each AXLE buying center website is a custom design from the ground up...using their toolkit which includes TradeVue and their messaging platform. TradeVue uses hyper-accurate market data, a proprietary valuation engine, and a best-in-class customer experience to render on-page appraisals in under 60 seconds.

Dealers can choose from existing wireframes or come up with a completely new design. The key behind the high conversion rates is the way in which the consumer is engaged during the trade process.

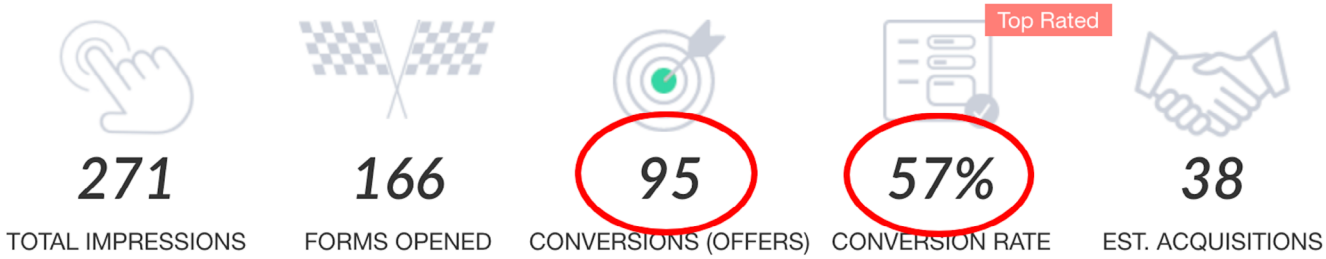
> **Every buying center website is a customized experience to create the best experience for local consumers who want to sell their car.** *- Derek White, CEO*

Dealers should know that AXLE customers are extremely pleased with the accuracy of quotations and the profitability of the trades acquired. Once a site is launched, the common theme is that dealers want to increase marketing budgets because the cost per acquisition is so attractive.

C. Harper Auto Group Experience with AXLE

I sat down with Josh Detzel, Director, Marketing & Digital Operations at the C. Harper Auto Group, to discuss his experience with Derek White and the team at E-Drive Auto.

BP: What has been your overall experience with AXLE?
JD: E-Drive Auto is a fantastic platform for car dealers looking to buy and source more used cars from private sellers. The website is user-friendly and easy to navigate, making it simple for dealers to find the vehicles they need to supplement their lack of new car inventory. The team at E-Drive Auto, led by Derek, has been excellent to work with. They have custom tailored SellYourCarPittsburgh.com to meet our needs, and we're already seeing great results.



BP: What performance stats can you share?
JD: It's important to note that marketing isn't an exact science, but E-Drive Auto has been able to fine-tune their strategy to deliver impressive results. In the past 30 days, we've seen a 57% conversion rate and about 95 leads, which is a testament to the effectiveness of their marketing efforts. The values that TradeVue provides to customers have been very accurate, and we're making money on 9 out of 10 cars we retail.

> **E-Drive Auto's AXLE is a fantastic platform for car dealers looking to buy and source more used cars from private sellers.** *- Josh Detzel, C-Harper Group*

BP: What would you tell other dealers about AXLE?
JD: Overall, our partnership with E-Drive Auto has been a game-changer for our business. Not only have they helped us boost our retail operations, but they've also improved our wholesale bottom line, keeping us in the green.

Our Buying Center runs completely independent from the rest of our operation. The Purchasing Agent is a true one-stop shop for sourcing cars: she handles the leads, appraises the vehicles, submits a true cash offer to the customer, sets an appointment, collects the required documentation, prints the paperwork, and cuts the customer a check. Our process has been perfected – getting every customer in and out of the dealership in under **60 minutes** with a check in hand. If you're looking to source more used cars and increase your profits, we highly recommend partnering with E-Drive Auto.

LaFontaine Experience with AXLE

LaFontaine Automotive Group launched LaFontaineBuyingCenter.com to provide an easy and seamless experience for guests considering selling their vehicle, and they also wanted to drive opportunity directly to their Vehicle Buying Center team. I sat down with Carlito Mojica to ask about his approach to LaFontaine's consumer-direct buying strategy:

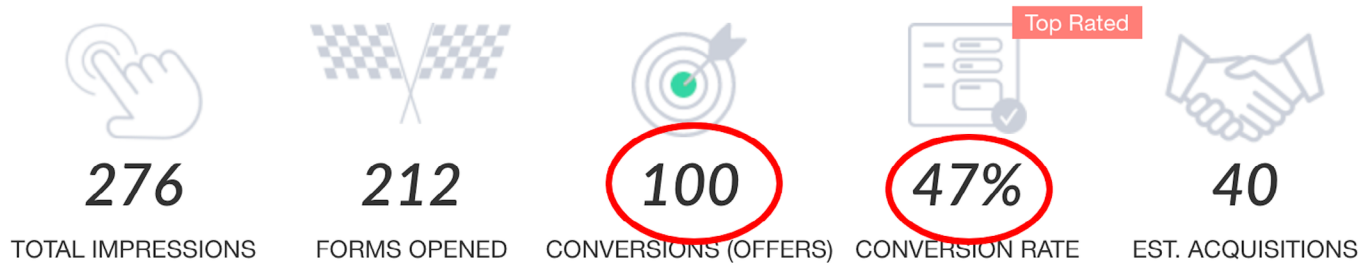
BP: Why a separate buying center website?

CM: We felt it was important to dedicate a website to facilitate a frictionless guest experience without the other offerings of inventory, service, parts, and body shop.

> **Within a 45-day snapshot of going live with marketing campaigns, we have seen an increase in our lead volume of 100+ opportunities with a conversion rate of 47%.** *- Carlito Mojica, LaFFontaine Automotive Group*

BP: What is your operational model for acquisitions?

CM: Our Vehicle Buying Center Team is an independent entity separate from our 34 Retail Operations. Private Party acquisitions fuel LaFontaine Automotive Group's inventory selection and nationwide wholesale offerings. Our goal is to eliminate expensive third-party vehicle acquisition lead sources and reallocate those funds to promote the site.



BP: Can you share your initial website launch metrics?

CM: Within a 45-day snapshot of going live with marketing campaigns, we have seen an increase in our lead volume of 100+ opportunities with a conversion rate of 47%. The LaFontaine Automotive Group wanted to choose a vendor that provides "partner performance". e-Drive Auto has exceeded our partner performance expectation based on the collaboration sessions, UX goals and conversion KPI's.

Modern Retailing Strategies at DMSC 2023 in Austin, Texas

A consumer ***direct buying center strategy*** is part of a great Modern Retailing framework that will be discussed this May in Austin, Texas at the 2023 Digital Marketing Strategies Conference. There are many new ways to target local consumers with a "sell your car" message which gives them the confidence and safety that they need to move forward with a sale.

Save $250 with E-Drive

If you would like to speak with Derek and the AXLE team, you can call him at 904-687-8510 or via email derek@edriveauto.com. You can also join the conversation with the AXLE team at the Digital Marketing Strategies Conference. Since E-Drive Auto is a sponsor, you can **save $250** on your tickets by using discount code **EDRIVE250**. ***Get your tickets now!***