



Consumer Experience

Build and deliver the best consumer experience that transcends just clicking a buy fully online button.

For most eCommerce, you need to build on the brand reputation for quality and service that your business already has within the community and region. Start by looking at the experience you offer your current clientele, how you establish trust today, and what you do to engage prospective car buyers.

With fully online/eCommerce retail, you'll need to take additional steps to make sure the car buyer understands how the tools work, offer speed and efficiency, provide transparency into pricing and process, establish clear and fair guarantees and warranties, and provide personal support as needed.

Establishing acceptable trade valuations If you want shoppers to buy fully online, your policies need to



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reflect the experience you would have offered in store. Successful online retailers provide the best guarantees and customer service—and it's all online. We know that offering the buying process online is paying off, with 74% of car buyers in 2020 reporting that they were happier compared to the previous year due to the increase in online shopping versus time spent at dealerships.

As you start to work on your new business strategy, one area where you can really shine is order fulfillment and delivery. When you're optimizing your delivery process for eCommerce, be sure to take into consideration how to handle orders outside the usual delivery radius. Consider covering delivery fees to amp up the perceived level of service you provide. You will need delivery drivers to provide high-level customer service as they handle additional tasks including collecting delivery confirmation signatures, evaluating trade-in vehicles, etc. It will also be necessary to plan for handling registration and titling so that fully online customers end each transaction on a positive note.

Go above and beyond

It's important to also look at your overall value proposition. Everyone will offer consumer-friendly policies like 7-day returns, free delivery

within a certain number of miles, etc. What will differentiate you? Will you provide an experience element that is truly memorable and social media worthy? Your dealership will need to stand out for something, or risk being overlooked.

Think about Nordstrom department store, which has thrived for more than a century, in part by being incredibly customer focused. There's a (probably apocryphal) story that they once refunded a customer for a tire, even though Nordstrom doesn't sell tires. Their well-known customer service focus makes it seem plausible. Or a more recent example is online pet supply retailer Chewy, known for personal touches such as sending customers a painting of their deceased pet and suggesting that items sent in error be donated to an animal rescue rather than returned. The company actively encourages their employees to go above and beyond for customer service and showcases service stories on their website.

Great customer service is not achieved with a long rule book with policies for every possible scenario. It's a mindset, and it requires that you empower your front-line team to make the best decisions—prioritizing consumer loyalty first—even at the expense of short-term profitability. A car buyer wants a car in perfect condition. However, the goal is to build a reputation for a best-in-class customer experience, like industry leaders such as Zappos, Amazon, Chewy and others. A great customer service mindset leads to happy customers, positive reviews, referrals, and repeat business which will be key to automotive eCommerce success.

Source: 2021 Cox Automotive Car Buyer Journey