



# Dealer Guidebook

A guide to Google's tools for  
dealers and their agency partners





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## Time for change

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While the auto industry has never stood still, the past few years have introduced change more rapidly than ever before. We've seen the emergence of autonomous vehicles, the rise of ride-sharing platforms, and new entrants like Tesla who have streamlined the retail process. But even though the pace of innovation has picked up, sales are slowing down. Car ownership has increased from an average of 4.3 years just a decade ago, to 6.5 years today, making the barrier to selling the next vehicle even higher.<sup>1</sup>

These numbers also align with what's happening at dealerships. Today, the average car shopper makes less than two visits to a dealership.<sup>2</sup> They're

more informed by the time they walk in, and digital - specifically mobile - is where they're turning to for information.

The competition for shopper dollars has never been more fierce, but the opportunity to reach them has never been greater. We built this Dealer Guidebook to answer the one question we frequently get when working with dealers and their agency partners, 'how should I best use Google?' The Guidebook is designed to help dealers prioritize Google's products based on today's shopper behavior and where dealers are with digital. These guideposts will show dealers how to create and capture demand efficiently and effectively from in-market vehicle and service shoppers.








## The moments that matter

One-third of in-market shoppers collect all information needed – in two weeks or less – from start to final purchase.<sup>3</sup> This means it's critical for dealers to make the most out of the moments that a shopper goes through before she steps onto your lot. On the next page, check out the five moments in the car-buying process that matter most. Then, learn how Stacy, a 32-year-old mother of two, researches in these moments.



**95% of vehicle buyers use digital as a source of information.**<sup>4</sup>

Consumer Moment	Real-Life Example: Meet Stacy
 <p><b>Which-car-is-best?</b> In these moments, shoppers are unsure of what brand they want to purchase. As a dealer, these moments may not be your first area of focus, but they're critical when you need to generate demand for your dealership.</p>	<p>Stacy searches on "best minivan" and "best car for families with a car seat and dog."</p>
 <p><b>Is-this-car-right-for-me?</b> Shoppers ask the more practical questions such as 'does this fit my lifestyle?' Manufacturer sites play a critical role in these moments as shoppers browse different equipment options and vehicle configurations. Dealer sites, however, can also influence shoppers through educational content.</p>	<p>Stacy searches for a list of features, such as a sliding middle row, to ensure the car will fit her lifestyle.</p>
 <p><b>Can-I-afford-it?</b> Now shoppers need to know if they can afford it. They search on keywords such as "Audi Q5 quote" or "Toyota RAV4 lease." As a dealer, it's critical to be present in these moments since they're lower in the conversion funnel.</p>	<p>Stacy explores pricing and payment options including: "price points less than \$30,000", and "comparisons of leasing vs. buying."</p>
 <p><b>Where-should-I-buy-it?</b> Shoppers are nearly ready to buy. They search "car dealerships near me" or "Ford Fusion test drives." As a dealer, your ads should appear on these types of searches and the messaging in your ads should relate to a shopper's search.</p>	<p>Stacy's nearly ready to buy as she searches "best car dealerships in Ann Arbor."</p>
 <p><b>Am-I-getting-a-deal?</b> Even when shoppers have made a decision, they still want real-time confirmation that they're getting the best value. In these moments, they may search "Ford Fusion deal" or "Kia Optima special." Highlight your deals and promotions in your ads.</p>	<p>Stacy double checks the quoted price at the dealership, by searching, "What's the lease payment for [X-brand's] Make/Model?"</p>

# Marketing must-haves

Before you dive in on Google tools, it's a good idea to take a step back and make sure you've built a solid foundation for your marketing efforts.

## Consider your levers

There are a few different ways to reach customers looking to buy. Think through these questions with your agency partner:

- Are you first maximizing the opportunity to reach customers who are actively searching for the brands you sell?
- Are you influencing shoppers earlier on in the purchase journey when they're forming opinions?
- How are you starting to measure the full customer journey - from online research to offline purchase?

## Understand your budget

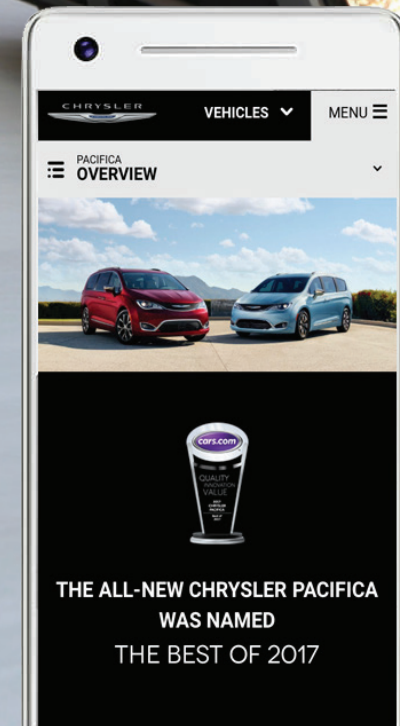
Check where your marketing budget is being spent, and confirm that it's aligned with where your customers are spending time. Discuss these questions with your agency partner:

- How much of my marketing dollars are being spent online (ex: email, search, display) versus offline (television, print, radio)?
- Does that align with where my customers are spending time?
- How am I measuring the effectiveness of each channel?



Your digital marketing budget allocation should fall somewhere between **45% and 75%** of your overall marketing.

Google



## How dealers can drive success on Google

# Lean into the mobile experience

More than 60% of all automotive searches come from a mobile device, and some of the top mobile searches are related to dealerships.<sup>5</sup> If you want consumers to make the journey from their phones to your dealership, building a mobile-friendly website is important.



### Put it into action with Google

#### Speed up your site.

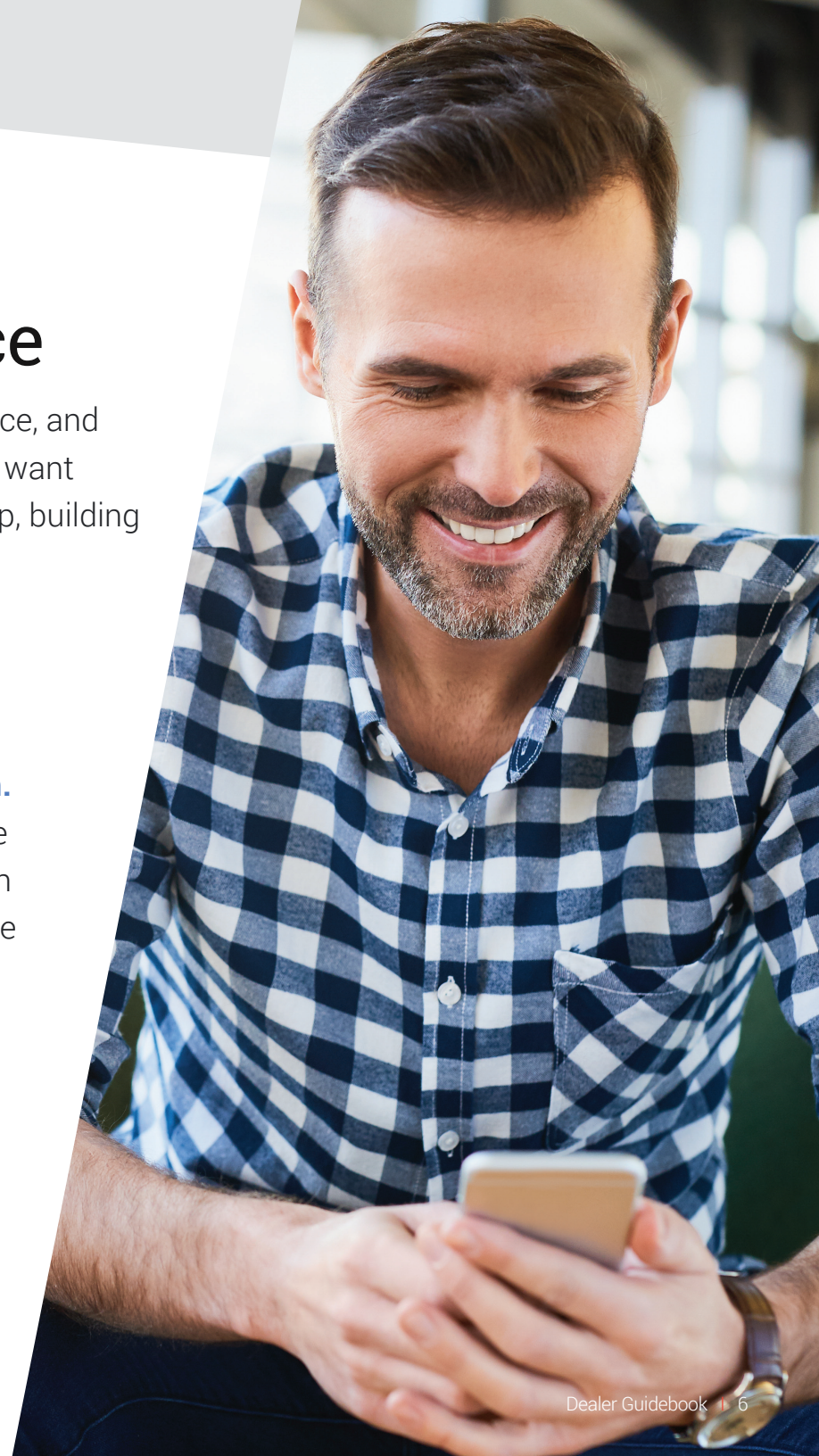
More than half of mobile site visits are abandoned if pages take longer than 3 seconds to load.<sup>6</sup> [Test your mobile speed](#) and work with your web provider to implement the report recommendations.

#### Improve site navigation.

If you have to zoom in to read information, it's a sign that your site isn't exactly mobile-friendly. Learn how to make your website better on small screens with these [quick tips](#).

#### Make it easy to get in touch.

Put your phone number in plain sight, and make your contact forms easy to fill out.



## How dealers can drive success on Google

# Personalize your message to in-market customers

While in-market, shoppers consider an average of 3.7 brands.<sup>7</sup> But because not all in-market shoppers are in the same stage of the purchase journey at the same time, you must tailor your audience and messaging strategy accordingly.



### Put it into action with Google

#### Customize your search ads.

Think like a shopper and use the [Ad Preview Tool](#) to make sure the messaging in your ads matches a shopper's search. For example, search "2018 Toyota Camry price" and check whether the messaging in the ads that you see are relevant to your search.

#### Retain existing customers.

Many customers research on multiple devices for weeks before they set foot in a dealership. Remain top of mind with targeting strategies like [remarketing](#) and [Customer Match](#) which let's you use your customer data to reach known customers online.

#### Acquire new customers.

Grow your customer base with [similar audiences](#). It allows you to reach new people who share characteristics with people on your existing remarketing lists.



## How dealers can drive success on Google

# Drive local discovery and actions at your dealership

Local searches on mobile devices are growing 50% faster than mobile searches overall.<sup>8</sup> But search isn't the only place shoppers look for information. Through online video they now experience parts of the shopping journey that they previously only experienced on-lot. For example, there are two times as many test drives videos on YouTube than there are test drives on physical dealer lots.<sup>9</sup> But all of this information that shoppers are gathering online isn't just helping shape their decisions, it's driving them into your dealership. More than 40% of shoppers who watched a video about cars or trucks visited a dealer as a result.<sup>10</sup>



### Put it into action with Google

#### Understand how often your search ads appear on mobile.

Your search ads should show up at least 9 out of 10 times for the keywords you value the most—this is known as [impression share](#).

#### Promote your video content.

Reach in-market vehicle shoppers with [Trueview ads](#), and only pay for people who choose to watch your video. These ads include a six-second video format that's specific to mobile.

#### Reach shoppers searching for videos.

One third of users search for videos on YouTube.<sup>11</sup> Promote your videos to people searching through [Trueview video discovery ads](#).



# Measure the full consumer journey

Most dealers measure lead forms, phone calls, and vehicle detail page-views (VDPs) to understand what people are doing on their websites. While valuable, these metrics are not enough. Only 26% of people who have purchased a vehicle in the past six months have actually filled out a lead form.<sup>12</sup> To understand the full picture of why and how people choose to buy, you must build a solid measurement foundation and expand the metrics that you use to define success.



## Put it into action with Google

### Get Google Analytics.

Google Analytics helps you track how people get to your site and what they do once they're there.

### Set up conversion tracking.

With AdWords [conversion tracking](#), you can measure how clicks from your ads lead to valuable actions on your site, like VDP and store locator views.

### Link your AdWords account to Google Analytics.

Get a better view of your customers by [linking](#) your AdWords account to your Google Analytics account.



# Additional resources

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Want more information? Get more detailed best practices below and share with your agency partners.

[CLICK HERE TO GET MORE DETAILED BEST PRACTICES](#)

<sup>1</sup>IHS Automotive

<sup>2</sup>Google/TNS, Auto Shopper Study, 2016, U.S.

<sup>3</sup>Kantar TNS/Google, "The Drive to Decide 2017", US, 2017 (n of 600 online consumers who have bought a new car within the last 12 months)

<sup>4</sup>Automotive Shopper Study", US, Jan. 2017 (n=3,165 consumers 18+ who purchased a vehicle in the past 3 months)

<sup>5</sup>Google Internal Data, 2017

<sup>6</sup>Google Data, Aggregated, anonymized Google Analytics data from a sample of mWeb sites opted into sharing benchmark data, n=3.7K, Global, March 2016

<sup>7</sup>Google/comScore, "Automotive Shopper Study", US, Jan. 2017 (n=3,165 consumers 18+ who purchased a vehicle in the past 3 months)

<sup>8</sup>Google Internal Data, 2017

<sup>9</sup>Sales Autonews.com, Polk Data; Google Global Gearshift Study US cut 2017; YouTube Internal Data, US, 2017

<sup>10</sup>Google/comScore, "Automotive Shopper Study," US, Jan. 2017 (n=3,165 consumers 18+ who purchased a vehicle in the past 3 months)

<sup>11</sup>Automotive Shopper Path to Purchase, Millward Brown Digital and Polk, September 2015.

<sup>12</sup>Google Surveys, US, November 2016 (n of 1,500 consumers who have purchased a car in the past 6 months)