

Outline - 85% draft

Jack Evans Chevrolet - Front Royal, Virginia

**Social Media Strategy Draft**

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**Preface:**

Social media is nothing new. Its origins extend into antiquity. What is new is the relatively recent phenomenon of social media connecting millions of people worldwide instantaneously across multiple internet and mobile device platforms.

The world of commerce has been playing a game of catch up in this new realm. Opportunity abounds but success is not a guaranteed. Social media is dynamic and challenging. It is nothing less than a social and communications revolution... part of the Information Age.

This document serves to introduce concepts intended to facilitate a strategy for participating in the realm of Social Media.

**Purpose:**

To establish a coherent and effective strategy for integrating the dealerships marketing, communications and relationship management systems into existing and emerging 21<sup>st</sup> Century technologies. More specifically but not exclusively, the realm of social media as it has manifested itself within the context of those technologies.

**Reason:**

By observation of the emersion into social media of those around us; by virtue of the example set by many of the Fortune 500; and by advice provided from virtually all sectors; it may be discerned that failure to adapt successfully into the realm of social media may hinder the dealerships capability to compete in an ever more competitive world.

In addition, it is important to understand the competition is aggressively adapting to this phenomenon. Those that transition well into this new world will better affirm the potential to continue their existence and reap the benefits of success within its seemingly infinite space.

**Objectives:**

To itemize in detail, a documented plan to appropriately exploit current social media technologies for a multitude of purposes. Such plan potentially impacts most aspects of the dealership including new and used car sales, service and repairs, parts sales, marketing and advertising, supplier relationships, community relations and most importantly, customer relations and communications.

The plan shall include policies and procedures in the form of a manual. The manual shall address all aspects of the strategy. The outline for the plan is as follows:

**The Social Media Team:**

- There shall be a designated Social Media Manager. The duties and responsibilities of this position will be itemized and are expected to be similar to the Job Description for “Internet Salesperson” as published by the dealership November 2009. The Social Media Manager will be accountable to the General Manager and/ or Sales Manager as directed.
- Contingent upon need (volume) there shall be provisions for additional staff to be designated as part of the Social Media Management team and assigned duties as may be required.
- Senior management shall directly interface and monitor the Social Media Management staff. They shall establish provisions for accountability and reporting.

**Education:**

- The Social Media staff shall consider themselves to be in a perpetual state of continuing education with regard to all aspects of social media. It is an ever changing and complex universe that requires daily inquiry.
- The Social Media staff shall disseminate relevant educationally derived information though out the dealership as so designated by management. Dissemination may be in whatever form is most appropriate for the content; verbally or written.

**Research and Development:**

- The Social Media staff shall conduct research with regard to all aspects of social media to determine what strategies, tools, resources and content may be applicable to the dealership's social media strategy. Strategies may be in the form of revisions or tweaks based on analytics research, published data, or other sources. Tools may be hardware or software tools required to execute the designated responsibilities. Resources may consist of access to outsourced expertise, digital materials, design components, or publications. Content is the determination of what type of published material produced by the Social Media staff is most directly or indirectly appropriate for purposes of inclusion within the context of the dealership's social media strategy.
- The Social Media staff shall develop and implement those items determined to be worthwhile to their maximum potential. Such items may include digital or software enhancements to whatever on-line dealership presence may exist or may also include the creation of new on-line entities.

**Legality:**

- The Social Media staff shall understand and at all times conduct business in accordance with applicable regulations as defined by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles AND federal, state, and local laws governing the sale of motor vehicles.

**Budget:**

- There shall be a budget established for the acquisition and maintenance of tools and resources required to successfully engage the dealership in the realm of social media. Tools and resources may be in the form of equipment, hardware, software, access to proprietary resource sites, digital graphic files, publications, design services, or other such items as may be subsequently identified.
- There shall be a budget established for the acquisition of premium promotional services if determined such services are worthwhile.

**Trade Groups and Associations:**

- The Social Media staff is encouraged to participate in Automotive Trade and Social Media on-line groups and associations for purposes of education, generating ideas and promoting the dealership's reputation within the context of such groups.

**Advertising:**

- The dealership's Social Media strategy shall be closely integrated with the dealership's traditional advertising streams. Cross advertising between mediums shall be appropriately implemented.

### **Employee Policies:**

- The manual shall include a policy with regards to employee participation in social Media when that participation is within the context of the dealership (they identify themselves as employees of the dealership on their personal pages for example).

### **Reputation Management:**

- As to character... The Social Media manual shall itemize a list of positive attributes that best summarize the values of the dealership and a list of negative attributes to be avoided. The values of the dealership shall be accounted for across all platforms of presentational dispersion.
- As to management of perception... it shall be the policy of the dealership to maintain a stance of neutrality with regard to political, religious, ethnical, or cultural activities. The dealership is a business entity and as such, considers all persons, other businesses, and groups as potential customers equally.
- By virtue of their sense of responsibility as members of the community they serve, the owners and management of the dealership strongly support numerous worthwhile non-profits and community groups. A list of these groups shall be prepared for purposes of providing the social media staff the opportunity to engage and support these groups within the context of the on-line community.
- Among the reasons for actively engaging in on-line social media are the following:
  1. Branding the dealership.
  2. Building on-line P2P & B2B relationships within the community.
  3. Establishing trust within the community.
  4. Reaching out, connecting, learning, and seeking feedback.
  5. Maintaining the dealership's reputation.
  6. Providing support for and interacting with worthwhile groups.
  7. Research, data mining, and intelligence gathering.
  8. Posting interesting and important news. Publishing original content.
  9. Participating in on-line events.
  10. Seeking out leads.

### Targeted Customers:

- People, businesses, organizations and government – virtually everyone needs a car.
- Primary target – Assigned regional area. It is important to understand the demographics of the population contained within your region. Their history, their organizations, the regional personality.
- Secondary target – All others outside of the assigned regional area. In the current era of lower production, limited availability and multiple choices, certain customers will commute long distances to acquire exactly what they want.

### On-line Sites:

- There are generally six types of sites the dealership may expect to be engaged with. What follows is by no means comprehensive.

1. Ratings Review Sites. The list in this category is long and growing. The following are sites which directly or indirectly provide dealer ratings:

Edmunds.com	City Search	RepairPal
DealerRater.com	Google Places	InternetAutoGuide
Car Dealer Check	Yelp	All Small Cars
My Dealer Report	Yahoo	Judy's Book
Insider Pages	PrestoDealerReviews	EveryCarListed
LemonFree	AutoMD	The Car Connection
JustGoodCars.com	AutoSpies	DealerFinder

2. Listing Sites:

Cars.com	AutoTrader.com
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3. B2B Sites:

Manta	MBendi
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4. Social Media Sites:

Facebook	Twitter	Blogger
YouTube	WordPress	LinkedIn

## 5. Proprietary Dealer Sites:

Wikimotive	dealerELITE.net	Motor Tradebook
Cobalt	Automotive Digest	Dealer.com
Auto Digital Marketing	Auto Social Media	MotorPlace
TK Carsites	DrivingSales.com	DealerRefresh

## 6. Media Sites:

Hootsuite	Soshable	SocialMediaToday
TechCrunch	PeerIndex	Foursquare

### Content:

- There is perhaps nothing more important than content within the realm of Social Media. It is the essence of the medium and original, entertaining, and informative content is the essence of content. This is surprisingly a point often missed by the pundits, the “experts” and the many available commercial applications and services. The business of providing content is the most difficult task to successfully achieve. It requires significant effort, time, and... imagination. The internet is in fact, saturated with content to the extent that it has become overwhelming. To brand your dealership in some unique way is a product of content, but achieving uniqueness is difficult. The basic subject of content shall be of primary focus and planning as an integral part of the dealership’s Social Media Strategy.
- Format(s) of content – video, audio, webinar, podcast, Power Point, technical writing, social writing, news release, newsletter, graphics, digital imagery, blogging, live chat.

### Technical Objectives:

- To achieve maximum SEO (Search Engine Optimization). The means by which to achieve this shall be itemized in the manual but will likely consist of a combination of options including: overall increase in the dealerships internet footprint, Meta tagging, exponentially increasing “impressions”, cross referencing & click-back via href, commerce networking, and publicity generation. Other SEO options may include outsourcing to paid premium services and/ or on-line advertising.
- To devise a system for measuring accountability and ROI. Analytics are already existent directly in the form of Google Analytics, Facebook Impressions & Analytics, Peer Insights, and other services. They are available anecdotally by Googling the dealership and observing the page ranking and by tracking reviews and ratings.

- It is also imperative to measure the direct relationship between the dealerships social media investment and how that translates into gross income. This may involve several things including solicitation of direct feedback from customers (in a form yet to be determined). That is, if a customer can be segregated as having become a customer directly... via the dealerships social media pipeline. Then that particular customer's purchase(s) may be directly attributed to the dealerships social media activities. In other words, a system shall be created that determines the origin (to the extent possible) of how each customer came to be at the dealership. The statistics gathered over the course of one year (for example) as to the origin of each customer would be interesting not just for purposes of ROI related to social media but for the dealership in general.
- It shall be an objective of the Social Media staff to devise methodologies for directly generating leads through their social media activities. Generally, the implementation of lead generation shall be subtle, not overt (given the nature of the platform).

#### **General Objectives:**

- The Social Media staff shall share their expertise, insight, and knowledge so that peers within the industry view the dealership in a leadership role.
- The dealerships social media activities shall be well integrated among all components of the dealership and incorporated into the traditional advertising.

#### **Other Technologies:**

- Mobile devices and applications
- Ringtones

#### **Final Point:**

- The implementation of a social media strategy requires knowledge, thoughtfulness, dedication, responsibility, trustworthiness, friendliness, sincere interaction, and above all... imagination.

Reference is hereby made to the following internal publications:

1. Facebook Page EM dated 01/04/2011
2. Internet Salesperson Job Description dated 11/11/09

Note; this document is 100% original material.

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