

That'll be the phone, Reg

Missed and abandoned phone calls are costing dealers \$260 a time, says WildJar boss

PHONES ringing out, phone lines busy, transferred calls abandoned and active sales calls hitting the dreaded 'dial this for service and that for sales' is costing dealers tens of thousands of dollars a month in lost sales, according to James O'Neill, the CEO of WildJar, one of Australia's leading call tracking and phone management systems.

Speaking with GoAutoNews Premium, as part of our Dealer Talks podcast series with Gumtree Cars, Mr O'Neill said dealers spend vast sums of money driving buyers to their businesses but are still missing many of the phone calls they are generating with 'hot' buyers on the other end.

The worst 'sins' are buyers met with engaged signals meaning there are not enough lines and phones ringing out suggesting there are not enough people manning phones.

"Across the board, we find dealers are still missing 15 percent of phone calls and another 10 percent of calls are being abandoned during the call transfer process," Mr O'Neill said.

"There is a huge hole when a call is transferred from reception to a salesperson and that salesperson is not at their desk and the customer is on hold for one minute or two minutes and they hang up. That is 10 percent abandoned.

"So in total that means 25 percent of calls into a business are being missed."

He said that WildJar calculates that missed calls and abandoned calls cost a dealership \$260 a time.

"We looked at Deloitte's \$2,600 gross profit per car and we know 1 in 10 calls into a dealership results in a sale. Lets keep it really simple and we know that every call you miss is \$260.

"We know a metro dealer who received 2,100 phone calls in one month and missed 390 which is 18.4 per cent. So the monthly revenue impact was about \$100,000 based on the Deloitte number."

Mr O'Neill said that, when a customer calls, dealers need to be ready to help them buy because they are ready to buy.

"There are so many improvements and efficiencies dealers can do internally just on getting the call flow and call handling correct and by answering the call at the right time.

"Dealers spend so much money at the front end to drive lead enquires and, when the customers pick up the phone and call, we know that callers convert at around a 15 percent higher rate than the online lead enquiry 'form fills'.

"A dealer salesperson might send a video out to a customer via SMS; they have done a video walkaround of the car, and that creates direct engagement with the customer.

"But that connection is broken when the customer calls the main dealership landline and is greeted with the usual Press 1 for Service, 2 for parts, 3 for sales and the experience around that is not good. The dealership needs to know at that point that the customer has just watched a video and treat them as such.

"How our business works is that we have unique phone numbers within advertising. So we know the customer is calling from a particular medium; in this case calling from a video they have just watched.

"Rather than sending the customer to a phone queue, we send them to the sales person or we set up a hunt group where we set up a multi-call to call all your sales people at the one time so they know that this is a sales engagement.

"When they pick up the phone we 'whisper' to the salesperson that this customer/lead is from your YouTube video ad or this is a lead from a video the dealer has sent out to them. So the salesperson knows how to respond to the phone call before they speak to that customer.

"When dealers are getting these calls buyers are ready to purchase. They have done their research and, by not answering correctly, you interrupt their progress.

"Dealers, on an aggregate level, are still quite poor at handling calls.

"You know this customer is looking at your inventory page so send them to the right people at the right time and improve that customer process – and invest more in the people that are answering the calls because we found that even if they are just polite on a call it is improving conversion levels.

"Customers like to interact. They do all their research online, go to classified sites, choose brands on local dealer websites, when they are ready to purchase, they are picking up the phone and calling.

"When they do call, the customer is highly engaged."

Mr O'Neill said that WildJar's experience across 600 dealerships of all brands and locations shows there is a remarkably small number of people who

call more than one dealership.

“We only see two percent of cross calling – which is a customer calling two or more dealerships.

James O’Neill

“Two percent is very low. So if a customer is calling your dealership, they want that dealership. They do not want to go to the next dealership a few suburbs away.

“That is why giving each customer a fantastic and memorable first impression over the phone is now more important than ever, as these consumers who are calling you are ready to buy,” he said.

“So the data that we are seeing is that once they have chosen a brand and chosen a dealership location, they are willing to give that dealer the opportunity to speak to them.

“Once they call you they are ready to talk to you, they are ready to purchase, they are as hot as a lead could be. So you need to treat them that way.

“But first of all you need to answer the call.”

To learn more about the WildJar visit WildJar.com or call 1300 317 533

About WildJar

WildJar helps businesses become wildly successful by providing cutting edge voice and SMS solutions. Founded in 2016, WildJar has helped more than 4,000 companies worldwide drive revenue and connect their customer’s journey online to their purchasing behaviour offline. Finally, businesses and marketers have complete attribution and analytics to measure call outcomes and ROI. With WildJar’s Voice Platform, businesses get granular campaign attribution to understand why customers are calling, real-time intelligence about who’s calling and analyse what’s being said during conversations to improve outcomes.

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