

Cars.com Launches Social Sales Drive Technology to Power Social Selling for Automotive

Latest product in company's suite of social solutions connects car dealers and auto manufacturers with active shoppers on Facebook Marketplace

CHICAGO, July 31, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Cars.com (NYSE: CARS) today announced the launch of **Social Sales Drive™**, a powerful new offering that enables automotive retailers to maximize the impact of their Cars.com used car listings with seamless integration on Facebook Marketplace. Social Sales Drive builds on Cars.com's leadership in social media marketing to provide more efficient advertising, combining the comprehensive data and targeting power of Cars.com with millions of Americans looking at vehicle listings every day on Facebook Marketplace. The new solution uses proprietary artificial intelligence chatbot technology to power conversations with consumers and capitalize on off-hour shopping via Facebook Messenger. Beta testing showed more than 50 percent of car buyers on Facebook Marketplace wanted to interact after business hours.²

"Social is a must-have for automotive dealers with the increasing amount of time people spend on social media and their desire for a shopping experience that meets them where they are. The combination of powerful Cars.com advertising and targeting with the efficiency of social as a selling channel is a win-win for dealers and manufacturers," said Alex Vetter, chief executive officer of Cars.com. "Cars.com is innovating at the speed of retail and leading the way for social selling in automotive."

At a time when dealers have more options than ever to market their inventory and build their brand, [Cars.com](#) has proved to be a valuable partner. And when combined with the power of social platforms like Facebook, dealers stand to gain even more. It has been proven that Facebook is twice as efficient as paid search in directing active car shoppers to a dealership's website who engage with inventory and special deals.³

Vetter added that Cars.com's integrated social tools enable advertisers to combine valuable third-party data and technology with social media platforms to better target and connect with a new audience to sell more cars. This is becoming increasingly vital as Facebook begins curbing the use of first-party data in marketing.⁴

Key features of Social Sales Drive include:

- **Seamless integration.** The solution automatically uploads enrolled dealers' entire used-car inventory to Facebook Marketplace. ConversationsSM, a powerful messaging platform, seamlessly integrates into dealers' websites, enabling 24/7 managed chat between dealers and car shoppers via Facebook Messenger.
- **Extended business hours.** More than 50 percent of Facebook Marketplace car shoppers are connecting with dealerships during off-hours between 6 p.m. and 9 a.m. With "Ana Bot," a proprietary A.I. powered chatbot and 24/7 managed-chat support, consumers receive real-time answers to their vehicle inquiries and dealers do not miss an opportunity to connect with consumers after hours to sell more cars.
- **Builds dealers' social brands.** Social Sales Drive is a Facebook Marketplace-integrated product in automotive that directly connects a dealer's inventory to its business page on Facebook, driving more exposure in front of active car shoppers and building the dealer's social brand.
- **Massive audience reach.** Cars.com receives more than 35 million visits each month and 81 percent of those shoppers plan to purchase or lease in the next six months.² Coupled with the millions of Americans looking at vehicle listings every day on Facebook Marketplace, dealers can connect with a significant audience of ready-to-buy car shoppers.

The new solution proved a runaway hit during beta testing, with full, rapid adoption in test markets that prompted a nationwide waiting list of more than 1,100 dealers.

"I've wanted to take advantage of Facebook Marketplace for some time, so when Cars.com offered to get all our inventory up and manage chats on our behalf, I was very interested," said Kevin Jamiel, a sales manager at Chuck Nicholson Mazda in Dover, Ohio who participated in the Cars.com pilot for Social Sales Drive. "The managed chat functionality does an amazing job of getting shoppers' basic information and then handing them off to us, so we don't have to sit in front of a computer answering Facebook messages all day. We sold 10 cars in the first six weeks using this product. We love it!"

Cars.com's full [suite of social solutions](#) serves automotive dealers and manufacturers in two ways:

- **Social audience solutions:** These products leverage Cars.com's 70 percent unique and unduplicated audience on social media platforms.² Our first-party data cannot be purchased or accessed anywhere else. [Cars Social](#), which was launched earlier this year, spurred significant demand, selling out in major cities

within hours of its launch.

- **Social inventory solutions:** Products such as Social Sales Drive extend the reach of dealers' inventory onto Facebook Marketplace, allowing them to influence and connect with a new audience of active car shoppers.

Cars.com is focused on building solutions to advance social selling in the auto industry and improve the car shopping experience for consumers. The company became a listing partner with Facebook in October 2017 when Cars.com made a portion of its inventory available to the social platform. The move made it easier for car shoppers on Facebook Marketplace to browse Cars.com's dealer partners' vehicles. That first limited rollout resulted in a 27 percent increase in consumer connections with Cars.com dealers within two months.⁵

Cars.com is inviting dealers to enroll in Social Sales Drive starting today: [Enroll here](#). The product will go live, beginning August 1.

¹ Facebook Marketplace, September 2017

² Cars.com Internal Data, June 2018

³ PCG Companies, July 2018

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/298717656925097>

⁵ Cars.com internal testing Dec. 1, 2017, through Feb. 28, 2018: 27 percent represents average leads driven per dealer across the Cars.com network versus number of leads produced from Conversations Starter for Social per dealer in test markets during the same time period.

ABOUT CARS.COM

Cars.com™ is a leading two-sided digital automotive marketplace that creates meaningful connections between buyers and sellers. Launched in 1998 and headquartered in Chicago, the company empowers consumers with resources and information to make informed buying decisions and enables advertising partners with innovative digital solutions and data-driven intelligence to increase inventory turn and gain market share. A pioneer in online automotive classifieds, the company has evolved into one of the largest digital automotive platforms, connecting thousands of local dealers across the country with millions of consumers. In 2018, Cars.com acquired Dealer Inspire®, a company that builds technology that helps future-proof dealerships for changing consumer behaviors and makes the car buying process faster and easier.

Cars.com properties include DealerRater®, Dealer Inspire®, Auto.com™, PickupTrucks.com® and NewCars.com®. For more information, visit www.Cars.com.

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