

### 3 Lessons We Can Learn From the Online Buying Experience

Online shopping. In 2020 it hit nearly 4 trillion market size across the globe and it's on target this year to hit 300 billion in the US alone. Think about that. It's 90% of our population! Over 70% have reported purchasing online and 25% do it monthly. Given these growing statistics it's a sure bet the online experience is no fad and dealers that pride themselves in digging in their heels in protest of technology are leaving opportunity, and money, on the table. Aside from the obvious lesson we've heard for years, "online shopping is the future, and the future is now" there are lessons to be gained by studying the large numbers of interactions that you can apply

**Shopping cart abandonment** is when a shopper loads up an online shopping cart with one or more items then exits the website prior to completing the transaction or making the final purchase. One of the top reasons for this is reported to be *unexpected costs*. Simply put, the buyer was turned into a shopper because the retailer waited too long to give a full disclosure and set the expectations with the buyer up front. **Lesson #1:** Practice transparency throughout the sales process. This holds true with live transactions as well as online. You'll come across as more trusting and your customer won't have reason to get spooked when you are asking for money.

**Failure to follow up.** Statistics show that emails sent to those that abandoned their shopping carts are opened 45% of the time and half will click through the email. That's huge and it indicates if a prospect does leave before purchasing, close to a third are willing to give your offer another look. **Lesson #2:** Are you actively following up with your prospects by email? Consider creating a template email you can edit as needed and send to every prospective buyer that calls or stops by your sales lot. Include a few words that set you apart from your competitors (aside from low prices). For example, do you offer a warranty, full tank of fuel, free oil changes, or have you partnered with the local car wash to offer special discounts to your customers? A couple legitimate testimonials would also fit nicely into a follow up email along with a picture of the vehicle they were checking out.

**Social Proof.** There is no denying that today's shopper relies on online reviews for most of their purchases. Studies have shown over 90% will seek online reviews *prior* to making a purchase. **Lesson #3:** Consumers and car manufacturers do a good job of producing content and reviews to promote specific models. What about your dealership? When was the last time you asked a customer to give you a 5-star review and even write a few kind words about their purchase experience? Many of us were taught the happiest customer is the one that just bought a car. Why not give them something to do while waiting for you to print up the paperwork? Chances are they are playing on their phones anyway, so ask them to do you a favor and write a review!

Looking ahead, the next wave of buyers is *Generation Z*. Born after 1998, this generation is anticipated to make up 40% of the buying market in just a few years. Most own a smart phone and spend, get this, nearly 10 hours per day on average scrolling through YouTube and Instagram. Because they have a high online comfort level, they are influencing a majority of household purchases for their parents. Smart businesses realize this and are positioning themselves by activating their social media. The best is yet to come!

Todd Shepard is the founder of Shepard & Shepard Insurance Solutions and a regular contributor to the Front Row. For more information or a competitive insurance quote for your dealership visit [www.shepquote.com](http://www.shepquote.com)