



Maguire Automotive Takes Customer Service Outside the Box

DEALERSHIP PROFILE:

Maguire Automotive

370 Elmira Road
Ithaca, NY 14850

Director of Business Development: George Dunn
Operations Manager: Frank Vanderpool

Key Reputation Management Stats

- 4.8/5 stars on average with 755+ Dealer Reviews on Cars.com
- 30% growth in sales in the past two years, 5-10% is attributed directly to reviews by management
- Sales consultants mentioned in reviews report selling 10+ cars per month, rather than the typical six to nine

How Maguire Automotive Does It

- Commitment to brand values by senior management
- Extensive training on dealership processes
- Progressive hiring practices
- Cross-promotion of online reviews through traditional media

With more than 750 Dealer Reviews on Cars.com, Maguire Automotive's Frank Vanderpool, Operations Manager, and George Dunn, Director of Business Development, know that online customer feedback is among the most powerful ways to differentiate their store in a competitive marketplace.

In fact, Vanderpool says the store has seen close to 30% growth in sales over the past two years, 5% to 10% of which he attributes directly to online reviews.

As is often the case, a great online reputation can't be built without a strong foundation that includes hiring the right talent, establishing solid processes and promoting its unique value to car shoppers – things Maguire has mastered with its commitment to consultative selling and customer-focused marketing.

From Big Box to Car Lots

When Vanderpool and Dunn joined Maguire in 2010, they knew that their store's performance and reputation were only as good as the employees they hired and trained. An ability to understand customer needs always trumped formal sales experience, they believed – a bold philosophy that places a customer-oriented approach and a positive attitude higher on the list of qualifications than dealership experience in the recruiting process.

"If I'm out shopping or at restaurant and I'm impressed by a sales clerk or waiter, I'll often follow up to tell them more about our dealership," said Dunn. "The job market is tough - some our top employees were previously working retail just waiting for an opportunity."

Once on board, every new employee goes through an extensive training process to learn product information and the processes behind the Maguire Family Commitment. The comprehensive training helps position new hires for success by immersing them in dealership culture, outlining expectations and educating them on store processes.

Training doesn't stop once a new employee has been brought up to speed, however. In addition to in-store observations, Dunn and Vanderpool hold in-dealership trainings several times per month that feature actionable feedback received via reviews. In addition to addressing customer service issues, the sessions serve as a platform to highlight team success and acknowledge individual contributions.

Selling Reviews to the Sales Team

As is true across the retail industry, building up such an impressive online reputation doesn't happen overnight. Maguire offers limited bonuses to employees based on the number of positive reviews they receive, but according to Vanderpool and Dunn, the true incentive for their salespeople has been to sell more cars by differentiating not just the dealership's brand, but their own personal brand."

"Once the rest of the team started hearing people specifically ask for Jamie because of what they'd read online, they were quick to jump on board," said Dunn. "Now, when a new hire starts, it's common to see the ones who embrace reviews jump from selling six to nine cars a month to selling 10+."

Let the Reviews do the Talking

As a key pillar in the Maguire's overall marketing strategy, reviews help support the store's vision and values at multiple customer touch points. Upon delivery, consultants solicit any unanswered questions about a customer's purchase, including upcoming service and payments, and once all questions are answered, those customers are asked to fill out a review on Cars.com or a site of the customer's choice.

"We do everything we can to make sure each customer has had a great experience from start to finish," said Dunn. "If there's something a customer is unsure of or has questions about, we make every effort to resolve the issue on the spot so that they leave with a positive feeling."

In addition to building review volume on sites like Cars.com, Maguire integrates reviews into its traditional advertising, connecting shoppers' online and offline experiences and showcasing the dealership's stellar reputation. One of Maguire's recent radio spots featured a review thanking the team for finding a better financing option through their credit union, for example.

Whether they're on the air or online, Dunn and Vanderpool agree that reviews have made a difference for their business.

"Right now we've got more positive reviews than any other dealership in the entire state of New York, including New York City," said Dunn. "We know that reviews matter to our customers."



MAGUIRE'S VOLUME-DRIVERS

- Customer follow-up processes that solicit reviews
- Dedicated point-of-sale materials
- Promotion of reviews through radio and video
- Featured reviews on the dealership's website
- Acknowledgement of staff members who receive positive customer feedback