


ARE YOU
NEGLECTING
THE IMAGE OF
YOUR
VIRTUAL
POWERSPORTS
DEALERSHIP?

PX DIGITAL

 + 2020 **E-BOOK**



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CHAPTER ONE: THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGE AND BRANDING

First impressions are everything in business, and in a business like a dealership, the right or wrong one could make or break the entire bottom line. If you aren't taking care of your virtual powersports dealership's image and giving it the attention that it deserves, your sales are going to suffer as a result. We live in a very Internet-first society, and people will make as much as 90% of their buying decision on their own, online, before they even come to you. That means that you have to do everything in your power to ensure that your image makes the best first impression, **but also that it makes a long-lasting impression.**

How do you do that, though? To start with, you need to stop ignoring branding, or assuming that your physical presence will translate to the online world. It might, but it doesn't usually prove to be very effective and you can't rely on a maybe. You need a sure thing if you're going to compete with today's online dealerships that offer a dynamic virtual space where people can really get the closest thing to a hands-on experience as possible. Keep reading to learn everything you need to know about how to stop neglecting your image and start making it the focus of your marketing efforts.

What is “Image” and What Does it Mean for Virtual Powersports Dealers?

Generally speaking, a company's image is not just their logo or website. These are elements that help create the right image, but the entire concept is much more about perception—how visitors perceive your virtual dealership, based on the tools and elements that you use to create your image. **You can't make the right impression if you aren't even sure what that is.** The biggest difference to keep in mind, when it comes to creating a virtual presence, is knowing the different methods of branding for digital spaces versus physical branding practices.

Digital vs. Physical Branding

In a dealership setting, getting people in the door is half the battle. Therefore, physical branding is all about getting the name out there and getting people to the physical powersports dealership. That's still the main mission of most dealers, after all—people want to see what they are buying for themselves. In the digital space, it becomes more important to make that connection with potential buyers. You have to make up for that lack of physical space. You can no longer just tell them that your dealership exists and hope that they come. You have to give them that “in-person” dealership experience totally online.



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Digital branding is about recreating the ideal shopping experience and giving people all of the tools that they need to make the best buying decision. **There are two major ways that your virtual dealership can create a strong image and professional brand with digital efforts: photos and videos.** Using digital technology to create inventory slideshows, product demo videos, and other showcase items will allow people to get the feel of an actual dealership experience when they visit your website.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IMAGE AND BRANDING

Image is how you are seen. Branding is an active task that allows you to create that image. By creating a solid strategy, you can make both work for your virtual dealership. You have to stop looking at the Internet as only a means to an end. No longer is this just a marketing tool. Instead, it is an e-commerce arena all its own where you can create a virtual powersports dealership that is the envy of the industry. **You can only do that, however, when you understand how to truly harness the power of branding and building a solid virtual image.**

Branding is about more than just going through the motions. **You can't just build a website and hope that people come.** You have to understand the marketing strategies involved in branding and how to create a strong, authoritative brand that people trust and recognize. That starts by taking the time to understand that this is what your audience ultimately wants. **When you are creating a branding strategy to develop a virtual image for your powersports dealership, you have to show your audience that you have the resources that they need and that you are here for more than just to try to sell them something.**

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Virtual-First Shopping Means First Impressions are Everything

In today's commerce world, most people go virtual first. What does that mean? **It simply means that when people are shopping, and especially for larger purchases like powersports equipment, they tend to look to the Internet first to get a better idea of what's out there and what pricing is like.** They want to narrow down their options quickly and effectively, so they need companies that respond in kind with a strong first impression. If you want to become successful in your virtual operations, that impression needs to make the right impact on every visitor.

People only give you a few seconds to impress them with your initial image. If it doesn't deliver, they'll move onto the next dealership that comes up in the search results or that they find along the way. When you are creating your digital branding strategy, make sure that your ultimate goal is to impress visitors and give them everything that they want. They'll end up making the majority of their buying decision before they even contact a dealer or salesperson, so you have to make sure that you equip them with the resources and tools to make that decision when they visit your virtual dealership.

Project an image of confidence and capability. Offer a robust selection of resources, including a blog and related links that people can use along with your dealership services. Have a well-designed website that's easy to navigate and functions similar to your physical dealership. Provide people with full inventory listings, feature-rich digital slideshows and presentations, and other tools to help them make the best buying decisions and trust your virtual dealership to help them find the powersports toys and machines that they want or need.

Up next, learn about how branding and online presence impact your virtual dealership and your e-commerce transactions, and how you can make improvements to get the best outcomes.



CHAPTER TWO: BRANDING AND ONLINE PRESENCE

In the physical world, it might be effective enough to be an alternative to another business or brand in the same industry. In the digital world, however, alternatives are basically worthless. People find one reputable dealer or company that they want to work with and they will never even think about an alternative. **Therefore, when you are building your digital presence, you need to make sure that your image reflects a sense of being the best, and only, choice for people's powersports needs.**

This process of creating a strong online presence is one that involves figuring out what the audience wants so that you can deliver. For example, you'll learn the value of authenticity in the statistics below, and that's an aspect of your brand image that you want to make sure is portrayed strongly in all of your branding efforts because it matters so much to consumers today.

Statistics Behind Branding and Virtual Commerce

One of the best ways you can learn the true value of branding and establishing a solid online presence is through research. Take the time to read up on the numbers behind things like image and virtual first impressions, as well as what today's consumers expect from online businesses, including virtual dealerships like yours. Although everyone thinks they know what customers want, getting the truth behind it all might surprise you.

HERE ARE SOME QUICK STATS YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- *Rebranding can cost companies as much as 5-10% of their annual marketing budget.*
- *80% of readers cite authentic content as the main factor in their choice to engage with a brand.*
- *91% of the consumers surveyed would prefer to purchase from an authentic brand.*
- *Consistent branding can actually increase revenues by as much as 23%.*
- *52% of consumers decided not to purchase from a brand based solely on poor brand aesthetics.*

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There are literally hundreds of statistics out there that will tell you all about the importance of image, including the fact that a lot of people talk about it, but few companies actually practice it like they should. **In fact, as many as 95% of companies have branding guidelines in place, but only ¼ of them actually stick to those guidelines when it comes to building an online image.** What good is a plan if you're not going to use it?

Tips for Building Your Online Presence Effectively

Studies have shown that digital marketing and branding creates more profit, significantly, than other marketing channels. Therefore, it would make sense that you would want to capitalize on this resource to create the best online presence. Plus, online branding and marketing is much cheaper than traditional marketing, which means that you can make a bigger impression on a smaller budget. Use the tips below to make the most of your branding efforts, no matter what you're looking to achieve with your online powersports dealership.

Photos and Videos

If you have an item listed in your inventory for sale, it should have a full selection of pictures, videos, interactive 360-views, and other media features that showcase all of its best assets. Remember that you aren't just leading people to your physical dealership anymore. You are now attempting to replace the entire dealership experience on your website. Part of doing that is giving people the feeling that they've done about everything that they can short of test driving a piece of equipment, even before they visit your dealership or contact you to discuss completing the sale. **With a robust selection of videos and photos for each item you sell, you can guarantee that you will make a strong impression.**

Inventory Search Feature

One of the biggest complaints of consumers, when it comes to virtual dealerships, is the lack of advanced or detailed search features that allow for custom searches. In a powersports dealership, where you have so many different products available for sale, this becomes an even more important issue. Take the time to integrate a strong search function that includes a variety of options and parameters so that your visitors can find exactly what they need.

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At the same time, you will want to offer a browsing feature that is just as intuitive and customizable for people visiting your virtual dealership. Some people do prefer to browse, but still want to narrow their selection and limit the parameters of their perusing. Giving them the tools to do so will make a great impression on them when other dealers aren't living up to their expectations.

Other Helpful Resources/Information

It doesn't stop with your inventory, though. Any virtual dealership that wants to succeed has to offer a full selection of resources and tools for its audience. That includes information and tools that go beyond your virtual dealership. For example, you might want to link out to all the major manufacturer websites of the brands that you sell. Perhaps you will offer a link or a blog that connects people with powersports industry news and insight. **You could even connect them with financial services and solutions to assist with purchasing various powersports equipment that your dealership sells.**

Your goal is to convince your customers that your virtual dealership is the only business that they need for anything to do with powersports. When you take the time to build your brand and create a strong online presence, that will happen naturally.





CHAPTER THREE: WHEN BRANDING IS FORGOTTEN

One of the worst things for your image is to forget about it entirely. As mentioned previously, some dealerships fail to realize that their physical presence and brand may not translate to the online environment. Because of that, every powersports dealership needs to utilize all of the branding resources available to create a strong online presence and a solid image. Otherwise, disaster is likely. Of course, it's not just about branding, but branding correctly.

The Damaging Effects of Not Branding Your Virtual Dealership

When you don't brand your business, it can have a lot of negative ramifications. Consumers need to know what you have to offer, after all, and how can they see that if you don't offer a solid brand image through your website and other resources? Although there are a number of different things that can be damaged when you don't take the time to give branding the attention that it deserves, some are more common than others.

Most frequently, the audience will be the issue. A virtual dealership that doesn't brand itself properly or doesn't engage in branding at all will notice that they are either attracting the **wrong** customers or they are simply not attracting any customers at all. You don't want to get just anyone's attention. You are wasting a lot of marketing resources if that's your approach. In the virtual world, you have to target an audience segment and cater your marketing efforts to that audience in order to get results.

Another common problem that affects profits is that when you don't have a solid brand, you don't have the ability to prove to people that your products are worth the asking price. **Especially when you're in a specialty industry like powersports, people don't have to buy the products you sell.** These machines aren't cheap, and you **have to** make sure that you are giving your customers every reason to invest in them and choose you to help facilitate their purchase if you are going to see any sales. A strong brand can do that with its mere existence. If you are struggling to get people to buy into your pricing, it might mean that your branding isn't hitting the mark.

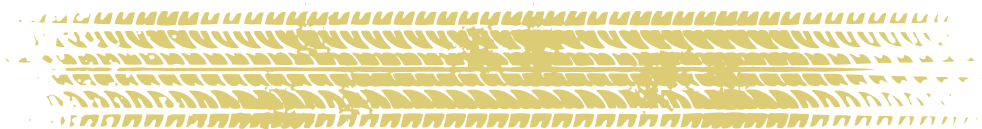


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How an Incorrect or Inconsistent Image Can Destroy Your Business

When branding goes wrong, the obvious issue is that you lose sales. This means that your profits fall and your business isn't making the money that it should. On the Internet, navigation itself is an entirely different business from the standard production and marketing of a business. **You need to make sure that your reach, or the access and connection, that you provide to users, is exactly what they need. When you aren't branding your powersports dealership the correct way, there is a lot of damage that can occur.**

The biggest issue, for many retailers and dealers, is that they still see the Internet only as a tool or arena for promotion and marketing. If you are only seeing the online world as a new medium for your traditional practices, you are putting your dealership at risk of losing a lot of potential customers because you aren't harnessing the virtual world to the fullest of its capacity.



Inconsistency vs. No Branding at All: Which is Worse?

There is an ongoing debate about whether total neglect is worse than improper or inconsistent branding. Although the jury is still out, for the most part, the fact of the matter is that inconsistent branding does send the wrong message and make a bad impression. At least a total lack of branding could be considered an oversight or a work in progress. If you have inconsistent branding messages across your various channels, it will look sloppy and unprofessional, not to mention confusing.

How are you supposed to convince your audience that your brand is the best one for their needs when you can't even convince them of the impression that you're trying to make? Creating a consistent experience from start to finish allows you to give your customers a sense of familiarity and trust. They develop a sense of understanding and appreciation for your brand, and they know that you will be able to support them in whatever they need. When your branding messages start to get muddy, the consumer can get confused and end up looking elsewhere for the solutions that they need.

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What You Can Do to Ensure Your Image and Impressions are on Point

Now that you're paying attention, it's time to act. Stop focusing on trends and fads and start digging into what branding and building a strong image actually means for your virtual powersports dealership. Don't get so caught up in getting noticed that you lose sight of your vision. Staying aligned with your vision and delivering on that to your audience is part of what will keep them coming back to you for many years to come. Here are a few more tips to help you make the most of your image and leave the best impression with every visitor, no matter which channel they find you on.

- **Use consistent images, logos, and colors to increase brand recognition** and create consistency across all channels. Even something as simple as color can increase recognition by as much as 80%.
- **Master your message before you start sharing it.** Your tone needs to match your intentions and establish a voice for your brand. Make sure that you create a strong voice and marketing message that you can convey as part of your brand's image.
- **Create a branding and marketing plan.** Nothing is less effective than going into something like building an image without a plan. Take notes from the best brands on the market and see how you can incorporate their ideas into your own branding efforts. With a proper strategy in place, the results will be much easier to achieve.
- **Don't get caught up in the hype.** It can be easy to jump on the bandwagon when you are new to the world of image and branding. However, it can also be the end of your virtual dealership before you even get started. Go beyond the hype and find the real solutions that will help you create the image that your dealership needs.
- **If it's not working, do something.** The worst thing that you can do is leave a poor image unattended for any period of time. The longer you leave bad branding out there, the more people might notice that you're not living up to your potential. Even if all you do is remove existing marketing until you come up with a better solution, you have to stop the bleeding before it causes irreparable brand damage.

Resources

<https://ducttapemarketing.com/online-presence/>

<https://venngage.com/blog/branding-statistics/>

https://medium.com/@steve_fabrik/avoiding-an-identity-crisis-the-dangers-of-inconsistent-branding-2e1d127a7462

<https://v12data.com/blog/why-auto-dealers-must-embrace-digital-marketing/>

<https://www.dealermarketing.com/3-steps-take-now-build-dealership-future/>

<https://info.zimmercommunications.com/blog/how-bad-or-no-branding-can-hurt-your-business>

<https://robbenmedia.com/brand-consistency-examples/>

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