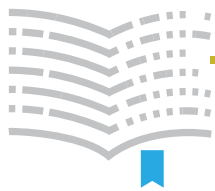


WHY TOSSING OUT BEST PRACTICES

FOR YOUR
WEBSITE IS A
BEST PRACTICE

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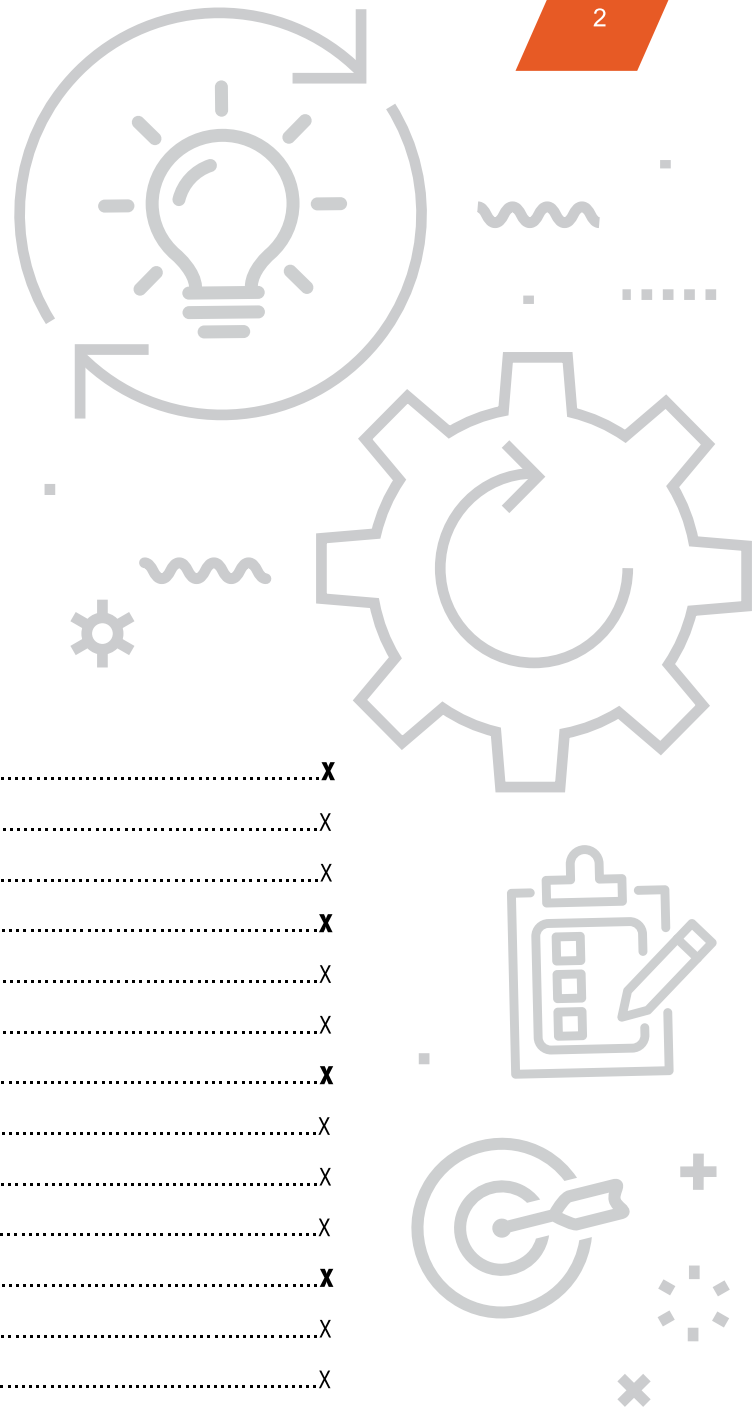


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WEB TRAFFIC DOES NOT EQUAL CONVERSIONS

Let's take care of this myth right away. The thing you need to be doing with your powersports website is NOT getting as much traffic as you possibly can. The wrong kind of traffic is a wasted effort.

What you should, instead, be focusing on is high quality leads.

Now, you may be thinking, "But leads come from traffic!"

Yes and no. Not all the traffic that makes it to your website is going to convert to a lead. And what you need to be focusing on is ushering in the kind of traffic that is likely to convert, not just any random visitor.

The numbers are clear that people who randomly happen upon your website are not particularly likely to become paying customers. Let's take a look at what it really takes to get someone from visitor to lead.

Doing the math on leads

High traffic numbers can give dealers a false sense of security. If you have high traffic, you must be doing something right, right? Unfortunately, all the visitors you generate don't do much for your business revenue if you aren't grabbing any of them to convert to leads.

Here's a simple example. If you sell a product that costs \$200 and you get 1,000 visitors a month, and convert at a rate of 1 percent, your monthly revenue is \$2,000. If you get only 100 visitors per month and convert at a rate of 15 percent, your monthly revenue is \$3,000.

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What this example shows is that you can make more money with far less traffic (and less money spent on driving traffic) by optimizing your conversion strategy. And here's the amazing thing. It's actually easier to double conversions than double traffic. Building web traffic takes many months, but optimizing conversion can generate results in as little as a few weeks.

So if you're getting a steady traffic stream, it's time to focus on your conversion strategies, not on increasing traffic further.

First party leads

By the way, the kind of leads you want to get with your website are first party leads. These are people who are directly providing their information to you through your site, such as on a signup form.

Why are first party leads so important? Because the leads you gather on your own site are unique, qualified leads that have shown an interest in your dealership. They are the people most likely to actually complete a sale with you.



THE BIG PROBLEM WITH SEO EXPERTS

A lot of dealers, when they aren't seeing enough revenue through their site, turn to SEO experts. There's nothing wrong with SEO experts, per se. Many of them are good at their jobs. But you should know exactly what their job is before you hire them.

The job of an SEO expert is to get you more traffic. And as discussed, you don't need more traffic until you are converting the traffic you already have at a high rate.

In the early days of car dealerships building an online presence, SEO experts charged a lot for things dealers didn't understand. They drove lots of traffic. But it was trash traffic, not quality traffic. What dealers ended up with was a big spike in visitors, but no leads.

So if you're going to hire someone for SEO, make sure they know what they're doing.

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SEO questions to ask

Whether you're doing it yourself or hiring an expert, here's what you need to ask.

1. What keywords are we going to rank for?

Hint: "all of them" is a terrible answer from an SEO expert. Realistically, the most you can rank for is 5 keywords. That's the number you can create enough content to rank around.

2. Why those keywords?

A good SEO consultant will go somewhere like Google Trends or SEM Rush and look at your website market and see what your market is searching for -- that is, they will find the low lying fruit. They should be able to show you this, and say, "This is why I recommend these keywords."

3. How are we going to rank for these keywords? What's the plan?

This is the hardest part of SEO. Most SEO consultants are not content creators, so they'll only do onsite SEO, such as meta tags and internal linking, but your website should have that anyway.

Off-site SEO should be about 80 percent of the work, creating content around the keywords and sharing it.

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SEO comes down to keywords, content, and backlinks. These are the foundation. You have to create content, like blogs and social media posts. And then generate backlinks from that content. You do that by getting other authoritative websites to link back to your content as something they're recommending.

Google is built on this concept of the referral link because if a site is getting backlinks it must be good. Of course, the algorithm is much more sophisticated now, but that is still at its basis.

There are tons of great opportunities for content in powersport vehicle sales. If you have team members who enjoy using the vehicles and riding the trails, have one of them put on a GoPro and record a ride. That can be a whole blog post.

In fact, the number one blog article we've had at PSXDigital was "5 Trails Around You That You Can Ride Today."

Videos and suggestions for places to ride are a great way to get new buyers interested because they may not know where to go with their vehicles. If you show them someone having a good time without a lot of work, it gives them more incentive to move forward with the purchase.

So, SEO made clear:

- **Create quality content**
- **Share content**
- **Convince others to like and share that content**



Now, let's go over a few keyword tips specific to powersports dealers.

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Powersports keyword tips

Whether you're doing SEO or SEM (search engine marketing, also known as PPC, "pay-per-click" marketing), you need to get specific with your keywords. You don't want to rank for OEM brands (e.g., Polaris, Honda).

Honda isn't a good keyword because you'll end up competing with a huge variety of dealers, including car dealers. You want, instead, "Honda + powersports" or "Honda + motorcycle". Being specific with keywords attracts the leads who actually might buy what you are selling.

And once you attract them, give them exactly what they are looking for. Drop them from the ad into a Honda landing page rather than the homepage of your site.

Make it easy for customers. They are looking for something specific. Time is the number one factor in sales, not price. People are busy and want to save time, their most valuable commodity. Making it easy and getting customers through quickly works better than competing on price.





THE RIGHT WAY TO CONVERT LEADS

You already know to land the potential customer where they want to be. If they're looking for Honda motorcycles, land them at the Honda motorcycles page. Don't make them sift through everything.

But what else can you do to optimize your site for conversions?

What you need is marketing automation that enables you to tweak your site to your exact needs. You see, website providers are not built towards dealers. They'll make it easy for you to put up a site quickly, but that does nothing to optimize lead conversion.

Basically, website providers are made with the bigger company in mind -- the big brand, not your dealership. Put simply, you need a marketing company that provides web sites instead of a website provider.

A quality marketing company will have the kind of customer support you need to adapt your site for optimal conversions. All a website provider's support team can do is tell you how to do a thing you want to do with the site. But they can't tell you what to do. They don't know. And since you're probably not a web expert, that's not particularly helpful. A marketing company, on the other hand, acts as consultant to your site and your dealership.

Typical platform sites are nothing more than online inventories, like Dealer Spike, ARI, Cobalt, and Dealer.com. Pages for individual dealers are wrapped around that huge inventory.

What's the problem with this? Isn't it good that you are listed in these big indexes? Actually, it's not that helpful to your bottom line. You can't really rank or use SEO if the only way your site is accessible is through big inventories.

If possible, go with an individual website with inventory added on rather than an inventory website with pages wrapped around it.

This is how you get quality traffic.

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4 things to look at when trying to convert

Once you have your own dealer site, what does it need to convert? There's a strategy called AIDA -- Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. You need features on your website that hit those 4 points to lead to conversions.

Here are the 4 features that help you to cover the 4 points of AIDA strategy.

- 1. Headlines** | Readers scan sites more often than fully reading them, which is why headlines are important. The headlines should grab their attention.
- 2. Offers** | These should answer the question, "What's in it for me?" that your prospect is asking.
- 3. Specials** | These light a fire under your visitor to follow your CTA (call-to-action). It gives them an incentive.
- 4. Call to Action** | The CTA on your site should be an information capture form. You have to have a way to capture names, email addresses, and phone numbers.

In other words, show readers where they are, what they can do here, and why they should do it. Traffic and interest alone is not enough to drive people to your actual store and close sales. It is leads that generate opportunities that bring in business.

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Standing out from other sites

Let's talk about a few things to do and not to do when you're trying to convert leads.

First off, your price is your offer for an inventory site. If your inventory says "call for price", you're doomed. No one is going to call for price. They want to see it listed.

If they aren't given a price, they're going to click the back button. And the back button is a dangerous thing for dealers online. Aside from ending the conversation, it also damages your rank because Google tracks bouncebacks, which are when visitors hit that button to leave the page shortly after they arrive.

To prevent bounceback, you have to fulfill the offer you make in your ads. Don't make them feel like you lied about where they were going when they click.

Second, you have to price your vehicles for real. Do not list the cost as MSRP. Just call it the price, even if you are selling at MSRP. MSRP suggests you will only sell for retail, which is not a deal for the customer. Note that we're not talking about violating MAP policies from manufacturers. We're talking about the choice of words you use.

A third thing, make it clear to the customer why they should submit their information to you. The button you use for the CTA has to stand out. An example of this is, "Click here to get employer pricing." Give them a reason to interact with you.

By the way, employer pricing is an easy incentive to set up. You simply make a list of large employers in your area and give a discount for their employees.

The worst mistake you can make is having no button at all for your CTA. A close second is having a vague button with something like, "Info" as the only text. Again, the goal of your website is to get them to a form. And you can't only put it on the vehicle display page (VDP) -- many prospects don't make it there on the first visit to your site.

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How marketing automation helps

Here's the thing. It takes a while for a visitor to convert to a lead and then into a paying customer.

That's why your CTA should not be an immediate request for a phone call or engagement from the customer. They're not ready yet. They're not hot for your product.

Furthermore, if your salesperson gets a call immediately from a lead, it is unlikely that they'll be able to get contact information from the person. And that means you have no opportunities to follow up with that lead. The call the salesperson takes then becomes your dealership's one opportunity to convert that lead to a customer.

Appointment rates on a first call are extremely low. It's an inefficient way to work your sales funnel. If the lead, instead, fills out a form on your site, you've got the information to follow up.

It is much easier (and more effective) to use marketing automation to capture lead data than to train all your salespeople to consistently grab customer information.

In fact, your marketing automation solution should also track incoming calls in cases where you do get customer engagement. What are you tracking? You should have three tracking phone numbers listed on your site -- a sales hotline, a service hotline, a parts and accessories hotline.

This separation allows you to track how many calls coming in are potential leads. You don't want to see the number of calls for service when looking at lead data because a large portion of web traffic is people looking for service, not sales.

Also, use local numbers, not 800 numbers. It's easy to get local tracking numbers now, and your potential customers will prefer to see that you're a local company.

There's absolutely no reason to try to track everything manually. It leaves too much space for leads to fall through the cracks, and that's lost revenue for your business.



THE BEST WAY TO OPTIMIZE CONVERSION

It turns out there is one thing you can do that makes a huge difference in your conversion rates, and that is A/B testing, or split testing. If you are doing nothing else to increase leads, you should be doing A/B tests for your website.

How to do A/B testing

For every page on your site that you are trying to capture lead information, you should be running A/B tests. It's simple to do, especially if you have a marketing automation solution that keeps track of the data.

You simply run one version of your page for a designated period of time, and note the number of lead conversions you acquire. Then, you run a second version of the same page for the same duration of time and note the number of lead conversions acquired.

When you compare the numbers, you may find that one version does significantly better than the other. What you do with that information is use the more successful page version.

Of course, pages have dozens of elements that can be tweaked, so you can A/B test the same page many times. You can test out different offer prices, different images to see what grabs people's attention, and different call-to-action buttons. Maybe a button with different words or a different color works better. You don't know what entices visitors to convert to leads until you test.

You should also test your forms. Forms tend to perform best when they have the fewest fields possible to get the information you require. All you need is the name, email address, and mobile phone number. Test forms with other fields to see for yourself. Conversions tend to drop as more fields are added to the form.

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3 BEST PRACTICES TO IGNORE

(AND WHAT TO TRY INSTEAD!)

FOLLOWING BEST-PRACTICES ARE MOSTLY TRIED-AND-TRUE. BUT FOLLOWING THEM BLINDLY CAN LOWER YOUR CONVERSION RATES. HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES:

- RULE:** Lead forms go on the first page.
- TRY:** Landing page without a form. Add a second page to the process.
- TESTED:** 60% more conversions
- WHY:** Split testing helps to determine what your audience will act on.

- RULE:** Add social sharing buttons to product details pages.
- TRY:** Remove them! *GASP!
- TESTED:** 12% more conversions on intended call-to-action
- WHY:** While social proof helps, removing the distractions focuses on the CTA.

- RULE:** Update to newer designs and interactive trends.
- TRY:** Simple, straightforward, informational pages.
- TESTED:** 20% more conversions on outdated design.
- WHY:** Designers aren't conversion experts. A/B test to find the sweet spot.

It's a smart strategy to run periodic tests to determine what works best for your unique Powersports audience, even if it goes against what the trends - and your competitors - are doing.



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Testing the homepage

The job of the homepage is to get people off the homepage and onto other parts of your site. They should not be there long because your offer pages are where conversions happen.

From the homepage, visitors should be able to do just one click into new inventory, used inventory, specific brand inventories, service, parts and accessories. Anything that distracts them from getting where they need to go to do business with you should not be on the homepage.

For instance, image sliders tend to distract from the purpose. They look cool, but they usually decrease leads and increase bounce rates because visitors waste their time looking at the images and then have to get back to a more important task, or their attention gets called elsewhere.

The same goes for videos on the homepage. It works for some industries and in some cases, but for powersports, it's difficult to end a video on the homepage with a call-to-action that appeals to all your visitors. Go ahead and A/B test the page with and without a video to see.



THE BIGGEST MISTAKES DEALERS ARE MAKING

If you're doing A/B testing with the assistance of a marketing automation solution like PSXDigital, you will pinpoint the problems your website has and their corresponding solutions. But there are some things you should just know from the get-go. These are problems with particular pages that can be easily corrected to improve conversion.

Underwhelming specials page

What are powersports dealers doing wrong with the specials page? Some don't seem to understand that it is **not** a featured vehicles page. Featured vehicles are not good enough as a special. Your special needs to be something that can be used regardless of which particular vehicle your customer selects. An example would be \$200 off when someone test drives a new vehicle.

Note: be sure that you don't violate MAP policies with any of the manufacturer brands you sell.

You should also have different special offers for your various business lines. That means having at least a sales special offer and a service special offer. Split test specials to see which work.

You want to change your specials about twice a month anyway, to give visitors an incentive to revisit the specials page. That's the perfect opportunity for split testing which specials work best. There's no need to change your specials more often than that because the majority of web traffic will be new visitors who haven't seen your specials yet.

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Frustrating trade-in page

Lots of powersports customers have vehicles to trade in. You can stand out from a majority of competitors simply by providing a page that instantly values the trade for them.

Note the instant part.

Do not make them give you tons of information and then send them to a page that says someone will email them in a few days about trade-in value. There are so many places prospects can go online, like the KBB, to get an instant value for their trade-in. If they leave your site to get an estimate somewhere else, then those sites are going to try to get them to buy from one of their partners.



Complicated credit application page

A full credit application has a lot of fields. And the SSN field scares people regardless of your site's encryption level. Simply put, a credit application page is not a good lead generator. You shouldn't be worrying about the credit app until after you get the lead.

Instead, use a credit pre-qualification page. It doesn't require as many fields; doesn't require an SSN; and does generate leads because they are pre-qualified with your dealership, which makes buying from you that much easier.



SUMMARY OF BEST CONVERSION PRACTICES

You just learned how to get started increasing lead conversions on your powersports website. That means you have the knowledge to start closing more sales and increasing your revenue.

To that end, here's a quick recap of the biggest tips provided here:

- Create quality content.
- Use ads with specific keywords and that link to a specific landing page.
- Make it only one click to anywhere your customers need to get on your website.
- Utilize headlines, offers, specials, and calls-to-action that make it a no-brainer for visitors to click your forms.
- Get a real specials page that appeals broadly to your audience.
- Provide an instant value for trade page to save customers time and keep them from going to other sites.
- Offer a pre-qualification page and leave the credit app for after the fact.
- A/B test everything.
- Ensure that all of these systems are integrated on one platform.

Bottom line: You need a marketing automation platform that can provide your website and marketing solutions all in one place.



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