

It's Still True: Your Customer Database Is Your Best Source Of New Sales.

Database mailers work - Plain and simple. Where's the proof? The world's number one car salesman (according to the Guinness Book of World Records) proved it. Joe Girad, month after month and year after year, sold over 100 cars a month personally.

I'm sure Joe Girad was a great car salesman. But what made him truly successful was a steady stream of prospects to talk to. And every month, Joe Girad mailed a card to everyone in his database. And they came back, year after year. Why aren't you doing it?

If you read Joe's book, he mailed every month back in the 70's – with no computers, it was a huge hassle and very costly. It's much easier to keep a database today – there are companies that offer turnkey database support services to do this for you

Why does it work? First of all, the people in your database have done business with you. They bought a car from you, or they used your service department. They like you. Why not give them a reason to continue to picture your dealership in a positive light? That's exactly what regular mailing to your database does.

Here's why Joe mailed to his customers every month: Research has definitely proven that if you contact a person at least 6 times, they feel connected to you – social conditioning says that you are a “friend” after six contacts. Use this to your advantage, and become a friend. Prior to closing the first sale, you were an adversary. Then you became a friend. Don't lose that friendship by ignoring them. Continue to keep your name in front of them month after month.

You don't have to spend an arm and a leg to stay in touch. Unfortunately, most dealers pay over a dollar a mailer. Joe didn't waste money – he would simply send out a holiday greeting card every month. Example: send a Valentine's card in February with a compelling offer: “Get \$500 off on your valentine car purchase and spend the savings on your sweetheart”. It's really simple: do different offers each month for the corresponding holidays.

The key for dealers is to make their database mailing program cost effective and consistent. Statistically, Joe Girad knew that each customer he sold a vehicle to had the power to influence 200 friends, relatives, and co-workers. Most importantly, he also knew that the customer's household was likely to buy a car every three years. That's why Joe wanted his name in front of the customer every month – even Joe didn't know when the customer's next purchase would happen.

Why not have your name in front of your customer whenever they are ready to make their next purchase?

You should be the first and last place your customer shops. That's what making friendships by consistent mailing does.

It's far more effective to pay less for each mailer and mail more often. Forget those "one shot wonders" – mail pieces that cost \$1 to \$2. Invoke the law of social obligation and caring by mailing regularly. Find a company that specializes in database mailing to keep your costs down. A general rule of thumb is to pay no more than \$.29 to \$.49 per mail piece. This means that for about \$4 a year you can stay in touch with your customer monthly. Is this a no-brainer or what?

Just think: if you mail this month to your database of say 5000 sales and service customers, it will cost you about \$2000. Generally, one or two customers (who probably would have shopped somewhere else) will cover that cost. More likely, you will sell 20 to 30 extra cars.

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