The social media conundrum

So, are you on Facebook? Twitter? Have you positioned your dealership on Foresquare? Started your own YouTube channel?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, I have just one more query for you. How many vehicles do you sell strictly because of your social media efforts?

I am a thirty-something professional who has tried to steer clear of most of this social media bee hive. And while my position on the periphery might seem ill informed, I feel it gives me a great vantage point from which to watch this market unfold.

Essentially everyone I know within my age bracket is on Facebook. And while more and more car dealerships climb on board, I can’t help but feel their efforts in this forum are somewhat useless.

I say that because everyone I know that logs on to social media does so to check out their friends, find out about last night’s party or maybe plan for the next one. They slink around profiles looking for pictures and information, which person is dating that person, where did they go on vacation.

They do not shop for cars, befriend dealership group pages or check out financing rates from a captive lender. Find me a dealership in this country with a list of Facebook “friends” that does so to check out their friends, find out about last night’s party or maybe plan for the next one. They slink around profiles looking for pictures and information, which person is dating that person, where did they go on vacation.

So, are you on Facebook? Twitter? Have you positioned your dealership on Foresquare? Started your own YouTube channel? If you answered yes to any of those questions, I have just one more query for you. How many vehicles do you sell strictly because of your social media efforts?

I am a thirty-something professional who has tried to steer clear of most of this social media bee hive. And while my position on the periphery might seem ill informed, I feel it gives me a great vantage point from which to watch this market unfold.

Essentially everyone I know within my age bracket is on Facebook. And while more and more car dealerships climb on board, I can’t help but feel their efforts in this forum are somewhat useless.

I say that because everyone I know that logs on to social media does so to check out their friends, find out about last night’s party or maybe plan for the next one. They slink around profiles looking for pictures and information, which person is dating that person, where did they go on vacation.

They do not shop for cars, befriend dealership group pages or check out financing rates from a captive lender. Find me a dealership in this country with a list of Facebook “friends” that goes beyond current staff, that current staff’s circle of friends or check out financing rates from a captive lender. Find me a dealership in this country with a list of Facebook “friends” that goes beyond current staff, that current staff’s circle of friends or the odd customer or two.

I know the stats – 500 million users spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook – but what about that usage makes you think the site’s users are logging on to shop? And to shop for cars no less?

I understand that participation in the social media realm is not about selling but rather just being a part of the conversation, but it seems that point has been lost on a number of Canadian dealers who have started offering their inventory to this growing group of computer gazers.

Numerous companies exalt the wonders of social marketing like it is the new consumer gospel. But maybe all of this glory comes from fear grounded in our inability to understand how to develop and harness the buying potential of 500 million people who all agree on one thing – that they like Facebook.

Proponents of this new media say it is imperative to have a presence in the online social world because that is where the new consumer frequents. And while presence is key, it is the form that presence takes that might make all the difference.

A recent article about advertising on Facebook in Bloomberg Businessweek discussed how technology on the site could help companies target specific consumers based on the information they provide.

One example given was how local jewelers and wedding-related companies can pay to have their ads appear on pages of people who have changed their relationship status from single to engaged.

That sounds like a better plan of attack to me – say for dealerships with recent graduate discounts – than simply creating an account and hoping people will like it.

It is specific and targeted, not broad and wishful. It is all well and good to try and appear hip and meet the growing group of computer gazers.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Publications Assistance Program (Registration A007779) and the Canadian Magazine Fund toward our mailing costs.

The social media conundrum

So, are you on Facebook? Twitter? Have you positioned your dealership on Foresquare? Started your own YouTube channel?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, I have just one more query for you. How many vehicles do you sell strictly because of your social media efforts?

I am a thirty-something professional who has tried to steer clear of most of this social media bee hive. And while my position on the periphery might seem ill informed, I feel it gives me a great vantage point from which to watch this market unfold.

Essentially everyone I know within my age bracket is on Facebook. And while more and more car dealerships climb on board, I can’t help but feel their efforts in this forum are somewhat useless.

I say that because everyone I know that logs on to social media does so to check out their friends, find out about last night’s party or maybe plan for the next one. They slink around profiles looking for pictures and information, which person is dating that person, where did they go on vacation.

They do not shop for cars, befriend dealership group pages or check out financing rates from a captive lender. Find me a dealership in this country with a list of Facebook “friends” that goes beyond current staff, that current staff’s circle of friends or the odd customer or two.

I know the stats – 500 million users spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook – but what about that usage makes you think the site’s users are logging on to shop? And to shop for cars no less?

I understand that participation in the social media realm is not about selling but rather just being a part of the conversation, but it seems that point has been lost on a number of Canadian dealers who have started offering their inventory to this growing group of computer gazers.

Numerous companies exalt the wonders of social marketing like it is the new consumer gospel. But maybe all of this glory comes from fear grounded in our inability to understand how to develop and harness the buying potential of 500 million people who all agree on one thing – that they like Facebook.

Proponents of this new media say it is imperative to have a presence in the online social world because that is where the new consumer frequents. And while presence is key, it is the form that presence takes that might make all the difference.

A recent article about advertising on Facebook in Bloomberg Businessweek discussed how technology on the site could help companies target specific consumers based on the information they provide.

One example given was how local jewelers and wedding-related companies can pay to have their ads appear on pages of people who have changed their relationship status from single to engaged.

That sounds like a better plan of attack to me – say for dealerships with recent graduate discounts – than simply creating an account and hoping people will like it.

It is specific and targeted, not broad and wishful. It is all well and good to try and appear hip and meet the customer where they spend a significant amount of time. But maybe the better idea for Canadian dealers is to develop great websites with fresh content, regularly updated inventory and videos about your stock and store.

So, are you on Facebook? Twitter? Have you positioned your dealership on Foresquare? Started your own YouTube channel?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, I have just one more query for you. How many vehicles do you sell strictly because of your social media efforts?

I am a thirty-something professional who has tried to steer clear of most of this social media bee hive. And while my position on the periphery might seem ill informed, I feel it gives me a great vantage point from which to watch this market unfold.

Essentially everyone I know within my age bracket is on Facebook. And while more and more car dealerships climb on board, I can’t help but feel their efforts in this forum are somewhat useless.

I say that because everyone I know that logs on to social media does so to check out their friends, find out about last night’s party or maybe plan for the next one. They slink around profiles looking for pictures and information, which person is dating that person, where did they go on vacation.

They do not shop for cars, befriend dealership group pages or check out financing rates from a captive lender. Find me a dealership in this country with a list of Facebook “friends” that goes beyond current staff, that current staff’s circle of friends or the odd customer or two.

I know the stats – 500 million users spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook – but what about that usage makes you think the site’s users are logging on to shop? And to shop for cars no less?

I understand that participation in the social media realm is not about selling but rather just being a part of the conversation, but it seems that point has been lost on a number of Canadian dealers who have started offering their inventory to this growing group of computer gazers.

Numerous companies exalt the wonders of social marketing like it is the new consumer gospel. But maybe all of this glory comes from fear grounded in our inability to understand how to develop and harness the buying potential of 500 million people who all agree on one thing – that they like Facebook.

Proponents of this new media say it is imperative to have a presence in the online social world because that is where the new consumer frequents. And while presence is key, it is the form that presence takes that might make all the difference.

A recent article about advertising on Facebook in Bloomberg Businessweek discussed how technology on the site could help companies target specific consumers based on the information they provide.

One example given was how local jewelers and wedding-related companies can pay to have their ads appear on pages of people who have changed their relationship status from single to engaged.

That sounds like a better plan of attack to me – say for dealerships with recent graduate discounts – than simply creating an account and hoping people will like it.

It is specific and targeted, not broad and wishful. It is all well and good to try and appear hip and meet the customer where they spend a significant amount of time. But maybe the better idea for Canadian dealers is to develop great websites with fresh content, regularly updated inventory and videos about your stock and store.