

# Marketing technology keeps track of customers

Cambria Automobiles makes use of a system that helps them get to know what buyers want

By Tim Rose

In the run-up to the September plate-change campaign it is vital for franchised dealers to have honed their marketing strategy to capture all the customers they seek.

Many manufacturers and their retail networks have already begun preparations for a boost in new car deliveries once the 60-plate registration comes in on September 1.

For rapidly growing AM100 group Cambria Automobiles, bringing systems and suppliers on board to streamline its processes and monitor the return on investment is one way of lessening the strain of a plate-change campaign.

Ian Godbold, marketing director, said the focus of the plate-change will be on winning conquest business for

Cambria, and digital marketing is at the heart of its strategy.

Dealerships in its 37-strong network, which includes the Doves, Dees, Invicta, Motorparks and Grange trading brands, have already been reviewing their databases to identify guests – its term for customers – who are ripe for a change of vehicle.

The group then uses systems provided by Marketing Delivery, namely its SmartMail solution, to deliver a targeted email to those identified prospects, or to create a direct mail offering for those whose email addresses are not known.

The systems even enable Cambria to track and measure what offers on its

websites are being looked at, so that it can better ascertain the interests of a customer.

Godbold said this enabled Cambria to track whether a guest had looked at a

10

Extra cars sold by one dealership each month, thanks to SmartMail

particular item and not purchased, then email an offer voucher which might encourage them to reconsider.

"It's common among electrical goods retailers but not so common in motor retail yet," said Godbold.

"With September coming up we're running alongside our usual activity a 24-hour or 72-hour follow-up programme. If a guest comes into a showroom or emails an enquiry we're logging them into our system and 24

hours later it sends an email to ask how their search for a car is going. It gives us automated follow-up and another chance to bring them back to our businesses."

He said that the programme stemmed from similar activity for CSI surveys. Cambria, now the 20th largest franchised dealer in the UK with £325m annual revenue, has a strategy to provide 'Gold Standard Quality' in all aspects of its business. Naturally, this includes being in the upper quartile for customer service and a 48-hour CSI email is sent after every sale to gather feedback on what is being done well and what needs further action.

The philosophy of 'guest delight' is one of Cambria's four pillars in its strategy laid down by founder and chief executive Mark Lavery. His aim is to ensure that customers are looked after as if they were a guest in the home of an employee.

Cambria monitors and measures all aspects of its business in order to identify where opportunities lie and to hone its practices. In line with that, the group makes great use of SmartMail's daily measuring of click-through response rates and its tracking of email recipients' precise actions.

"We have to be sure of our return on investment," said Godbold.

"The general manager of our Swindon Motorpark, which has Seat and Citroën franchises, believes he is generating 10 additional car sales per month thanks to his site's SmartMail activities.

"We looked at other companies but Marketing Delivery has the automotive knowledge as well as the systems and we're very happy with the responses



from them," he added. "We've been using them for over a year now, and for us it made perfect sense.

"The elements we've put in place so far are already improving conversion and retention while reducing attrition rates."

Cambria's business model is to leave general managers with autonomy over their particular dealership, so the group does not impose Marketing Delivery's services on its sites.

"We advise them but they make the final decision. Some of them, like our Doves dealerships, use the full suite of services including service reminders and SMS messages, some choose selected services that best fit their business."

However SMS is not used for promoting offers. Godbold believes its strength is simply in communicating with customers, such as for service reminders. A concern is that marketing

offers by text message would be seen to be intrusive.

Cambria expects growth across its portfolio of dealerships, and Godbold believes its digital marketing will be a key tool in driving that growth.

"The plate change and from September to the end of the year will be critical with the increase in VAT to 20% due to be introduced in January," he said.

"Our guests don't appreciate being bombarded with unnecessary sales pitches but they do appreciate it when the messages they receive are relevant, offer good value and arrive at just the right time to help them make their buying decision.

"They use technology in all aspects of their life so why shouldn't we be part of that? If it's easier to reply to an email in an evening or to a text message at lunchtime then it's up to us to enable that to happen to everyone's benefit."

**"The elements we've put in place are already improving conversion"**

Ian Godbold, Cambria Automotives

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Marketing Delivery is the outsourced marketing department for the automotive industry – specialising in email and mobile CRM and marketing

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