



HELP FORCE

HOW TO
FUEL YOUR ONLINE
DESTINATION TO
SELL MORE STUFF!™



INTRODUCTION

Imagine a dealership with no knowledgeable sales team, no units, no accessories, no service department – just some minimal signage and a stack of brochures. If a potential customer walked in the door, they'd probably just turn around and leave, right?

As your first point of contact with potential motorcycle or ATV buyers, your online destination is just as critical as your physical location when it comes to making first impressions and getting prospects to raise their hands and say, "I'm interested in buying from you."

By optimizing your online presence to mirror the experience you've crafted for your in-store shoppers, you can convert online shoppers into qualified leads and ultimately drive in-store traffic and sales as well as online part and accessory sales. We'll cover some must-have website features, website content that customers look for and website counterparts that will help you reach customers along the digital path to purchase in this ebook.

LET'S GET STARTED!

WEBSITE MUST-HAVES

Your customers all have their own ways of navigating your website, and there are a handful of features you should have to make their experience as easy as possible. Anyone who comes to your website should be able to navigate easily and find everything they would find in your store, from new units to parts and service.

You can make sure your customers easily find what they're looking for with:

- ✓ Search bar
- ✓ Intuitive navigation
- ✓ Featured products
- ✓ Sales and promotions

Let's take a deeper look at these features.



SEARCH BAR

The most popular way for consumers to find the products you sell is by using a site search bar. According to Google data, 77% of consumers preferred to use a site search bar first to find what they're looking for. ARI's data parallels these results – the site search bar is the most popular feature used on all of our sites, beating out even homepage views.

Why? Companies like Google, Amazon and eBay have ingrained this behavior in consumers. As a result, visitors to your site expect a search experience in line with what they experience at the major online retailers.

But your site's search bar is only as good as the functionality and content behind it. When someone types "engine" into your search bar, they should receive a list of related products and then have the ability to further refine those results down by price, type, brand and sale, allowing them to easily find exactly what they are looking for.

If you don't have a search bar, don't deliver relevant results and don't offer the tools shoppers expect to refine their search results, your potential customers will most likely get frustrated and go to another website to do their research.

Your search bar can also help you read your shoppers' minds. With tools like Google Analytics, you can view the search terms customers enter in your website's search bar. If a lot of people are searching for the same product, feature it on a homepage banner graphic to help them find it even faster!



INTUITIVE NAVIGATION

Approximately
50%
*of potential sales are
lost because users
can't find information.*
(Forrester Research)

Think of how your store is organized. You want to make it easy for shoppers to find the units they're interested in, so chances are you feature your most popular units prominently. To help customers find your service department, you probably have signage indicating where it is. If a customer can't find what they're looking for, they'll probably leave your store without making a purchase.

The same concept applies to your website. According to studies by Forrester Research, approximately 50% of potential sales are lost because users can't find information.

You can avoid becoming a victim of this statistic by making it as easy as possible for your customers to find what they need. You can do this by featuring the areas your customers are most likely to look for in a simple, easy-to-use navigation. Highlighting popular areas of your site like "About Us," "Contact Us," "Financing," "Products" and "Sale" will help guide your customers to the correct areas of your site.

To give your navigation more impact, incorporate dropdown menus. You can feature your most popular brands or unit types within your "Products" tab, list out the services you offer in a "Service" tab or detail location information in the "About Us" tab.

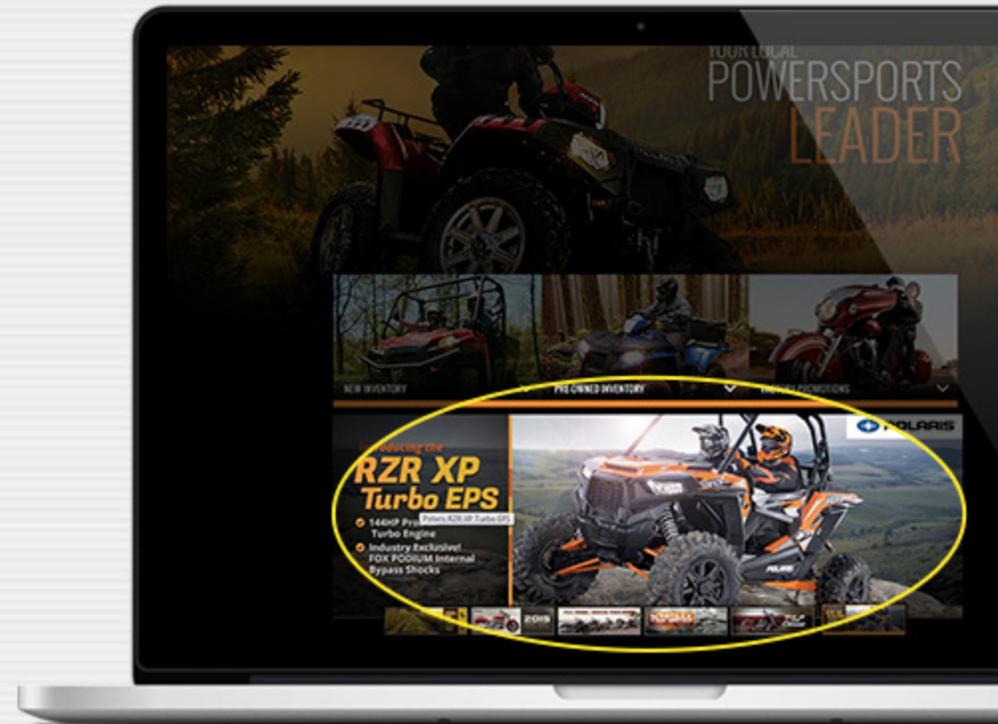
FEATURED PRODUCTS

In your store, you probably don't hide your best units where no one can see them. You likely place them in a prominent area where they'll catch your customers' eyes.

You should do the same thing on your website. When a new product hits the market, prominently display it on your homepage and other high-traffic areas of your website, like at the top of your inventory landing page.

Use your website's homepage graphics to call attention to new inventory, manufacturer promos and popular units, then link the graphics to areas of your site where customers can view the units in greater detail. A rotation of these images can grab the attention of shoppers, and they can help your search engine optimization if you use descriptive file names and alt-text – we'll dig into these a little later on.

Your homepage banner rotation is also an easy place to feature any sales or promotions you're running. Keep reading to learn more!



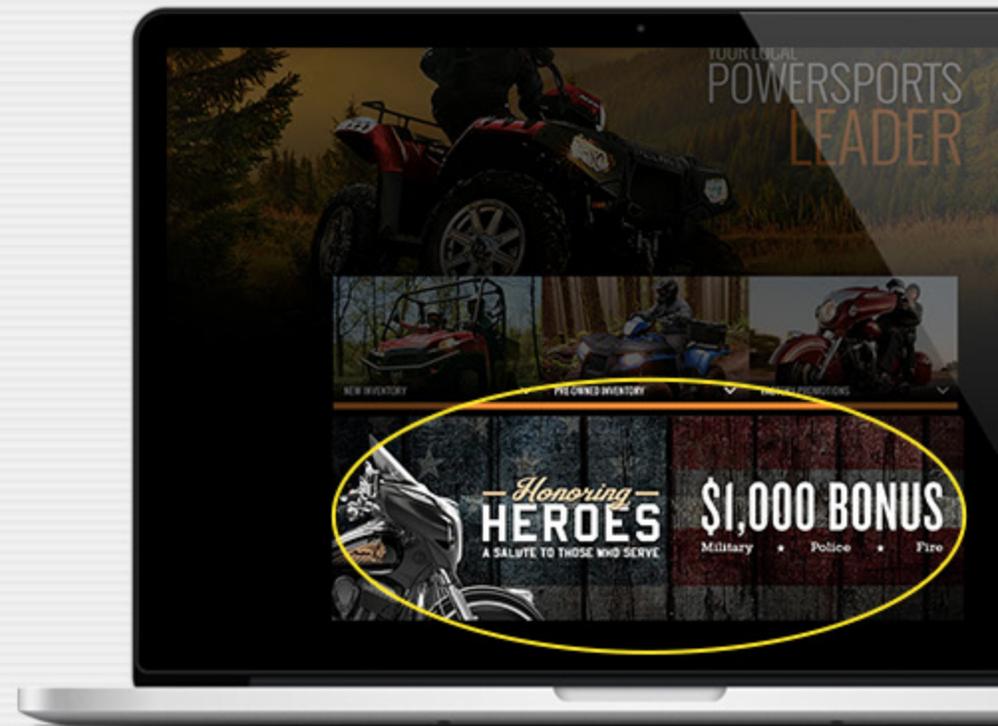
SALES AND PROMOTIONS

It's no surprise that many of your customers are on the hunt for a good deal. Many shoppers have a tight budget to stick to and can't consider higher-priced units. According to Mintel, 44% of Americans said they shop around to get the best deal.

In your store, these shoppers probably head for your Clearance section to browse discounted units or look for coupons or promotions to get a percent off their purchase. When there's a sale going on, they look for signage to let them know where they can find bargains throughout your store.

You can use these same concepts on your website. To make sure your shoppers find what they need, include a "Sale" or "Clearance" section on your navigation bar to help ensure they can quickly find your discounted merchandise.

The online counterpart to in-store signage is eye-catching graphics. Creating a banner graphic featuring your big sale or an OEM promotion is a great way to grab attention and point your shoppers in the right direction. Many OEMs will provide graphics for you – you just need to enable them on your site.



WEBSITE CONTENT

The text, video and graphic elements that make up your website's content can help your SEO as well as improve your online destination. When someone searches for a new motorcycle, Google wants to show them the results that they'll find the most helpful. Websites with relevant multimedia content and rich text will place higher on the search results page.

You can generate high-quality website content that will provide solutions for your customers and boost your SEO with:

- ✓ Videos
- ✓ Images
- ✓ Branding
- ✓ Expertise



VIDEOS

According to YouTube, 90% of shoppers find videos helpful when making purchasing decisions. Videos can also give your SEO a boost by providing the content Google looks for when someone searches for a unit you sell.

You don't need to be a cinematic whiz to create video content for your website. Sharing OEM video content is a quick way to get video on your website.

If you want to create your own videos, something as simple as a walk-around tour of a new unit can capture a shopper's interest and get them in-store to learn more. You can even create video slideshows out of photos with tools like ARI Inventory Powered by LotVantage.

To get the most out of your video content, AdWeek suggests keeping videos to a length of 3 minutes or less. Keeping videos short and sweet will help keep your audience's attention, and including a call to action at the end – like “Call us to learn more!” – can help encourage them to take the next step in the buying process.



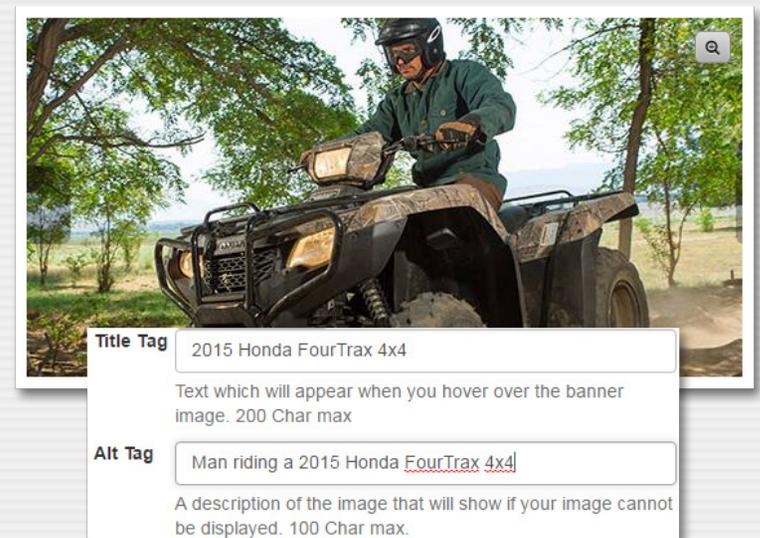
IMAGES

According to KissMetrics, content with relevant images gets 94% more views than content without relevant images. Quality images make your site visually engaging, and they're relatively easy to incorporate with options ranging from banner graphics we discussed earlier to inventory photos.

If you have too many large images, however, it can make your site run slowly. A good rule of thumb is that the images you upload should be no wider than your page, the file size should be 80-100kb at most (OM4) and the resolution should be 72 dpi.

Optimize your images and your SEO by tagging your images with alt-text and descriptive image names. Search engines can't see images, so search engine crawlers read alt-text and image file names to figure out not only what the images are, but how they relate to the text on your website.

If you have an image of a motorcycle with alt-text that mentions the word "motorcycle" and the surrounding text is about motorcycles, search engines will know that that's probably a helpful page for people searching for motorcycles. This will make it more likely that the page shows up in search results for someone making that search.



BRANDING

Your brand is important. It's how shoppers distinguish you from the competition, and it showcases your business and what it stands for. Many shoppers form a relationship with their favorite brands, and your online presence can help solidify those relationships. In fact, 36% of consumers said their interaction with a brand online has led them to buy more from that brand (Business News Daily).

To make your business as memorable as possible for online and offline shoppers, your branding should be consistent everywhere. If you have a logo, slogan or specific colors you use in your store or ads, be sure to carry that over to your website. This will help shoppers know they're in the right place when they visit your store after checking out your website or vice versa.



EXPERTISE

Your website is a great place to show off your staff and your years of experience. Your “About Us” section is an easy place to fit in bios of your sales and service team, highlight the number of years your dealership has been operating and mention the areas where you really excel.

You can also work in keywords to amp up your SEO. Phrases that mention the geographic area you serve, your top brands or the type of units you sell can go a long way. For example, saying “We’ve been the #1 dealer of new and used Honda motorcycles in Milwaukee since 2002” could help you rank higher in search results for new or used Honda motorcycles in your area.

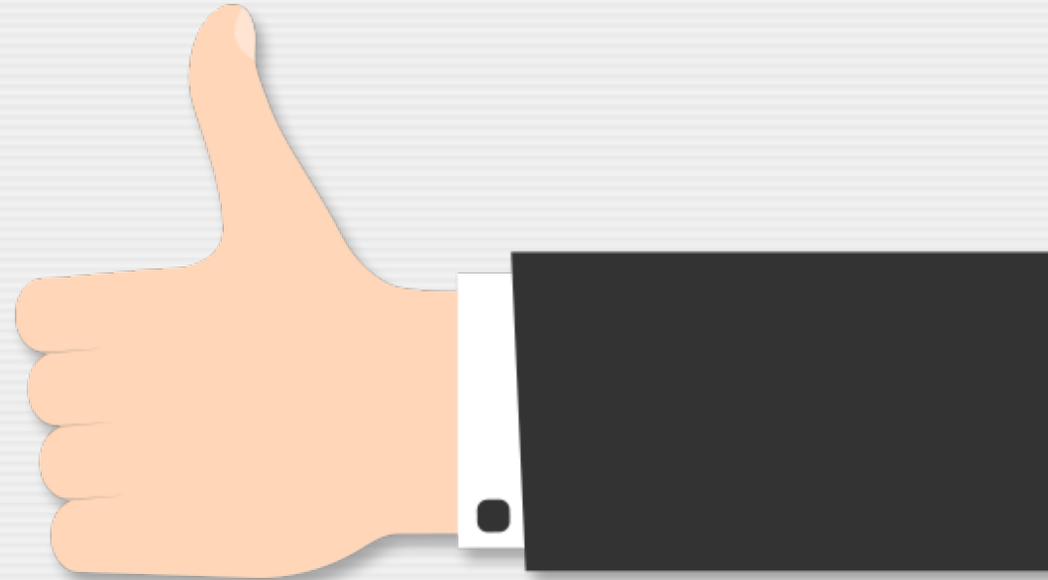
If you have a dealership in a suburb of Orlando, it’s important to include Orlando in your website text to reach a wider audience. Saying you’re located in Winter Park and serve the greater Orlando area will help you reach searchers who are looking for motorcycles in Winter Park and those who are looking for motorcycles in Orlando.



WEBSITE COUNTERPARTS

Your website is your online destination, but your social media profiles and review websites like Yelp are natural avenues for sharing and generating website content and creating a community of your customers.

These channels can help you spread brand awareness, improve your SEO and lead customers to your website. Let's dig into how social media links, cross-sharing and reviews can benefit your online destination.

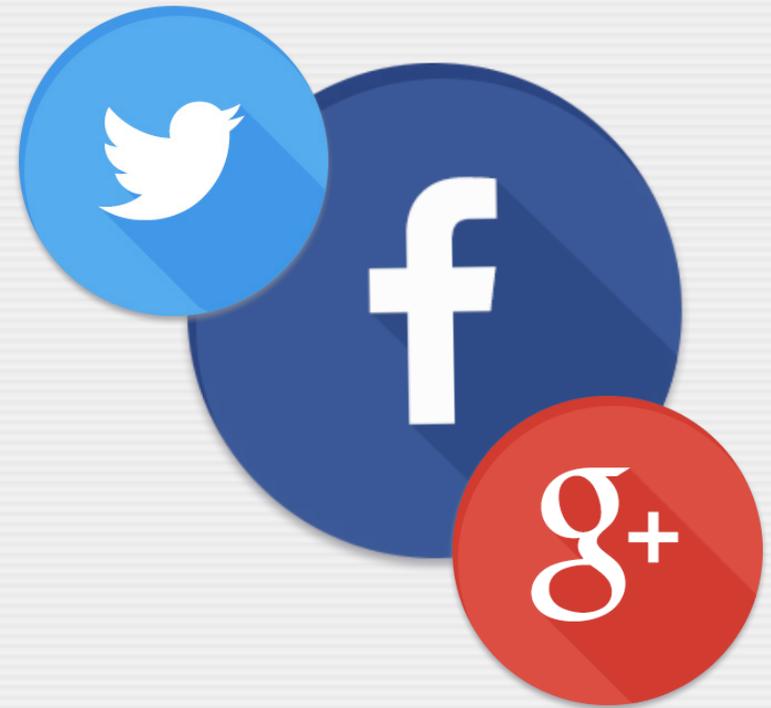


SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

When you browse the Internet, you've probably seen websites that feature small icons for Facebook, Twitter and other social media profiles at the top or bottom of the page. These social media links are a simple way to help your customers connect with you on your social media profiles.

According to the Pew Research Center, 52% of online adults use two or more social media sites, so your customers are likely to look for you on their favorite social media outlets. Make sure any links to your social media profiles are always up-to-date and sending your customers to the right place. If you start a new social media profile, be sure to add a link so customers know they can find you there!

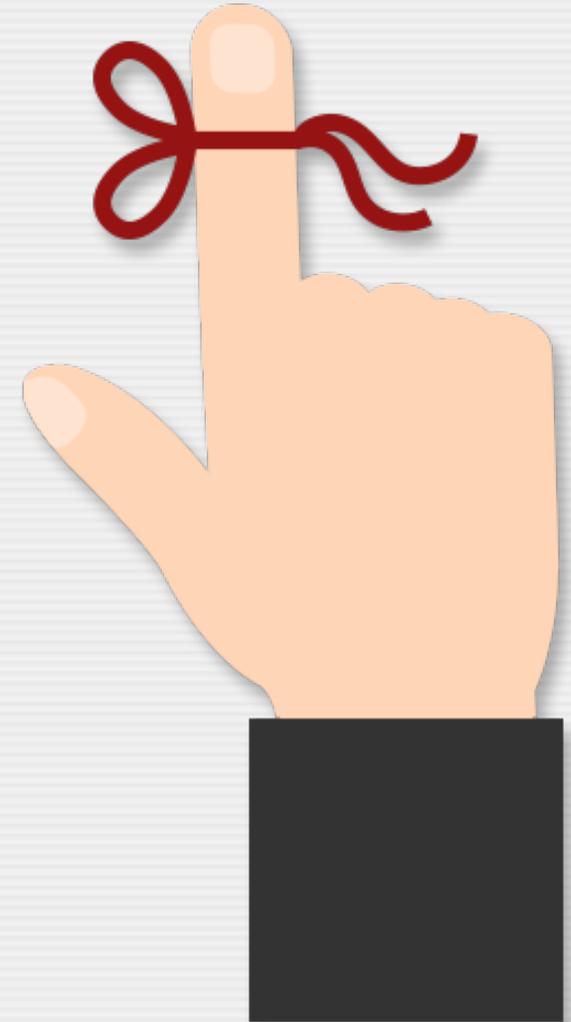
You can tie these icons into your in-store experience by posting signage letting your customers know they can find you online on these social media channels by simply listing the URLs for your social media pages or the icons of the social media channels you use.



SOCIAL CROSS-SHARING

Your website content is ideal for feeding your social media profiles. While the majority of your social media posts should focus on sharing lifestyle or brand content and presenting yourself as a resource for your customers, occasional posts promoting sales or new products and linking to your website can help convert casual fans or followers into leads.

Want to learn more about how to leverage your website content on social media? Check out our article on the 70-20-10 rule on the [HelpForce blog](#)!



REVIEWS

Instead of just telling coworkers about an experience around the watercooler or talking to neighbors over the fence, today's shoppers are leaving online reviews to let others know about their shopping experiences. These reviews can make an impact on what shoppers choose to buy. Econsultancy says 61% of shoppers read online reviews before making a purchasing decision.

While it may seem daunting to open the door to customer feedback, letting your customers know they can review your dealership online can generate positive content to feature on your website and in your store. Pick a preferred platform – Google Plus is a popular option – and have your sales and service teams ask customers to leave a review as they're wrapping up a transaction. You can also encourage reviews by linking to your preferred review platform or hosting a feedback form on your website.

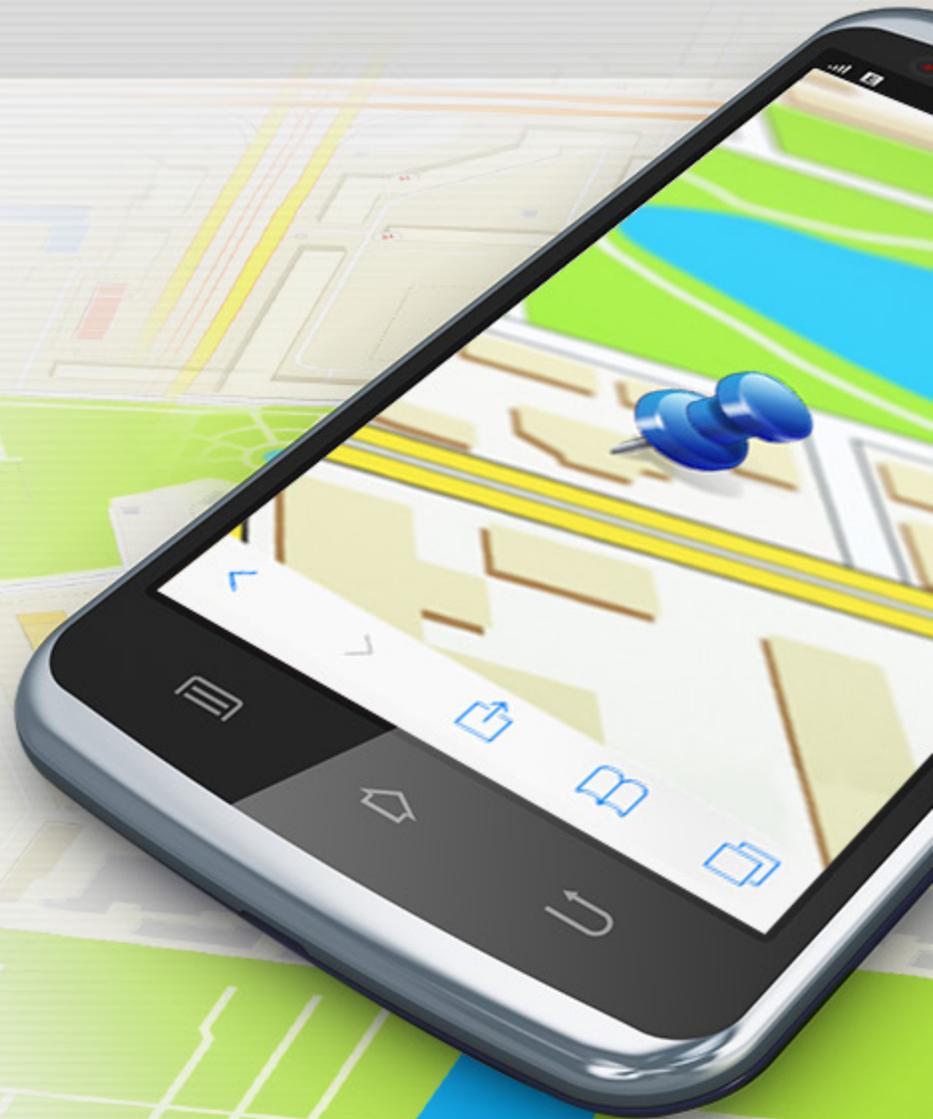
Once you've begun generating reviews, feature your favorite ones on a testimonial section of your website or on an in-store display. Many shoppers read online reviews about products and retailers before making a purchase, so seeing a glowing recommendation of your dealership might be just the thing to help you get the sale.

Everyone has a bad day now and then, and you might occasionally receive the odd negative review. While these might seem like instant losses, you can easily turn them into wins by responding with a polite and sincere apology and an attempt to resolve the customer's problem. You can learn more about responding to reviews on the [HelpForce blog](#).



CONCLUSION

To create the best experience possible for your customers, your website should strongly mirror your in-store experience. Get the most out of your online destination by ensuring your website has the features your customers need, optimizing your website features and content, and leveraging content across social media and review sites.



RESOURCES



HelpForce Blog

For more tips to help you connect with your customers online, visit the HelpForce Blog, where you can find a variety of articles regarding social media, search engine optimization, pay-per-click advertising, website optimization and more!

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