

Mastering Online Inventory:

Your guide to online
inventory marketing
and merchandising



Two Essential Parts to Every Successful Inventory Strategy

Any dealership can list inventory online—that's easy. But going the extra mile to **market and merchandise** your inventory listings will drive shoppers to your site, help you sell inventory faster and more efficiently, and improve the profitability of your business.

1 **Inventory Marketing** encompasses the strategies you employ to drive awareness and traffic to your online listings. More than simply listing inventory online, inventory marketing means displaying and advertising inventory on your website and third-party marketplaces.

2 **Inventory Merchandising** is the method and manner of building buyer excitement for your listings. It involves the day-to-day details of displaying your inventory to build buyer interest and provide the information shoppers look for that will push them toward a purchase decision.

Together, inventory marketing and inventory merchandising can make your listings stand out in a crowd of online competition and capture the attention of more prospective customers.

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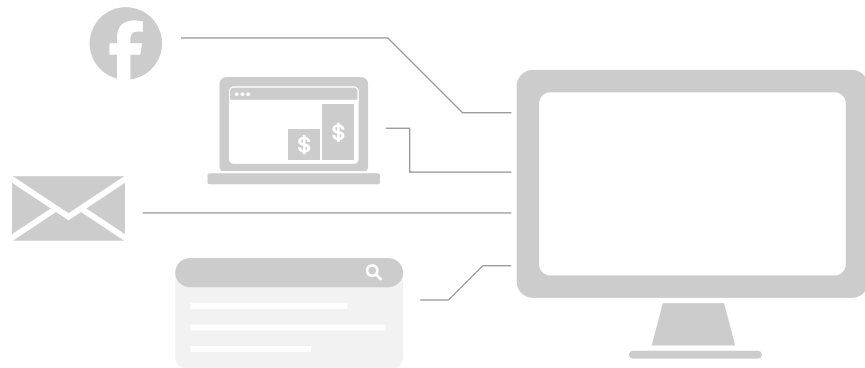
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Rolling Out the Red Carpet to See Better Sales Results

When you list your inventory online, you can **choose to follow one of two sales philosophies.**

1. You can display your inventory for the world to see and wait for customers to come to you.
2. You can display your inventory online and proactively reach out and engage shoppers with your listings.



In today's digital age of intense online competition, the first approach—passively listing inventory online—is no longer enough to capture customer attention. Dealers who do the bare minimum to display inventory online will fall behind other dealers that are diligently putting resources into marketing their inventory listings.

To make your listings truly stand out, you have to give shoppers a clear path to purchase. You have to give them the convenience they want out of a modern shopping experience. Rather than make shoppers chase down your inventory, you have to roll out the red carpet, put your listings in front of shoppers, and usher them into your online marketplace.

To use a physical store metaphor, simply listing your inventory online is like setting up shop in an abandoned building with no signs and a locked front door. You can't expect customers to wander around, find a way in, and want to buy your inventory. By nature of your limited inventory plan, you're automatically restricting your audience.

A Common Inventory Marketing Misconception

Even if active inventory marketing is more effective, many dealerships say they lack the time and resources needed to implement an inventory marketing strategy. But here's the secret: you don't have to add more strategies to build a successful inventory marketing plan—you **just have to adjust the ones you're already using.**

You're probably already marketing your inventory; you just may not be allocating your marketing dollars most effectively. The truth is, many dealers are having a hard time moving into the modern era of marketing. But while a shift in marketing mindset can be difficult, buyer habits have changed, and the way you sell inventory has to change too.

But how can you tell if your current marketing strategy isn't working? Look ahead to see if you're on track to hit your sales targets. Track low sale indicators, like high bounce rates, lost or slowing leads, low website traffic, low conversion rates, low promotion engagement, etc. If any of your sales indicators seem off, consider reallocating your marketing resources to implement the following inventory marketing tools and tactics.



Inventory Marketing Tools and Tactics

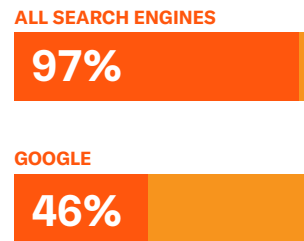
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

How it Works:

Search engine optimization, SEO, involves making subtle improvements to your inventory pages, including adding keywords, to increase the searchability and visibility of your listings on search engines.

Key Stat:

As much as **97% of search engine users search for local businesses and 46% of all Google searches seek local information.**¹ By including location-based keywords in your inventory copy, you can showcase your listings at the top of the search results.



Benefits:

In addition to improving the visibility of your online listings by targeting local traffic and high-intent shoppers, SEO can help your business build a better brand reputation, reach new audiences, and see long-term results.

¹12 Local SEO Stats Every Business Owner and Marketer Should Know in 2019. Walker-Ford, Mark. Feb. 26, 2019. SocialMediaToday. Web.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

How it Works:

AI-driven search no longer stops at keywords—it interprets context, details, and location to show shoppers relevant inventory instantly.

To make sure your listings appear:

- **Include transparent pricing and full specs in every unit description.**
- **Use descriptive language that answers real buyer questions (“Which side-by-side can seat six?”).**
- **Keep photos, data, and inventory feeds current—AI tools pull from what they can verify.**

Benefits:

When your website communicates clearly with AI systems, you’re not just improving SEO—you’re ensuring your dealership’s products are featured in the answers shoppers see first.

Inventory Marketing Tools and Tactics (Cont.)

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

How it Works:

Search engine marketing, SEM, uses paid ads that appear at the top of the search results pages to improve the visibility of your inventory listings.

Key Stat:

As much as **49% of shoppers say they use Google to find new products.**²

When shoppers input terms included in your inventory pages, your listings will get a prominent place on search results pages.



Benefits:

SEM can help you reach new audiences and see fast sales results by getting your inventory in front of new high-interest customers. Plus, it's easy to track conversions, and you can implement SEM to improve the success of both short- and long-term inventory marketing campaigns.

²Search Engine Marketing (SEM): Ultimate Guide + Expert Tips. Kayla Schilthuis-Ihrig. Jan. 4, 2024. Hubspot. Web.

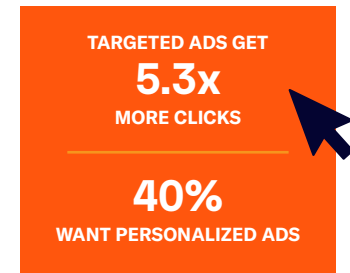
Targeted Digital Advertising (TDA)

How it Works:

Targeted digital advertising, TDA, tracks online searches and serves shoppers ads about your inventory, based on their personalized interests.

Key Stat:

Targeted ads get 5.3 times more clicks than standard ads,³ and more than **40% of consumers want their ads to be personalized.**⁴



Benefits:

TDA targets specific demographics and delivers highly tailored ads to help you build brand awareness and showcase your inventory, no matter where shoppers search.

³The Economic Value of Behavioural Targeting in Digital Advertising. IHS Markit. Web.
⁴13 Targeted Advertising Statistics That You Simply Can't Duck. Galov, Nick. May 20, 2023. Web tribunal. Web.

Inventory Marketing Tools and Tactics (Cont.)

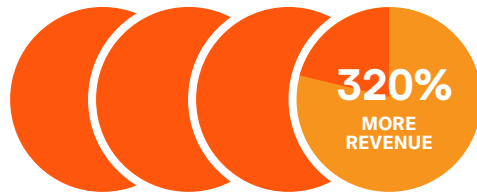
Automated Email Marketing (AEM)

How it Works:

Automated email marketing (AEM) sends automated emails to remind shoppers about an inventory items in their cart and inform them about new offers and promotions related to your listings.

Key Stat:

Automated emails **generate 320% more revenue⁵** than non-automated emails.



Benefits:

Automated emails are a low maintenance, low cost way of retargeting existing customers. They are highly effective for moving inventory when emails featured sales, promotions, inventory highlights, trade-in offers, parts or service specials, price drops, restock alerts, reminders to take another look, and more.

⁵24 Email Marketing Stats You Need to Know. Nov. 2017 Updated July 2019. Campaign Monitor. Web.

Social Media Marketing

How it Works:

Social media marketing delivers inventory ads to specific demographics, based on their interests and locations, on their favorite social media platforms.

Key Stat:

As much as **44% of internet users, from Gen X to Gen Z, use social media as a primary source of information when researching a business.⁶**




Benefits:

Social media marketing extends the reach of your listings to both existing and prospective customers. It's a great way to build brand reputation and awareness of your inventory offerings to an engaged audience.

⁶134 Social Media Statistics You Need To Know For 2023. Nyst, Annabelle. July 14, 2023. Search Engine Journal. Web.

Inventory Merchandising Tools and Tactics

2024 Can-Am Maverick R 999T DCT



Availability: Brochure Year: 2024
Make: Can-Am Model: Maverick R 999T DCT

This card shows a high-quality image of a 2024 Can-Am Maverick R 999T DCT side-by-side vehicle. The main image is a large, clear photo of the vehicle from a three-quarter front view. Below it are three smaller, square images showing the vehicle in different settings: one in a desert landscape, one in a wooded area, and one with a person sitting in the driver's seat. The text below the images provides details about the vehicle's availability, year, make, and model. An orange checkmark icon is in the top right corner of the card.

2024 Can-Am Maverick R 999T DCT

NO IMAGE AVAILABLE

Call for Pricing

Make: Can-Am

This card shows a placeholder for a missing image. The main image area is a large grey rectangle with the text "NO IMAGE AVAILABLE" in white. To the right of this rectangle, the text "Call for Pricing" is displayed in a large, bold font. Below the main image area, the text "Make: Can-Am" is visible. A black circle with a white 'X' icon is in the top right corner of the card.

Marketing your listings is just one part of a successful inventory strategy. Today's shoppers want the same experience online as they can get in-store. That includes showcasing your inventory in a way that makes shoppers feel like they are in your physical store, browsing your inventory selection.

Inventory merchandising can give your listings more appeal, engage shoppers, and push them toward purchase. Put simply, marketing your listings will drive buyers to your site; merchandising will keep them there and help you close sales. **Consider the following inventory merchandising methods:**

Quality Inventory Images

Your site visitors want to see themselves with your inventory. If they like what they see, they are more likely to progress toward purchase. If they don't, you run the risk of losing customers and even damaging your brand.

High-quality images engage online shoppers and give them a visual invitation to visit your physical store. Shoppers love high-quality photos of actual units, features, and stand-out details. In fact, **67% of online shoppers believe that high-quality images are more important than product descriptions.**⁷

Beyond visual appeal, quality photos prove your authenticity. They show that your inventory is real and on your lot. They also help shoppers narrow down their buying options on your website.

⁷The Case for Using Vendor Images. Sep. 14, 2023. Pixelz. Web.

Inventory Merchandising Tools and Tactics (Cont.)

Mobile Media Merchandising Tool

When making merchandising decisions, be sure to stay away from stock images and poor-quality images, as these can reflect poorly on your dealership. They can also make it harder to sell your inventory.

Still, capturing real photos takes time, especially if you need to capture and upload images to inventory listings one at a time. Most dealers simply don't have time to manage multiple inventory images, apps, and processes for uploading and displaying photos.

An easy-to-use mobile media tool can help you photograph (or video) units when they arrive on your lot and immediately upload files to their corresponding inventory listing—all without needing to switch to another app or platform. This tool gives your inventory merchandising the following benefits:

- **Save Time:** Capture visuals, video, and 360-degree spins of your inventory and upload them to your listings pages in mere minutes, all in one app.
- **Build Buyer Interest:** Engage website visitors and drive more buyer interest with authentic, high-quality visuals that allow them to explore your units from all angles.
- **Ensure High Brand Standards:** Create a consistent standard for media quality by using photos that follow the same format and brand guidelines, making your inventory listings appear more professional.
- **Market Your Inventory:** Store photos, videos, and 360-spins in an in-app library and reuse media for promotional materials and other inventory marketing strategies, including emails, targeted ads, and social media posts.



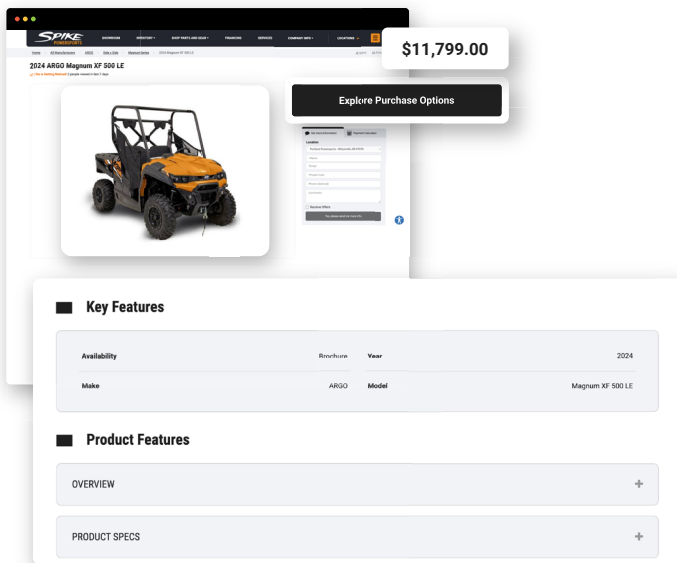
Inventory Merchandising Tools and Tactics (Cont.)

An Intuitive Digital Showroom

Giving your inventory added appeal is more than just showcasing high-quality photos, it means making your digital showroom easy to navigate. Beyond just looking more professional, an intuitive inventory search helps shoppers find what they want and removes all barriers from the buying process. It increases time spent on your inventory pages, supports SEO, and improves purchase rates.

To use another in-store analogy, having an easy-to-navigate website is akin to a clean, well organized showroom. Prospective buyers want to spend time there. On the other hand, a difficult-to-navigate site is like filling your showroom excess clutter. No shopper wants to walk around a maze of mess and distractions just to find what they're looking for.

Consider the following inventory navigation tactics:



- **Minimize Clicks:** Help your shoppers find your inventory pages and the exact unit they're looking for in as few clicks as possible.
- **Show Pricing:** Be transparent with your inventory pricing, and include pricing calculations, prequalification services, and financing applications right on your inventory pages.
- **Be Detail Oriented:** Give customers everything they want to know about each unit, including specs and other detailed unit information, organized in an easy-to-read way.
- **Make It Mobile Friendly:** Ensure that your inventory pages scale with shoppers' mobile devices and are easy to view and read, no matter where potential customers view them.

Mastering online inventory is a blend of both dedicated (and active) inventory marketing and merchandising. As buyer expectations continue to evolve, you can meet your existing and potential customers where they want to shop and give them the best possible buying experience.

The best part, an effective inventory marketing and merchandising strategy doesn't require much added effort on your part. You're simply re-allocating marketing assets and rethinking what you're already doing.

About Dealer Spike

Dealer Spike builds high-performance websites and digital solutions that help dealerships attract more buyers and sell more inventory. We serve powersports, marine, trailer, agriculture, truck, heavy equipment, and outdoor power equipment dealers across North America. Our team combines deep industry experience with innovative technology to help dealerships stay visible, competitive, and connected to today's digital shoppers.