



Dealer Marketing Magazine

Business Development



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You have a marketing plan to drive customers in your area to your dealership. This plan probably consists of print and on-line advertising, as well as marketing tools like search engine optimization, to ensure that your dealership gets a high ranking on search engines like Google and Yahoo, and direct mail pieces touting special offers. You have to market your dealership to the public to stay viable and successful, but you may be missing a golden opportunity. There's a way to get more back from every marketing dollar you spend, and it requires almost no effort on your part. The secret? Using your credit card to pay for your marketing.

Out of 100 dealers interviewed, 68% use credit cards for business purposes, but they don't generally use them to pay for their marketing campaigns. Ninety-four percent

Get More From Your **Marketing** Dollars

of them pay for travel costs with a credit card, and 71% use their cards when buying office supplies. When ordering automotive parts, 64% use credit cards; however, research shows dealerships are ordering one or two parts versus a large amount. The point is that most dealers are missing a huge opportunity to get rewards back for every dollar they spend on marketing. So what can you do?

Consider using your credit card to pay for marketing campaigns, like the advertising you buy every month in your local paper and the classified listings you regularly purchase. If you have a Website wizard who updates your site with new vehicles and emails special offers to customers, think about paying him or her with your credit card. If this sounds a bit risky to you, consider the fact that credit cards are just as safe as checks and, unlike checks, you can reap the rewards from every dollar you spend. The possibilities of what you can do with earned credit card reward points are almost limitless.

Looking for a way to reward a stellar salesman who consistently exceeds his sales quota and never misses a day of work? Start putting your marketing dollars on your credit card and in no time you can

hand him two round-trip air tickets for a sunny locale, all at no extra cost to yourself and your dealership. Or maybe you've got an administrative team who deserves a night on the town? Redeem your reward points for a restaurant meal and tickets to that just-released movie that everybody's been talking about. The possibilities are out there—start exploring!

If this sounds appealing but you don't know where to start, there are companies in the automotive space who can help. Services are available that integrate with your ADP or Reynolds & Reynolds dealer management system to efficiently and easily pay, post, and reconcile invoices paid by a credit card, so you can pay it and forget about it. Then when you're sitting on a sunny beach or strolling the Las Vegas strip, you can remember your last marketing campaign and how it earned you a great vacation!

Karla Friede is the president of Zevez, a service/software company that makes it easy to process payables with credit cards instead of checks, earning dealerships reward points worth \$10,000 to \$50,000 in cash and travel every year. You can reach her at Karla.Friede@zevez.com or call 866-938-3902.