

How AI is Building a Better Car Shopping Experience, One Click at a Time

Power Shift White Paper

Introduction: Your 24/7 Salesperson Just Got an Upgrade

A car dealership's website is arguably its most important salesperson. It works around the clock, never takes a day off, and interacts with more potential buyers than the entire sales team combined. But there's a fundamental problem with most of these digital showrooms: they offer the exact same static, one-size-fits-all experience to every single visitor. What if that salesperson could instantly adapt its pitch, presentation, and focus for every customer who walked through the virtual door? Thanks to Artificial Intelligence, this isn't a hypothetical question—it's the new reality of online car shopping.

1. The Problem with a "One-Size-Fits-All" Website

A static website is like a salesperson who has memorized a single sales pitch and uses it on every customer, regardless of their age, budget, or what they're looking for. This approach is inefficient because it fails to recognize the unique needs and intentions of different shoppers. To understand the disconnect, consider how a typical static website treats three very different visitors:| Visitor Profile | Looking For | What a Static Website Shows Them |

Profile 1: A 25-year-old on a mobile device. | A used economy car. | The same homepage with the same featured new luxury SUV. |

Profile 2: A 55-year-old on a desktop computer. | A new luxury SUV. | The same homepage with the same featured new luxury SUV.

Profile 3: A returning visitor who viewed specific F-150s yesterday. | More information on F-150s. | The same homepage with the same featured new luxury SUV. |

This approach forces customers to do all the work, digging through irrelevant information to find what they need. For the dealership, it's a missed opportunity to connect with a qualified buyer. This is the core problem that AI-powered website optimization is designed to solve.

2. The AI Solution: A Website That Learns and Adapts

The solution to the static website problem is a smart, dynamic platform that uses AI to track visitor data and personalize the experience in real-time. Instead of showing everyone the same page, it creates a unique journey tailored to each individual user by constantly analyzing a stream of data points and making instant adjustments.

How AI Connects Visitor Data to a Personalized Experience

- **Behavior Tracking:** By monitoring every click, the time spent on each page, and which vehicles a user views, the AI learns what a visitor is genuinely interested in. In response,

it can automatically feature more relevant vehicles and content on the homepage and subsequent pages.

- **Location Data:** By identifying a visitor's location, the AI can instantly adapt the site. A local shopper sees local inventory and service specials prioritized, while an out-of-state visitor might be shown information about vehicle delivery options.
- **Device Type:** The experience is optimized based on whether the user is on a mobile phone or a desktop computer. Mobile users get a simplified interface with prominent click-to-call buttons, while desktop users see a richer, more detailed layout designed for deeper research.
- **Intent Signals:** The AI looks for clues about a user's readiness to buy. A visitor who uses a finance calculator is showing higher intent than someone just browsing photos, so the site can respond with more direct calls-to-action like "Schedule a Test Drive."
- **Return Visits:** The system remembers what a user looked at on previous visits. If they viewed three specific trucks yesterday, the site can feature those models or similar inventory on their return, creating a seamless continuation of their shopping journey. Implementing this intelligent system is a straightforward process that allows dealerships to put the technology to work quickly.

3. How It Works in Practice: A Simple 4-Step Process

Putting this AI technology to work follows a clear, structured process designed to gather data and deliver personalized experiences without disrupting the user.

1. **Code Implementation** A code snippet is inserted into the website's header. This is the first step that enables the system to begin gathering the data needed to create hyper-personalized shopper experiences. Think of this as installing the 'brain' of the AI onto the website; it's a one-time setup that enables all subsequent personalization.
2. **Data Gathering** Once the code is live, the platform begins tracking and analyzing website traffic. This information is used to understand visitor behavior and create clearer shopper flows. This is where the AI starts to learn, building a profile of user preferences and common pathways through the site.
3. **Timely Interactions** The AI uses the gathered data to present timely, non-disruptive, and intent-driven engagements to visitors. These interactions are designed to encourage conversions without feeling intrusive. Here, the AI moves from passive learning to active engagement, using what it's learned to guide customers toward their goals.
4. **Performance Reports** Dealerships can view highly detailed reports and dashboards that show the platform's onsite performance, including key metrics on engagements and conversions. This closes the loop, turning visitor behavior into actionable business intelligence that proves ROI and informs future strategy. This process is powered by sophisticated platforms from leading technology providers in the automotive industry.

4. Meet the Tech: A Look at Dealer Inspire and DealerOn

The two main platforms providing these AI-enhanced websites for car dealerships are Dealer Inspire and DealerOn. Both aim to create a more dynamic and effective online experience, but they emphasize slightly different features and philosophies. Dealer Inspire | DealerOn || ----- | - ----- || Uses **machine learning** with **data-driven design** to greet visitors with an

approachable first impression and automatically feature vehicles they are most likely to be interested in. | Powered by the **Cosmos platform**, engineered as the highest-converting platform in retail automotive with guaranteed results. || Delivers dynamic, **personalized messaging** based on visitor location and on-site activity to make the experience more relevant. | Features **predictive search** that understands user intent even with vague queries like "red SUV under 30k" to quickly show relevant results. || Integrates a suite of **seamlessly integrated tools**, like retailing technology that allows shoppers to compare personalized payment options. | Deploys a **Lead Driver Behavioral Targeting System** to deliver fully customizable offers at salient moments in the user journey. || Leverages its deep history as an **SEO company** to optimize the platform for organic growth alongside its AI-driven personalization features. | Utilizes **dynamic content blocks** that can change based on factors like time of day, local events, or specific marketing campaigns. |

While the features differ, the goal is the same: to turn a static digital brochure into a powerful tool that produces tangible results.

5. The Payoff: Big Wins for Customers and Dealerships

Ultimately, the goal of implementing AI is to create a win-win scenario: a better shopping experience for the customer and better business outcomes for the dealership.

5.1. A Smoother Ride for the Customer

For the car shopper, the primary benefit is a faster, easier, and more intuitive online journey. When a website seems to anticipate what you're looking for, it removes friction from the research process. This feeling of being understood—of the website "knowing" them—leads directly to higher customer satisfaction and a more positive perception of the dealership.

5.2. Measurable Results for the Dealership

For the dealership, the benefits are concrete and measurable. By personalizing the user experience, AI optimization drives significant improvements across key performance metrics.

- **Higher Engagement:**
- **35-45%** increase in time spent on the site.
- **25-30%** reduction in bounce rate (visitors leaving after viewing only one page).
- **40-50%** increase in the number of pages viewed per session.
- **Better Leads:**
- **30-40%** more leads submitted through the website.
- Higher quality leads, providing sales teams with more detailed inquiries and better qualification data before the first contact is even made.
- **Increased Conversions:**
- **15-20%** increase in test drive appointments scheduled online.
- **10-15%** increase in finance applications started. These metrics show that a better customer experience translates directly into a healthier bottom line.

6. Conclusion: The Future of the Digital Showroom

By moving away from a one-size-fits-all model, AI-powered optimization is fundamentally reshaping the online car buying journey. It transforms a static dealership website into an

intelligent, dynamic salesperson that works 24/7 to understand and serve each customer individually. This shift is not just a technological upgrade; it's the creation of a more efficient, satisfying, and ultimately more successful digital showroom for everyone involved.