

CASE STUDY

Shuman Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram

DealerRater Enables Shuman Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram to Build Strong Online Brand; Shuman Wins 2013 Overall Dealer of the Year Award

ISSUE

Situated in Walled Lake, Michigan, Shuman Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram plays in a highly competitive market with approximately 50% of their consumer base representing employees or friends/family of employees at the neighboring Chrysler manufacturing plant. For years, Shuman focused efforts on being a leading dealer in SSI and CSI; however, the dealership soon began to realize that its online reputation was taking shape on its own by means of a handful of unhappy customers that were prone to provide feedback on third-party online review sites.

In early 2011, Shuman began focusing on building reviews on Google and Yelp. After encountering a number of challenges in getting reviewers to successfully post reviews on Google and Yelp, Shuman sought additional options. Shuman became interested in DealerRater because of DealerRater's exclusive focus on reviews of auto dealers and viewed DealerRater as a critical means in establishing Shuman's dominant presence over other Detroit-area Chrysler dealers. The dealership quickly enrolled in the DealerRater® Certified Dealer Program with the goal of becoming the top rated Chrysler dealer in Michigan.

This goal was a bold one. Shuman entered the Certified Dealer Program with just four reviews on DealerRater, three of which described a negative experience. "We had consistently earned top ratings in SSI and CSI for years, yet our online consumer ratings were low since only a few dissatisfied customers were posting reviews," said Bob Shuman, Principal Owner.

APPROACH

Shuman was in a good position to rely on DealerRater to promote their high customer satisfaction levels. Being a family-owned and operated dealership, Shuman made a personal connection with their customers every day, so management felt that customers would act when asked to post a review.

INCORPORATE A TOP-DOWN MESSAGE

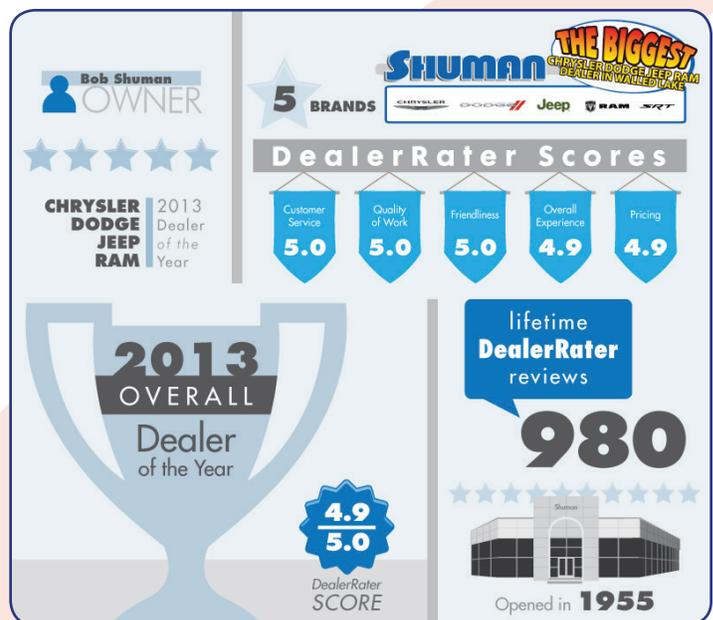
To encourage sales staff to integrate DealerRater into their sales process, Bob Shuman and Shuman General Manager, Joe Zeigler, stressed the importance of third-party reviews at daily sales meetings. They set the expectation that employees should aim for a verbal agreement from the customer for a review on DealerRater after each sale. To reward positive results, they began emailing five-star reviews to the employees tagged in that review, along with a personal note recognizing the importance of that achievement. They copied all employees on these emails, encouraging the team to strive for great reviews.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

The next step was to reach out to customers from multiple angles. They implemented several DealerRater tools, including the display of DealerRater table tents and handing out rating reminder cards to customers. Sales employees were trained to share Shuman's DealerRater Dealer Review Page with customers during sales visits. The sales team also added a link to Shuman CDJR's Review Page to their email signatures so that follow-up correspondence included a subtle reminder to write a review.

INTEGRATED MESSAGING

Shuman also worked their DealerRater reviews and impressive online ratings into their marketing strategy with a simple message: "Don't take our word for it, check us out on DealerRater.com." This hook is incorporated into all online, radio and print marketing campaigns as well as throughout their dealership web site.





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“Absolutely no question that our sales went up as a result of our DealerRater reviews. And I see it growing even more so into the future.”

Bob Shuman, Principal/Owner, Shuman Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram

CONFRONTING & ADDRESSING THE NEGATIVE

Shuman’s approach to managing their online reputation allows for the occasional negative review. Shuman invites all customers to post on DealerRater, whether it reflects a positive or negative experience. “We firmly believe that our credibility and dominance on DealerRater has grown because we are not afraid to have a negative post here and there,” says Shuman. “It only lends credibility to the hundreds of positive reviews that we have built.”

When negative reviews appear on DealerRater, the dealership consistently responds in a way that directly addresses the customer’s complaint. Shuman also takes advantage of DealerRater’s 14-day private reconciliation period before a consumer’s negative review are posted live on the site, by developing empathetic private and public responses. The dealership has found that such responses turn a significant number of negative reviews into positive ones, and that their responses show the public that they are serious about addressing customer satisfaction concerns.

RESULTS

ONLINE GREETING CONVERTS TO MORE BUSINESS AND SHOWROOM TRAFFIC

- Customers now often walk into the dealership showroom indicating that they chose to work with Shuman based on the reviews that they have read on DealerRater.
- With word about DealerRater reaching many of Shuman’s core market through the dealer’s diverse marketing campaign, Shuman has built its online reputation into a critical competitive advantage in the Detroit Chrysler market.

STRONGER ONLINE PRESENCE VS. COMPETITORS

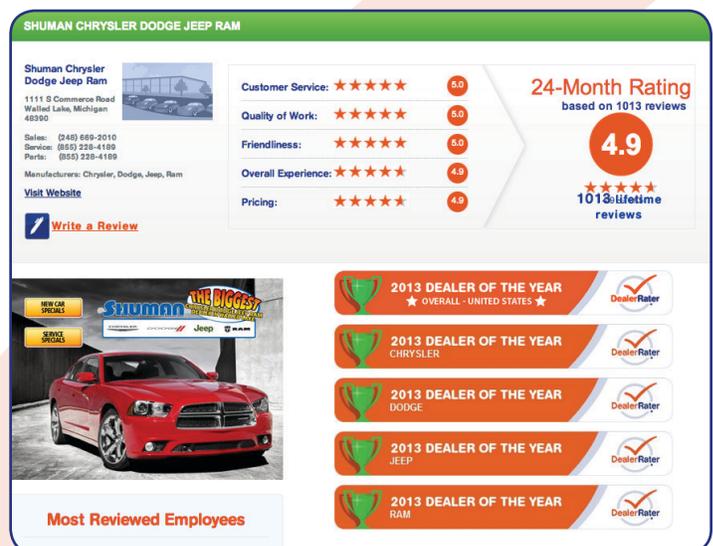
- By leveraging the tools of the DealerRater Certified Dealer Program, Shuman now has nearly 1,000 lifetime reviews and an overall star rating of 4.9. These impressive results have earned Shuman the status of Overall 2013 Dealer of the Year, as well as Dealer of the Year national status for all four of their brand categories.
- Shuman has also been able to differentiate the dealership from other local competitors through their Service group, garnering over 185 positive service-related reviews.

BUILDING REVIEWS ACROSS THE WEB

- Utilizing DealerRater’s Push tool, Shuman has grown its review count on other third-party review sites, in addition to DealerRater. Shuman’s satisfied customers have been sharing their DealerRater reviews on other review sites like Google+ and Cars.com, giving the dealership an even greater online presence without specifically targeting those sites.

DEALERSHIP REVIEW CULTURE /COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER SERVICE

- By utilizing DealerRater and the many tools of the Certified Dealer Program, Shuman is able to capture customers’ experiences efficiently, which offers the dealership the opportunity to address any customer feedback quickly and proactively.
- Attracting and retaining employees is another key benefit of Shuman’s work with DealerRater. Most recently, a sales professional applied to become part of the Shuman winning team expressing interest in working for a dealer that is committed to customer service. After online research and reading through online reviews on DealerRater, the applicant noted that the clear choice in the area was Shuman.



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