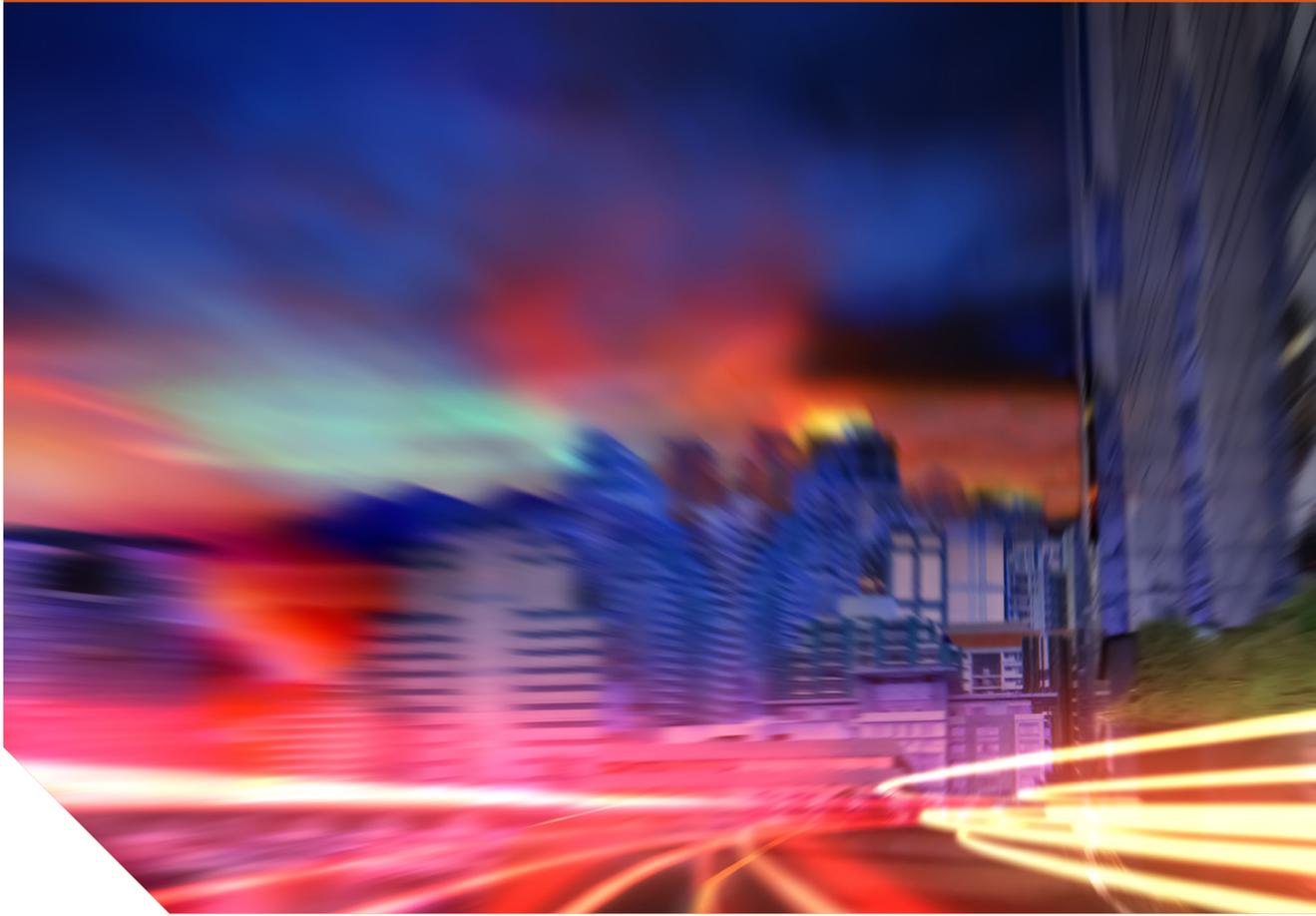

Dealer website design tips.

a website design guide
by **AutoRevo**.

First impressions are everything.

Is your website helping your dealership, or does it drive potential customers away? Since you don't get a second chance to make a first impression, you need to have the best website in your market. Most car buyers start their purchase process online, checking out an average of 9.5 dealer websites before filling out a lead form or making a phone call.

Your online presence needs to be just as great as your dealership if you want potential buyers to contact you. In this guide, we'll talk about what you can do to make sure customers stay on your site longer and check out your inventory, and what your website needs to have to succeed.



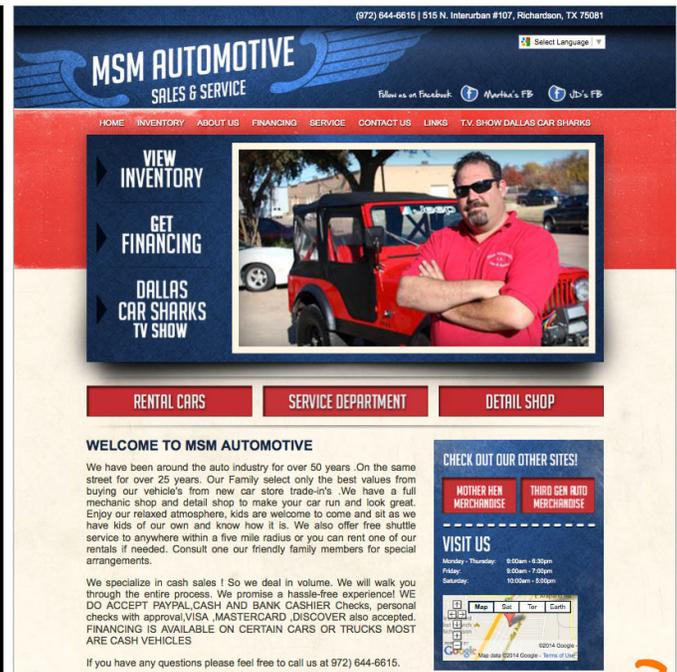
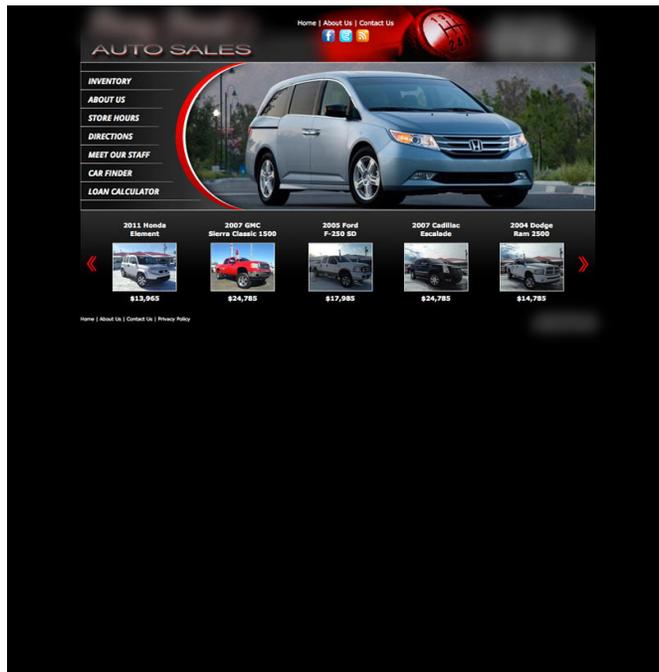
Catering to your customers

Your dealership website is your virtual showroom. It's almost always the first thing a customer will see... and first impressions are everything in this business. It's not the 90s anymore; you can't be satisfied with simply having a website. Your website should reflect your dealership and be clean, inviting, and full of your professional personality. It should show customers who you are, and why you're different from other local dealers. Just like your lot, a customer needs to be able to browse your inventory without getting lost, and should they see a vehicle they want to investigate, they should have no problem reaching out to your sales team.

It's not just about having vehicles online – it's about the overall presentation. In this guide, we're going to cover all the important aspects of a well-designed website.

Clean, easy to read, appealing design

When we talk about design, we mean the way it looks: the color scheme, the layout, the images, how all the parts of the site look together. If a customer thinks you don't care enough to put some effort into how your site looks, they are going to assume the same goes for the inventory you sell, the reconditioning you do on that inventory, and the overall buying experience you provide. You'll get fewer phone calls and sell fewer cars - all because your dealership's website wasn't up to par.



Which site gives a better first impression?

Remember – potential buyers are looking at your competitors too. If they look at 10 websites, and yours is plain and boring (or even ugly), it won't matter what cars you have... They'll be calling your competitors.

A website that looks like it was created in Microsoft Word is basic, boring, and void of interesting design elements. On the flipside, you don't want to go overboard with too many buttons, colors, fonts, and moving parts.

Your design should complement your dealership and inventory – not distract from the user's browsing experience. If music automatically plays whenever a customer lands on your website, or you have sound effects, or a "talking head" person walks out and starts blabbinb - cut those elements out.

Keep your design clean and easy to read. Use complimentary colors that have enough contrast so that the design is visually appealing. Stick to one font, and keep your bolding, italicizing, and underlining to a minimum. If you have a background image, make sure it doesn't interfere with the content.

Organize, organize, organize

The best websites are easy to navigate, with menus that make sense. Most dealership sites need to have, at the minimum, menu buttons for **Home**, **Inventory**, **About Us**, **Warranty**, **Financing**, and **Contact Us**. If you decide to add more content pages, utilize your submenus, so your menu doesn't look too crowded. When you add more pages to the menu, be sure to keep your **Contact Us** button on the far right. This is the standard location for a contact button, and you don't want customers to have to search for a way to contact you.

Make sure your menu buttons showcase everything that you do. If you've got a service department, make sure you've got at least one page dedicated to your service department. Do you sell cars on consignment? Add a page. Do you have a certain subset of inventory that you specialize in? Yep, you need a separate submenu button.

Remember – your most important goal is to make your website reflect your dealership. Adding extra pages and keeping your menu organized is one of the most important aspects of updating your website.

Edit and customize your content

Not only does your content help potential customers get an idea of who you are and what you do, it's one of the most important signals that search engines analyze to determine ranking order.

You should edit content on all your pages regularly. Search engines use fresh content as an important signal of relevancy – if you're taking the time to update your content and keep it fresh, it shows that you're trying to provide a better user experience.

Make *absolutely sure* that you've got great content on your home page. Tell visitors about your dealership – what you do, how you treat customers, what makes your dealership better than your competitors, and so on.

Don't forget your interior pages – they're just as important. Most website providers will insert default boilerplate text on your pages, since it's bad to put out a website with empty pages... But do you want your **About Us** page to say exactly the same thing as another dealer in town? Obviously not. Log in to your provider, check out your interior pages, and update the content to make it unique to your dealership.

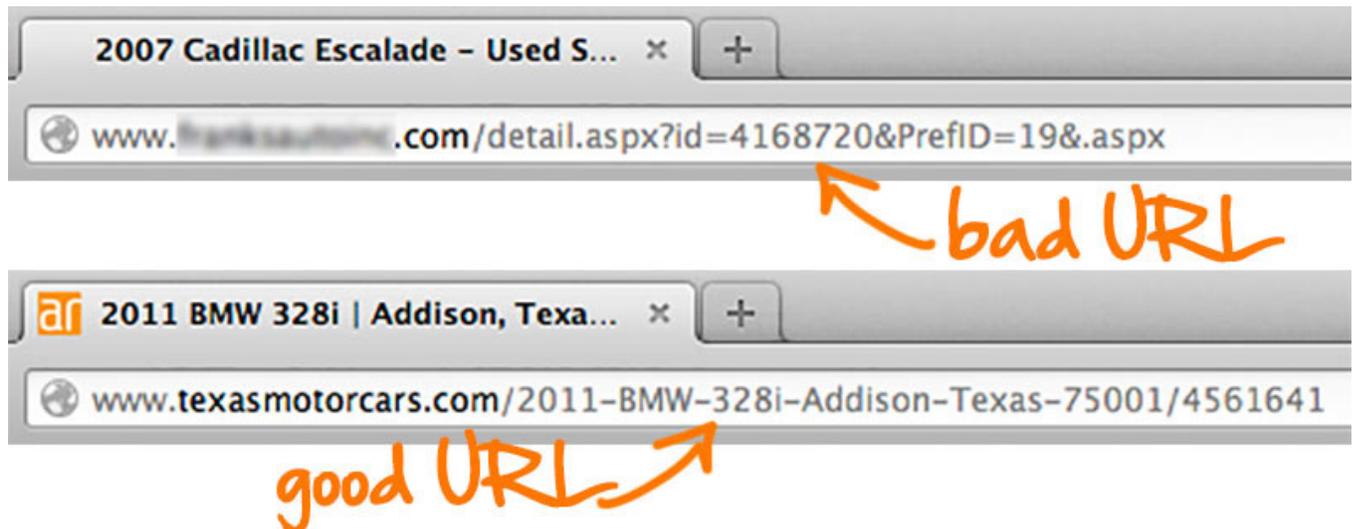
Don't use stock photos! Remember – you want to provide the best possible user experience you can. Actual photos of your dealership and your staff will go a long way towards establishing a sense of identity with potential buyers.

Do you have any empty pages? It's incredibly bad to have a menu button that links to a page with nothing on it. Customers will think you don't care, or that you're lazy – and it's going to hurt your SEO. If you've got empty pages on your site, either delete them from your menu, or add content immediately.

SEO friendly inventory pages

Ok, we admit – this isn't really a design element – but it's still incredibly important to your website's success. Search Engine Optimization is a manual process, and can never be automated... BUT, most providers have automated the important SEO elements on the VDPs to make the SEO process easier. Search engines look at certain elements on a page to help determine relevancy, such as the title tag, URL, H1 heading, and alt tags on images. It's important to include the keywords that are relevant to the content of the page in these elements.

Check out one of your VDPs. Does the URL look like a string of random characters, or does it include the important keywords about that vehicle?



I'm Zach, AutoRevo's Dealer Trainer, and I'm here to help any way I can. I have an extensive background in marketing vehicles exclusively on the Internet. I'm not a software guy - I'm a car guy who experienced firsthand the value in the tools that AutoRevo provides. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. I look forward to helping you be more successful.

We hope you enjoyed this guide...

Unlike other providers who forget about you until you complain about a technical problem, AutoRevo is dedicated to helping each and every dealer succeed.

This dealer website design guide is one of many free guides that we provide for our dealers. We've worked with thousands of dealers through the years, and we want to share our knowledge and experience to help dealers be the best they can be.

Real data, real solutions, and real success. From vehicle acquisition to point of sale, we're with you every step of the way.

