

sMedia COVID-19 Strategy Checklist

The following is a list of recommendations that we've put together designed to help your dealership do everything possible to get through this difficult time, while continuing to provide a valuable service and great all around experience for your customers.

The recommendations on this checklist are based on our research and industry expertise, as well as the many conversations we've had with our customers regarding their strategies and tactics for navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is a challenging time for us all, but we want you to know that we're here to help. If you have any questions, or if there's anything we can assist you with at this time, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Stay safe,
Your partners at sMedia

1 Clearly showcase COVID-19 messaging on your website homepage

Make sure to outline right on your homepage what you're doing to keep your employees and customers safe, and be sure to update it frequently with information about what's open and available - the COVID-19 situation is constantly changing and information quickly becomes outdated.

Effort: Low | **Impact:** High

2 Clearly showcase COVID-19 messaging on your social media channels

People are spending much more time on social media during this time. Make sure your social media channels are clearly communicating your COVID-19 messaging to your customers.

Effort: Low | **Impact:** High

Posts

Pinned posts

About us and description messages

3 Clearly showcase COVID-19 messaging in your advertising

Your ads will often be one of the first places customers see you online. Include in your advertising any relevant information about how you're managing your business during the COVID-19 situation. **If you're an sMedia customer who is using one of our advertising products we're already working on taking care of this one for you!**

Effort: High | **Impact:** Medium

4 Make sure your dealership's commitment to public health and safety is clearly communicated to your customers

In addition to communicating the current status of your dealership, make sure the messaging on your website and social media channels communicates to your customers the things you're doing to keep them and your staff safe.

Effort: Low | **Impact:** High

Website

Social Media

5 Make sure your Google My Business listing has up to date COVID-19 messaging

Your Google My Business listing will often be the first place your customers go for information about your business. This is a great place to tell customers how your dealership is managing the COVID-19 situation. Don't forget to update your business hours & ensure phone number accuracy!

Effort: Low | **Impact:** High

6 Guide customers towards what they CAN do online

Your dealership is likely operating with fewer or different services than it previously was. Make sure your website clearly showcases the features, products, and services that are currently available that allow you to engage with your customers or capture leads.

Effort: Medium | **Impact:** High

7 Be active on your social media channels

People are spending more time online and on social media while isolating. Use this as an opportunity to engage with your customers by posting frequently, but make sure to have a healthy balance between COVID-19 messaging and your regular fun, informative, engaging content.

Effort: Medium | **Impact:** High

8 Use video to explain your dealership's current COVID-19 status, and to showcase vehicles and service options

Video is the most highly engaging form of content and people are watching more of it online right now. Use video to engage your customers and communicate to them what's open, what's available, and what health and safety precautions you're taking.

Effort: Medium | Impact: Medium



9 Use YouTube to publish your video content (ie. not just Facebook and Instagram)

People are spending more time on YouTube right now, and YouTube ranks high on Google search results pages (SRP). Use this as an opportunity to offer highly engaging video content and capture more web traffic. Don't just post video content on Facebook and Instagram, consider adding your videos to YouTube as well.

Effort: Low | Impact: Medium



10 Make use of a chat or text tool on your website

If you don't have a chat or text option on your website, now is a good time to consider getting one. Customers may have questions about your products or services, or their options. The easier you make it for them to engage with you, the more likely you are to build a relationship and ultimately make a sale. If possible have a real person monitoring chat during this time.

Effort: Medium | Impact: High



11 Update messaging on your service pages to clearly outline COVID-19 health and safety protocols

If your dealership is open for service appointments, it's crucial that you communicate what you're doing to keep customers and employees safe during the process. Make sure this process is clearly outlined for the customer on your website's service pages to avoid confusion or an unsafe situation.

Effort: Medium | Impact: High



12 Add a Request a Virtual Test Drive button to your VDPs

Encourage potential customers to engage by taking a "virtual test drive" of vehicles they're interested in. Highlight your online process, and use this as an opportunity to capture a lead and potentially make a sale.

Effort: Medium | Impact: Medium



13 Add a dedicated COVID-19 page to your website

This can be used as a centralized hub of information for your website visitors. Make sure to update it frequently as the situation changes, and add this page as a top level menu item in your website's main navigation menu.

Effort: Medium | Impact: Medium



14 Make use of a trade value tool on your website, such as sMedia's FREE TradeSmart tool

Use this time as an opportunity to capture and engage with a lead that may purchase from you in the future. Don't already have a trade value tool on your website? We've got you covered. Our FREE TradeSmart tool uses live market data from vehicles that are currently listed in your area to ensure all trade values are as close to market prices as possible. It also features a streamlined user interface to provide a great experience for your customers, and can be fully customized based on your dealership's unique requirements. If you're interested in getting your dealership set up with the free tool please reach out to corbin@smedia.ca.

Effort: Medium | Impact: Medium



15 Make use of a popup tool on your homepage, such as sMedia's new FREE COVID-19 SmartMemo

Our recently launched COVID-19 SmartMemo popup tool is specifically designed to help you showcase the most timely and important COVID-19 messaging to your website visitors right on your homepage. You can manage the content of the popup yourself, allowing you to keep it current with the most relevant, up to date information. If you're interested in getting your dealership set up with the free tool please reach out to corbin@smedia.ca.

Effort: Low | Impact: High



16 Make sure messaging is framed as "How can we help" first - shift language away from sales messaging

Because of the economic uncertainty, many customers may not be ready to purchase right now. Use this time to build relationships with customers and leads - let them know you're there to help, and that they can purchase when they're ready.

Effort: Low | Impact: High



17 Make sure your vehicles are properly merchandised. Multiple photos, descriptions, options and pricing all need to be there.

Potential customers have more time to spend online shopping and browsing, which means they'll likely be more thorough in their research. Use this as an opportunity to present shoppers with all of the information they might need to make a decision on a particular vehicle. Don't leave them guessing!

Effort: High | **Impact:** High

18 Offer at home test drives if this is an option for your dealership

This would entail a member of your sales staff bringing the shopper's vehicle of interest directly to their home for a test drive. Make sure a thorough process for keeping customers and employees safe is developed and is clearly outlined for the customer to avoid confusion or an unsafe situation.

Effort: High | **Impact:** High

19 Offer home delivery for vehicle purchases or home pick-up for service appointments

This would entail a member of your sales staff bringing the shopper's vehicle of interest directly to their home. Make sure a thorough process for keeping customers and employees safe is developed and is clearly outlined for the customer to avoid confusion or an unsafe situation.

Effort: High | **Impact:** High

20 Develop a secure pick-up and drop-off procedure for service appointments, test drives, and vehicle purchases.

Specify a location where customers can complete the appointment without needing to make physical contact. Make sure this process is clearly outlined for the customer to avoid confusion or an unsafe situation.

Effort: Low | **Impact:** High

21 Don't completely cut ad spend budgets, instead reduce and reallocate.

*Your customers are still shopping your inventory, and competitors are still advertising - continue to put yourself in front of customers to make sure you hold on to, or increase, market share and don't lose out to competitors who are maintaining a strong digital presence. **Your sMedia Customer Success Manager can advise on the best way to do this. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions.***

Effort: Low | **Impact:** High

22 Reduce or cut spend on branding campaigns

*If you're looking to reduce your advertising spend, branding campaigns might be a good area to do this. Your customers are digitally shopping your inventory - for more effective spend of your advertising dollars, follow up with them with the exact vehicle of interest by optimizing your retargeting campaigns. **Your sMedia Customer Success Manager can advise on the best way to do this. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions.***

Effort: Medium | **Impact:** High

23 Reduce spend on third-party listing sites

*If you're looking to reduce your marketing spend, third-party listing sites might be a good place to do this. If you're tightening up your marketing budgets hold on to every dollar and sell the vehicle right off your site! **Your sMedia Customer Success Manager can advise on the best way to do this. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions.***

Effort: Low | **Impact:** Medium

24 Focus on customers whose lease is set to expire

These customers are most likely to take action and either purchase or upgrade their vehicle as they have a more immediate need, making this a good place to focus your efforts while other customers may be less certain about spending.

Effort: Medium | **Impact:** Medium

25 Ensure phone numbers are up to date

If you have employees working remotely, like your sales team, make sure customers have updated contact information so that they can reach you.

Effort: Low | **Impact:** High

26 Make sure online reviews are being responded to promptly

Potential customers have more time to spend online shopping and browsing, which means they'll likely be more thorough in their research. Use this as an opportunity to show your dealership's commitment to providing excellent customer service.

Effort: Low | **Impact:** High