

#WhatReallySellsCars



Defining Your Dealership Why

Learn how answering the “Why Buy?” question can transform your dealership today.



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Contents

03	Dealerships Need a Why Wake-up Call
05	Pop Quiz: Put Your Dealership to the Test
07	The Why is What You Believe
08	The “What” Brain Versus the “Why” Brain
09	Three Reasons to Embrace “Why Equity” in Your Dealership
12	“Why Marketing” Case Study #1: The Apple Doesn’t Fall Far from the Tree
14	“Why Marketing” Case Study #2: For Carl Sewell, Success is in the Midnight Oil
16	Getting Started: Define Your Dealership Why

Dealerships Need a Why Wake-up Call

Since the dawn of time, dealerships have believed a great lie: customers will never be passionately loyal to a car dealership. Automotive professionals look at companies like Apple and Zappos and think, "That's great for them, but that will never happen to me. That kind of die-hard fan loyalty just doesn't happen for car dealers." This is false. Of course it can.

After all, our industry is a retail industry exactly like any other. From a product perspective, cars are not inherently repellant. It's not like you're selling unicorn tears. In fact, cars probably have more natural sex appeal than tennis shoes, computers, or any of the other wares sold by these more beloved brands and well-branded retailers.

You too can have lines around the block for a new model release; you can have die-hard customers who won't shop anywhere else; you can create a legendary brand just like your retail peers. All you have to do is define your why.

"People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it."

- Simon Sinek
Author, *Start With Why*

The theory behind “defining your why” is simple: consumers don’t care what you sell, they care why you sell it. It’s not about features; it’s about feelings. It’s not about price; it’s about principles. It’s not about vehicle specials; it’s about shared values.

In other words, “why” is the reason people buy.

This is the secret other retail industries have figured out. This is the simple but revolutionary approach that has been neglected by dealerships, and that’s why you may not be enjoying the same success. Yet.

The Defining Your Why Concept, first popularized by [this awesome video by Simon Sinek](#), Columbia Professor of Communications and author of *Start With Why*, has profound implications for the automotive industry.

This eBook will break down the seemingly abstract concept of defining your why, and show in a step-by-step approach how to do it, and why it will transform the automotive industry one dealership at a time. Ready to move forward with defining your why? Take this quick test to get started...



Simon Sinek
Author,
Start With Why

Photo: Les Kamens,
The Photo Group,
courtesy of IHRSA

Pop Quiz: Put Your Dealership to the Test

Which example below best describes your last marketing campaign?

Example A:

- We sell the car you want!
- Our cars are on sale!
- We have zero down financing!

Or was it something like this....



Example B:

- ▶ Come enjoy a pressure-free environment at Sam's Motors. Our automotive consultants are paid on salary, not commissions. Why? Because we believe pressure belongs in your tires, not your car-buying experience.
- ▶ Come buy a car from Sam's Motors and get free tires for life. Why? Because we believe in lasting relationships, not drive-by sales. We want to know your name, not just your credit card number.
- ▶ Come buy a car from Sam's Motors, where \$100 of every car sale goes to our local food bank. We support local business in the hopes that you'll do the same.

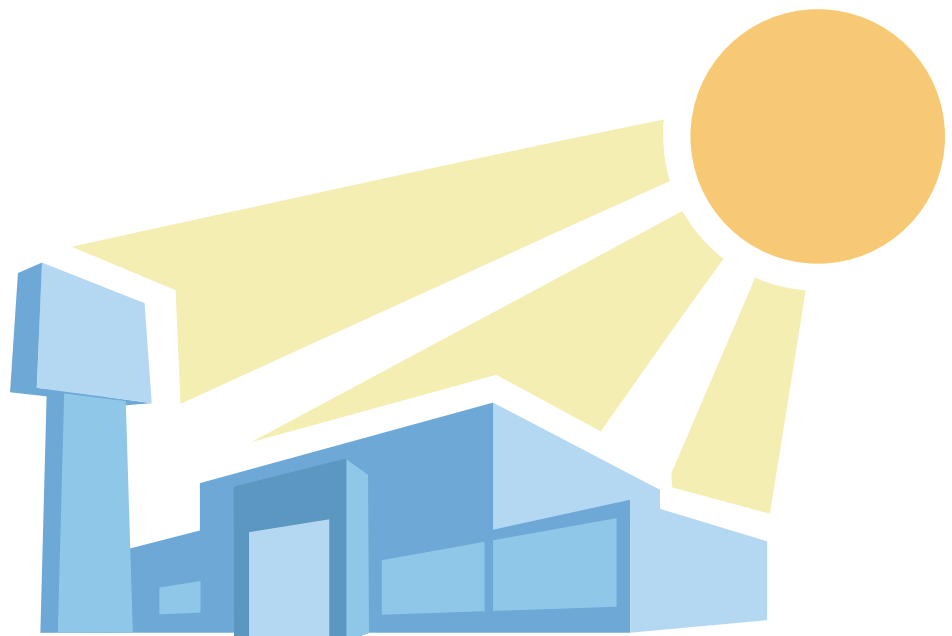


The Why is What You Believe

See the difference? When you define your why (Example B), you bypass commodity features in favor of getting to the core of your value proposition: what you believe, and why you believe it. Price is not a why. Model is not a why. Deals are not a why. It's about your core beliefs and how you tangibly incorporate them in your daily business. Your why, and the extent to which you "walk the why," is what will create customers for life.

This is not marketing fluff; it's biological fact.

Here's how it works...



The “What” Brain Versus the “Why” Brain

To understand why we buy with our feelings, all we have to do is look at the brain. As Sinek’s video explains, the brain is made up of two major parts: the neocortex and the limbic brain. The neocortex, aka the “what” brain, processes rational thought, facts, etc. This is the logical part of the brain, but it doesn’t drive behavior. Our limbic brain, the “why” brain, where all our feelings and instincts are stored, does. Translation: people buy with their feelings.

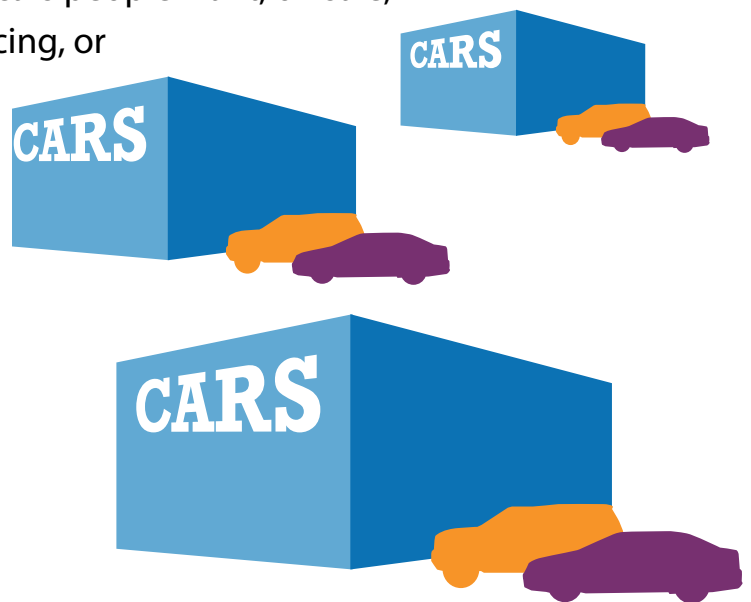


Three Reasons to Embrace “Why Equity” in Your Dealership

1

To Differentiate

The problem with Example A on page five is that the messaging isn't differentiated. There are many other competitors who also sell cars people want, on sale, and offer zero down financing, or the equivalent. When you're dealing in “What Marketing,” there's always someone who can match your claims, or worse, outdo you. The beauty of defining your why is that, if you do it right, no one else will be able to claim the same.





2

To create rabid fans who are loyal to your brand forever.

If you practice “What Marketing” you have car-buyers. If you practice “Why Marketing” you have customers for life. It’s just that simple.

3

To decrease employee turnover.

As much as defining your why is important to your customers, it's important to your employees too. They want to know why they are getting out of bed in the morning, and why they should work for you versus the dealer down the street. Defining your why will help you decrease turnover and dramatically boost team morale.



“Why Marketing” Case Study #1: The Apple Doesn’t Fall Far from the Tree

Now, dealerships are unique because they do have some “why equity” inherently built in with their OEM. Hyundai’s why is the idea that you shouldn’t have to choose between a car that’s stylish and a car that’s affordable. Subaru is built around the idea of safety and social responsibility (did you know that Subaru means “unity” in Japanese?) This inherited “why equity” is a good place to start, but not a good place to stop. Instead, you as a dealer can take the “why equity” inherited from your OEM and extend it even further with your own dealership marketing campaign. One good example of this is Carter Subaru of Ballard. Carter Subaru knows that Subaru stands for safety and responsibility, but they didn’t leave it at that. Instead, they



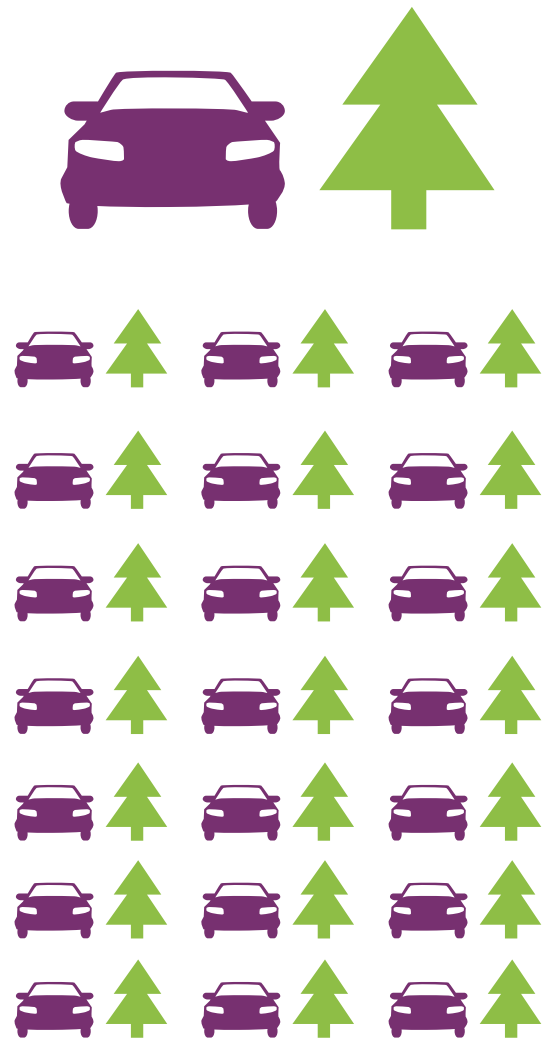
Jennifer Moran,
(far right),
General Manager
of Carter Subaru

Case Study #1: Carter Subaru, Cont'd

capitalized on this knowledge and parlayed it into a promotion bound to appeal to their Seattle hometown natives, known fondly as “Granola Eaters.” The dealership extended their inherited “why equity” to their own dealership with their wildly successful “a tree for every test drive” campaign, which plants one tree for every test-drive taken at their dealership, and plants three more when a vehicle is purchased. To date, Carter has planted more than 70,000 trees. This is a great example of using creativity to extend the [why equity from your OEM to your own dealership](#).

Charity work is a great example of “why marketing,” but you don’t have to be the Mother Theresa of the Auto Industry to define your why. Your why can be anything: your passion for making the car-buying experience more convenient, more pleasurable, more affordable, anything.

Let’s take a look at another example...



“Why Marketing” Case Study #2: For Carl Sewell, Success is in the Midnight Oil

One great pioneer of defining the “why buy” message is Dallas auto magnate, Carl Sewell. Sewell is legendary for his simple and revolutionary “why buy” message: “Don’t charge customers for any service you wouldn’t charge a friend for.”

Sewell’s commitment to customer service is unparalleled, and he practices what he preaches. Sewell’s dealerships were some of the first to have service departments open on Saturday, and have doled out “loaners” and free car washes so generously that they initially shocked other retailers. Today, Sewell stores have on-call service reps 24 hours a day, who are known for doing things like showing up at the Dallas airport at midnight to replace a broken key in a customer’s ignition, for free.

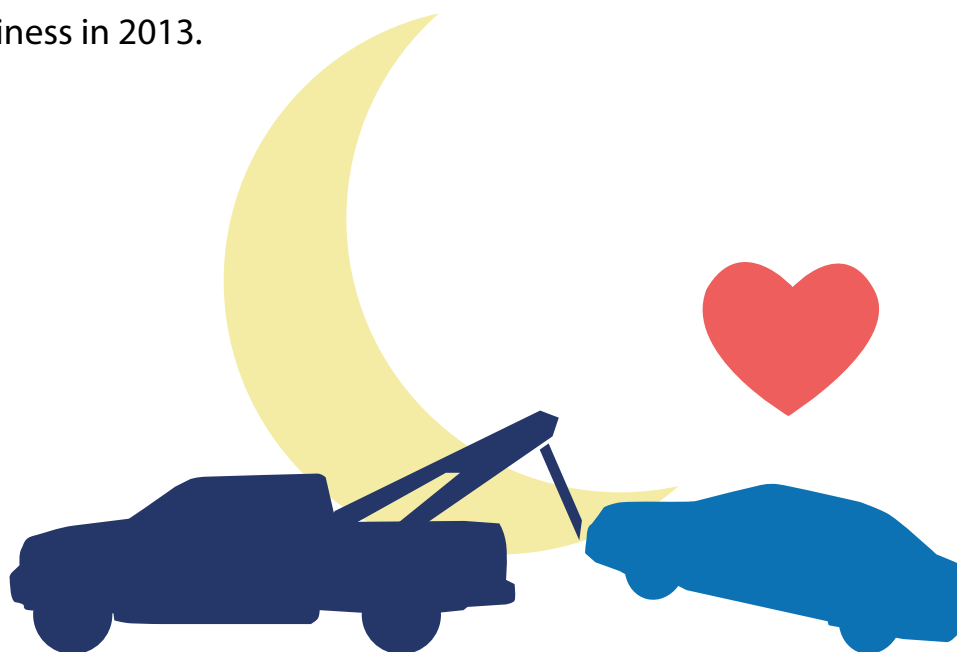


**Carl Sewell (right),
Sewell Automotive
Companies**

Case Study #2: Carl Sewell, Cont'd

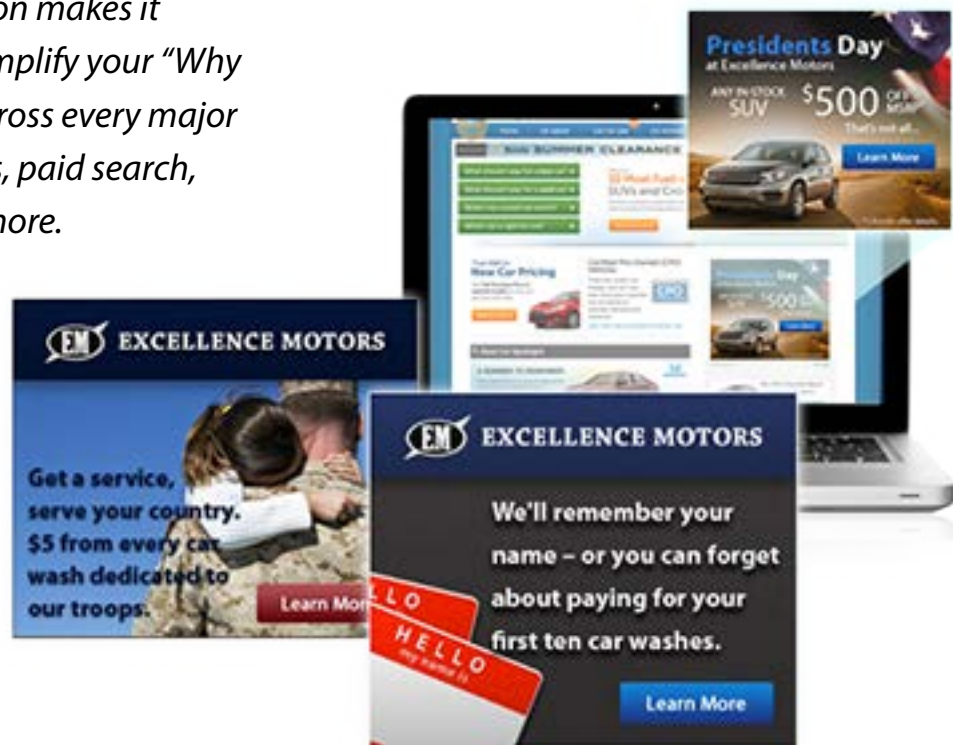
The moral of the story: Sell a customer a car at a “rock bottom price,” and tomorrow they’ll leave you for the next great deal. Bail someone out of a jam in the middle of the night, and you have a customer for life. Sewell’s “why buy” message qualifies him for the long game, and it shows: Sewell has expanded his business from \$10 million in 1968 to over \$1.5 billion today.

In conclusion, don’t be shy; define your why. This one simple word can make or break your business in 2013.



Getting Started: Define *Your* Dealership Why

Ready to share your why with the world? Cobalt's new PowerBrand multichannel solution makes it incredibly easy to amplify your "Why Buy?" messaging across every major channel: display ads, paid search, mobile, and much more.



For more information about PowerBrand, visit:
www.cobalt.com/powerbrand