

Kiosks Help Drive Automotive Sales

GoMoto and Meridian help accelerate the car-buying process through a strategic partnership



By Richard Slawsky | Contributing writer,
KioskMarketplace.com

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The players

Meridian is a self-service industry pioneer and fully integrated manufacturer of kiosks and digital signage. For over 25 years, Meridian has specialized in helping companies optimize brand impact and extend brand reach. Meridian differentiates itself by building kiosk solutions completely in-house. From concept to completion, Meridian specializes in the design, engineering, manufacturing, integration and support of self service solutions for clients globally. By owning the entire process, Meridian can guide clients from start to finish, creating a robust solution to help reach specific, unique goals.

GoMoto simplifies the car-buying process by helping customers easily navigate the check-in process, current incentives, equipment, brochures and inventory via a kiosk-based solution. The company was started by seasoned automotive and technology entrepreneurs with a simple passion to develop and deploy the dealership experience of the future. GoMoto has developed a unique technology platform designed to enhance customer experience in automotive showrooms, service lanes

and service waiting areas. Their suite of interactive solutions extends a dealer's digital footprint, and complements customers' online shopping experience when they arrive at the dealership.

The challenge

Although the GoMoto team owns and operates car dealerships, CEO Todd Marcelle actually came from a technology background, having previously founded, led and executed several data, research and e-commerce companies. So when he got into the automotive sales field, he was able to evaluate the customer experience at the dealership level. He quickly realized there was an opportunity to improve that process with the right technology. "If you've ever bought a car, you're probably well aware of the tribulations of going through the car-buying experience," Marcelle said. "We wanted to bring in the modern retail experience into the dealership world," he said. "The best way to do that was to create a technology that both a customer and a sales associate would be comfortable using."



With GoMoto, Marcelle hoped to accomplish several goals: The first was to increase customer engagement. The second was to decrease transaction time, and the third was to provide transparency to the process. The company planned to accomplish those goals via the use of self-service kiosks. "Dealerships often only check in 60 to 70 percent of the customers who walk in their door, so they have an immediate 0 to 40 percent gap in the customers who come into their stores but don't have their information entered into the dealership's customer relationship management software," Marcelle said. "The kiosk streamlines that entire process." After testing the kiosk concept in malls and at its own dealerships, GoMoto was ready to begin deploying the solution around the country. To foster the rollout, though, the company needed a kiosk manufacturing company that could develop the units in bulk based on GoMoto's exacting specifications and timeline. That's where the process hit a snag. "We chose a company to work with and it was an absolute disaster," Marcelle said. "We had a miserable six months where they missed every single production deadline and the finished product wasn't what we were hoping for," he said. "Ultimately, they couldn't execute on anything we asked them to do."

The solution

To get the rollout back on track, GoMoto turned to Meridian. As it turned out, Meridian was a finalist in GoMoto's original manufacturer selection, so Marcelle was already familiar with their background. After some initial discussions, GoMoto tapped Meridian to make the GoMoto concept a reality.

"They literally executed a project that we had with about two weeks notice, and executed the entire order perfectly," Marcelle said. The kiosks GoMoto developed with Meridian accomplish a number of tasks that improve the car-buying process. When a customer enters the dealership they enter their contact information, which then guides them through a series of questions about what brought them in. It also captures their license information as well as their phone and email address, and prequalifies the customer without affecting their credit score as to the level of payments they can afford. The entire process takes about 30 seconds. Once they qualify, the kiosk will display only the vehicles in the dealer's inventory that meet those qualifications. "So after you check a customer in you have the ability to pull up and run through inventory, filtered by the factors you choose," Marcelle said.



That inventory then renders dynamically on the kiosk. Customers can then click through and look at the details of specific vehicles, including pictures, videos and accident history reports. "Most customers these days have a very good understanding of what they are looking for because they've already researched it online before coming into the dealership," Marcelle said. "My philosophy is to let them tell you what their next step in the process is by leveraging technology, and get out of the way," he said. "When you walk in my dealership I acknowledge you've done the research, I give you transparency and speed and you can navigate my inventory and get behind the wheel within 3 to 5 minutes."

The results

Although GoMoto is unable to disclose exactly how many of its kiosks have been deployed since the company partnered with Meridian, several hundred dealerships are currently utilizing the concept.

The platform tracks more than 98 percent of dealership floor traffic, versus just 60-70 percent without the use of a kiosk. The system allows for the capture of a number of key analytics, including peak times in the showroom, the performance of various salespeople and the types of advertising that brought in those customers.

“We attach customers to the ad sources, so if you’re spending \$10,000 with a lead provider you can go back and analyze how many customers identified with that lead provider,” Marcelle said. “The dealership can also look at their online leads and match it to their in-showroom traffic.”

And because the system captures a customer’s license information, the dealership can go back and see from where buyers are coming. “That gives you the ability to see how your advertising is working and what is most effective,” Marcelle said.

The collaboration between GoMoto and Meridian has been so successful, Marcelle said, the companies are expanding their partnership to other potential automotive applications, including oil change shops, tire stores and service centers. “Meridian saw the opportunity within the automotive sector and was instrumental in helping improve our product,” Marcelle said. “That led to such great success for GoMoto that we actually decided to become JV partners and attack the entire automotive vertical across the entire process. That is already starting to bear fruit.”

About the sponsor:

Meridian works with customers from concept to completion to turn ideas into custom-made kiosks. The company also offers the largest line of standard kiosks in the self-service industry.