



Matt Baker

# BUSTING STAFF EVENT MYTHS, PART 2

As we began to explore in last month's issue of *AutoSuccess*, misconceptions are no stranger to the world of automotive event marketing. With countless assumptions surrounding everything from advertising compliancy to event team responsibility, it can be easy to see why so many may be turned off by the idea of hosting a promotional sale.

However, in adopting these assumptions as truths, many dealers often make costly mistakes when it comes to choosing a promotional event program that's right for their dealership. This month we'll dig deeper into some more of the popular "myths" surrounding staffed events, to help you make promotional event decisions that will reap the benefits your dealership deserves.

**"Staffed events used to work. Now they don't."** — Much of this assumption is rooted in the belief that direct mail no longer works. When direct mail first came out, sales reps understood that customers came in for their gift but figured they were there to buy. Today, however, sales reps have become so used to seeing gift seekers that they often give up on the opportunity to engage with these customers. Event sales teams are another story. By developing specialized techniques to turn "gift seekers" into shoppers and shoppers into buyers, event teams can help dealership sales staff learn unique ways to overcome their assumptions and re-engage with these customers.

In addition, so many staffed event companies have entered the industry looking for ways to become more efficient. As a result, many have done away with training, set-up days, meetings and building proper sales team synergy. Because of this, events offered by some companies differ very little from an ordinary day at the dealership.

**"Event sales people aren't hireable by dealerships, which is why they're on the road."** — Let's say you're a talented

automotive sales professional faced with two career options. First, you have the opportunity to make a good amount of money traveling from sale to sale three weeks a month, with one week each month devoted to personal vacation. Or you could plant yourself in one place, working for one store six days a week from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. where you are constantly dealing with the same inventory, needy vendors, service complaints and concerns about whether or not your colleagues will be showing up to work. Which option would you choose?

The fact is many of the people who choose to work for staffed event companies as a part of event sales teams do so because they *want* to, not because they *need* to. These talented individuals have the flexibility in their lives to travel, and have taken advantage of that opportunity by seeking out openings with reputable event companies.

**"My inventory isn't suitable for a staffed event."** — Have excess aged inventory? You're not alone. Unfortunately, many dealership salespeople lose interest in selling specific units if they've been on the lot for an extended amount of time. However, to an event sales team, every dealer's inventory is fresh, regardless of the number of days it has sat on the dealer's lot. The ability for a staffed event to move aged inventory effectively is one of the top reasons why many dealers decide to do a staffed event.

**"Staffed event sales teams have nothing new to teach my staff."** — How many times do we as sales people get caught up in the daily routine and forget to do a step or use a technique that at one time worked well? While many staffed event companies may take pride in exposing their event sales teams to the latest sales techniques, sometimes it just comes down to basic principles. Even if the event company's sales staff doesn't teach your sales team something new, you can rest assured that your staff will be pushed back on track by being reminded of basic sales principles they used to practice.

**"All staffed event companies are here today, gone tomorrow, leaving me no support after the event."** — Let's say you hire someone to paint your house white. They "accidentally" paint your house pink. You're angry and want the issue fixed. You call the paint company only to find that they are no longer in business, leaving you with no way to hold them accountable for their mistake. Now how do you feel?

When you are relying on someone to provide a service, accountability can never be overrated. While most staffed event companies strive to have as few issues as possible, in some instances problems will arise. To combat accountability concerns with the staffed event company you choose, ask that they put their accountability promises in writing. Look for them to explain how they will handle issues and ensure that their solutions aren't jeopardizing the reputation of you or your dealership.

In the end, these myths create and promote false impressions that can have damaging effects to a dealer's marketing plan. By uncovering the reality behind these assumptions, dealers are presented with opportunity to connect with potential event marketing partners on a new and more honest platform. The key to getting the most out of these new found insights into the world of staffed events is to use it first hand. Be assertive, ask questions, and ensure the event marketing partner you choose is aligned with your best interests.

Just like mom always said, don't believe everything you hear. Sometimes you might be missing out on that valuable solution you've been searching for.

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