

# 100% Turnover to the Business Office

By Tony Dupaquier



In too many dealerships, having every customer meet with the business manager at the time of commitment is difficult. Why is this? In some cases, it is not the dealership's policy, and in others, the sales team does not see the need to have every customer meet with the business manager.

This is astonishing since the business office is the single most important department within a dealership. The business manager secures the deal and protects the gross. Without seeing the business manager, the dealership does not have a deal. Does your sales department know this? They should.

Does the sales department say that its customers do not want to go to the business office? Of course customers might be hesitant to visit, but only if they do not understand the functions of the department. They will, however, be more willing to go if they know it is where all the title and registration paperwork is completed.

In order to calm the customer's concerns, make sure your sales department refers to this office as the "business office," not "finance," "the box," or "the dungeon." Remember the automotive industry revolves around the words and phrases we use. If customers hear the wrong words or phrases, it can and will be detrimental to a business manager's gross.

It is also important to stress to salespeople the fact that the business office is in charge of the dealership's cash flow. Therefore, all checks should be written in the business

office and all down payments or transactions must be done in the business office, in front of the business manager. There are severe legal consequences if a transaction takes place and a FinCEN8300 form is not filed.

Do all of the salespeople and managers truly understand what the products and services sold in the business office do for customers? They should.

The products sold in the business office protect a customer's ability to buy in the future. One of the primary reasons for repossession is when a mechanical breakdown occurs and the customer does not have the ability to pay for repairs and make payments at the same time. In these instances, the customer will allow the vehicle to go back to the lender. However, just because the customer calls the lender to return a vehicle does not mean his/her credit will not be affected. Instead it means the customer will have an R8 on his/her credit bureau, which is considered a repossession. The business office sells a product designed to protect against this, it is the vehicle service contract.

Another reason for repossessions in this country occurs after a customer is unable to work due to an illness, injury, or medical condition. The business office has a product for this called credit disability insurance, and now, in some states, a vehicle return program. The sales team should have a full understanding of what this coverage does for a customer and how it can benefit the dealership.

Although it is important for the salespeople to be properly educated on the importance of the business office's products and services, salespeople should not attempt to sell any of these products or services to the customer. All that is needed is an opportunity for the business manager to present the products and services to each and every



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customer. Salespeople have an opportunity with every customer who walk on to the lot, and business managers deserve the same opportunity.

If the sales team sees no value in the products and services the business office offers, educate them on the legal obligation to offer every product to every customer. The burden of proof to demonstrate that a store has done this falls on the shoulders of the dealership itself. Failing to meet this requirement proves to be a costly mistake for many dealerships.

In the next sales meeting, the business manager needs to explain all of the products and services the business office has to offer. If everyone at the dealership, from the salespeople to the general manager, has a good understanding of the duties of the business office, the turnover will become an important part of the deal rather than an inconvenience.

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