



TRADE TRACKER INC.

Brings order to the used side

Ever looked at a hand-written, trade-in appraisal form? Does it tell you all you need to know? Does it protect your store in the event of disputes?

Most don't, says Lee Wittick, president of Trade Tracker Inc. and a veteran dealership manager.

"The process of filling out the form is often rushed or not followed at all," says Wittick, who managed two dealerships for Roy Foss Motors Ltd. in the Toronto area. "Although it looks easy, the basics don't show up.

Then there's the problem of getting crucial information. Is it AWD or six cylinder? Which six cylinder? The differences can be crucial when it comes to evaluating the trade, he points out.

Was the owner asked to disclose whether the car was in an accident at any time? Failure to ask and have the owner stand behind the declaration by signing it can leave the store at risk.

He says the answer is Trade Tracker. TradeTracker is an online device that Wittick says will bring needed order and discipline to the trade-in process.

With Trade Tracker, all a subscriber needs do is enter the VIN and the system's VIN decoder tells them all they need to know about the vehicle — from body style to engine size and trim level, he says. And then it enters the information in the appraisal form.

TradeTracker makes the sales person ask the customer the questions about vehicle condition or the form can't be finished.

Hit the print button and have the customer sign the form.

But Wittick says there's more to TradeTracker than form filling. It lives up to its name: it keeps track of trades.

He explains.

Every appraisal form has three statuses: closed (successfully completed); closed without trade; and open (no decision made).

If the customer goes so far as to have their trade appraised, they are a serious customer. So all the "open" vehicles are put in a directory, where the sales person can follow up on them.

Ask a dealer how many times a customer comes on the lot asking for a car you don't have," he says, "Your staff may take down that information, but rarely is there a follow-up. Now, your sales manager can search the directory to see if the store has something within reach.

Then pick up the phone and call the customer to tell them there's a buyer for their trade.

"It's a lot easier to give more if the dealer has a customer waiting for the car," he says. "Trade Tracker lets you sell cars you don't own yet. And you've added used cars to your inventory."

"You get a look at all the winners in the trade-in inventory and a shot at the those in the (open) decision category," he says.

The system also adds accountability to the appraisal process. It tells how many the

used department won and lost to date, the average value of trades won and lost as well, and the scores of individual sales people. Knowing personal scores lets used managers schedule properly.

When dealers check the won/lost ratios as between new and used, they may be shocked by what they see, he points out.

"This (feature) has become a bit of a stumbling block when we show it to used managers," Wittick told *AutoWorld*, "so we've hidden this and let the dealer decide if they want the used manager to see it."

"Our motto is 'if you track it, you can improve it.'"

At \$1,895 a year, Trade Tracker comes with training and 90-day monitoring to see that it is being used properly. Master Tracker for dealer groups is also available.

Jim Low is general manager at Belisle Chevrolet Cadillac in Ottawa. The system was introduced there because of incomplete or inaccurate appraisals and poor follow-up, he says.

"Although still early, Trade Tracker has helped reduce appraisal error, closed more deals and improved the overall process. The VIN explosion eliminates errors, exposes reps that are weak in presenting trade values and shows the brands that we are not 'stepping up to.'"



Lee Wittick, president of Trade Tracker Inc.

Al MacPhee's secret

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