

Ward's Dealer Business  
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Who you gonna call?

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Vehicle sales people at Ricart Automotive Group are doing more than just working the showroom floor these days.

Under a new system that uses software developed specifically for the Columbus, OH dealership group, its salespersons will handle virtually all post-delivery customer contacts, including scheduling service appointments.

"If customers can go to the Internet to schedule service appointments, they should be able to contact their salesperson to do it - and for anything else," says Rhett Ricart, president of the multi-franchise dealership group.

He adds, "Why should that customer be handed off to different people in the dealership? The customer wants to talk to one person. That person should be the one who sold the vehicle in the first place. He or she is the person you trusted with a \$25,000 vehicle purchase."

The Ricart group sells a lot of vehicles: more than 20,000 new and used units a year.

Ricart says he worked months with Automatic Data Processing Inc. (ADP) to develop specialized customer relationship management (CRM) software that allows his sales staffers to be customer point people.

Sales people are expected to use the new system to generate business as well as handle customer requests.

Says Ricart, "A sales person can look at his computer screen and say, 'Hey Bob, our information indicates you are due for a service appointment. I can schedule you for that now.'"

As to whether sales people should be drumming up business for the service department, Ricart replies, "Why shouldn't they?"