



# WARDS AUTO

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### Clueless Car Dealerships Unwittingly Tried to Stop Sale

*Purchasing a car is onerous when salespeople are clueless, information isn't forthcoming and a delivery takes four hours.*

Dealers often think their operations are working just fine, but don't check to make sure.

It's a rude awakening to spend thousands of dollars on training and systems, and then find out people are not using what they learned.

Dealers should see for themselves how sales processes, online efforts, lead management tools and customer relationship management systems are working.

If dealers pay for those, they certainly expect them to work. But inspect what you expect.

I recently bought a Camaro. It was an interesting customer experience, to say the least. I dealt with three dealerships, and it seemed like no one wanted to take my money. Here's what happened.

I sent an Internet inquiry to three dealerships regarding a Camaro they listed in inventory. Two sent automated replies giving me the name and number of a person to call.

I called the first dealership, reaching an operator who had no idea who the person was. Even though the email had directed me to a specific person, I was referred to the BDC where no one knew who I was, why I was calling or that I had sent a vehicle inquiry.

When I called the second dealership, someone other than the name on the email answered the phone, and again the person had no idea who I was trying to reach. No one with the name I was given even worked at the business. However, the person I reached did offer to help.



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The third dealership sent me an email address of a salesman and requested I come over for a demo. I kept asking questions, but the only thing I was told was to come on down.

Why is the burden put on the customer to call, after already reaching out for information? How many customers would never even bother calling?

I asked the salesman at the second dealership for pricing details. Twenty-four hours later, I was still waiting. I called back and asked for a manager. I was told the dealership did not provide pricing by phone, email or text messaging even though some dealerships post that information on their websites.

I explained I was calling from 260 miles (416 km) and three states away, and I wanted to complete the deal and then come pick up the car. The salesman sent a text with a photo and video of the car, but no price. I called again and was told to “come on down.”

I wanted to buy a car. He wanted to make an appointment.

The next day I received two automated emails from the general manager thanking me for my inquiry and offering to help with future needs. I replied but got nowhere. So I emailed him directly. He called, curious to know how I had found his email address. He didn't even know it was being used in the automatically generated follow-up email. After telling him my story, he finally gave me the price and we closed the deal on the phone.

All three stores seemed to do everything they could to stop the sale. If I had not been determined to buy that car, they would have succeeded. The manager was surprised to hear about my experience, as his dealership prides itself on customer service. How many sales did their systems and their people stop? They may never know.

Even the best digital experience synchronizes with the in-person experience. No surprise, that didn't happen in this case. I told them I would arrive at a specific time with a certified check. I told them the insurance and taxes would be



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taken care of in my home state.

We sat down to do the paperwork, which should have taken about 30 minutes. They had the wrong price, the car was not ready and they insisted I consider financing. At one point I told them to forget it, to give me my keys and the title on my trade, that I was done. It was only when management got involved that the errors were fixed, they got the car ready to go and I was permitted take it. It took more than four hours to pay and pick up an automobile.

I had driven 260 miles with a check in my pocket ready to take the car home and I almost didn't get it. Imagine what an impatient customer would have done. Customers don't have time today, or at least that's what I am told by dealers. They want to get in and out as quickly as possible. Yet it still took four hours just to take delivery.

The moral of this story is for dealers to stop spending money on things if they don't check to see if they are working. Dealers should shop their stores from every aspect, online and off.

Make it easy for customers to buy.



**Richard F. Libin** has written two acclaimed books that help people of all walks of life improve their sales skills, because as he says, "everyone is a selling something." His most recent book, *Who Knew?* ([Who-Knew.com](http://Who-Knew.com)), was published in early 2017. His first book, "Who Stopped the Sale?" ([WhoStoppedTheSale.com](http://WhoStoppedTheSale.com)), is now in its second edition. As president of APB-Automotive Profit Builders, Inc., a firm with more than 48 years experience working with both sales and service professionals, he helps his clientele, through personnel development and technology, to build customer satisfaction and maximize gross profits in their businesses. Mr. Libin can be reached at [rllibin@apb.cc](mailto:rllibin@apb.cc) or 508-626-9200 or [www.apb.cc](http://www.apb.cc).