

## Case Study

### Moving From a Good to a Great Car Buying Experience

Jim Ellis is a family-operated, multi-brand automotive dealership located in Atlanta and founded in 1970 on the basis of family values and service.

**The company's position to "Expect the Best" needed reaffirmation and a fresh definition for what "the best" is today.**

The real issue was in making sure that the company still focused on the customer. It's easy to get complacent after many years of being on top. A new perspective was needed to go further still.

With the intention of raising the bar on the brand experience for customers and widening the lead on the competition, Jimmy Ellis first brought Mike Wittenstein in for a keynote address for their sales team and partners. This soon uncovered many opportunities for improvement.

This meeting ended with **two key areas** identified for action.

The first was to use **undercover shopping** to gather information from the customer's viewpoint. This technique has proven invaluable for gaining true understanding of the buying process. The second item was to help the leadership team **set a customer centric strategy** for long-term adaptability to changing conditions - a requirement in today's market.



### Change Came Easily

The undercover customer research was useful in affirming some of the experience components already in place, but it also served to put a spotlight on a few hidden areas for improvement. This new information resulted in the beginning of an experience and service innovation initiative to address those areas.



Remediation was then much simpler, and change came easily. It all boiled down to three easy-to-remember points:

- Put the customer in the right vehicle. (As defined by the customer's desired combination of features of price and availability)
- Show respect for the customer's time by make the car-buying process easier and less time consuming.
- Enhance the customer relationship by taking the mystery out of pricing and negotiation. Empowering the salesperson to be transparent about price and to negotiate deals without running back and forth to an "unseen" manager was defined as the key.

Often, it is the obvious that needs adjustment, but frequently, we are simply too close to see.

## The Results

When all was said and done, the Jim Ellis Automotive Group had an even clearer focus on why they were in business. Their employees are better equipped with more compelling ways to engage their customers, and they have even refined the criteria used in the hiring process to support these changes.

Perhaps there are areas in your business that you know need a fresh perspective and new ideas to avoid stagnation in your market.



Contact Mike Wittenstein for big, positive-change solutions with lasting value for your company.



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