

Autobytel increases conversions by more than 10% after upgrading to enhanced campaigns



About Autobytel

- One-stop-shop for consumer car buyer information
- Largest provider of online consumer purchase requests to automotive dealers

Goals

- Connect with in-market car buyers where and when they are gathering information
- Remain at the forefront of digital customer acquisition within the auto industry

Approach

- Upgraded to enhanced campaigns
- Implemented ValueTrack URL tagging to further optimize landing pages
- Expanded use of Conversion Optimizer

Results

- Increased overall conversions by more than 10%
- Increased tablet conversions by 15%
- Maintained or decreased Cost-per-acquisition (CPA) for many campaigns
- Decreased number of campaigns managed by 30%

Autobytel helps car buyers make better purchasing decisions by providing them with specifications, reviews, and competitive pricing for all major automobile makes and models. The company also works with car dealers as a leading provider of new car purchase requests nationally.

While Autobytel caters to car owners at all stages of the customer lifecycle, the company focuses most on in-market car buyers considering a car purchase within the next 30 days. Since launching in 1995, Autobytel's marketing team has developed a deep understanding of the automotive path to purchase. The team also understands that the way its target audience researches purchases is evolving. As of 2013, mobile traffic represents over 20 percent of their overall site traffic.

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—Billy Ferriolo, Senior Vice President, Consumer Acquisition and Product Development, Autobytel

Better understanding users to better connect with users

Autobytel began upgrading some of its campaigns to enhanced campaigns in February 2013.

"Testing has always been at the core of our paid search strategy and we were already experimenting with compelling ad copy and landing pages across all devices," said Ralph Smith, VP of Consumer Acquisition at Autobytel, "Enhanced campaigns offered us the opportunity to streamline what we had been doing manually."

Enhanced campaigns enabled Autobytel to optimize and set bids according to users' contexts such as their location, the time of day, or type of mobile device they were using. After upgrading, Autobytel began using advanced reporting as well as new features like upgraded site links and ValueTrack URL tagging, which offered greater opportunities to increase click-through-rate (CTR) and improve internal tracking.

As a result, Autobytel now has a greater understanding of user behavior, and the team has been aggressively improving the user experience. "A mobile user may be at an actual car dealership comparing prices, while a tablet or laptop user may be searching from the convenience of home based on a commercial they saw on television," said Smith.

Continuous improvement

Now that the team has completed its upgrade to enhanced campaigns, conversions have increased more than 10 percent. In particular, Autobytel has been pleased with the improvement it has seen in conversions on tablet



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devices. Prior to its move to enhanced campaigns, the search team was often forced to opt out of tablets due to low profitability, but since upgrading the team has seen a 15 percent increase in conversions.

"We've increased our lead volume while essentially maintaining the same keyword base we have historically," said Billy Ferriolo, Senior Vice President, Consumer Acquisition and Product Development at Autobytel. "It isn't that the information in-market buyers need has changed, it is where and when they look for it that has shifted – enhanced campaigns puts us in the right place at the right time for consumer engagement."

Autobytel's search team now manages 30 percent fewer campaigns today than it did earlier this year and cost-per-acquisition (CPA) has held constant since the upgrade, even decreasing in some cases. "We are acquiring the right conversions at the right price, and lead volume is growing. We are now able focus our search marketing efforts more on the user experience rather than managing the account," said Ferriolo.

