

SERVICE DRIVE PROSPECTING THE UNTAPPED GOLD MINE

Every day you walk past one of the biggest untapped gold mines in your dealership, the Service Drive. Most salespeople ignore it. The pros? They mine it daily. You see, the service drive is full of people who already believe in your brand. They've bought vehicles, they trust the store enough to bring them back for maintenance, and they're already spending money inside your dealership. But here's the kicker, most of them didn't even buy their car here. Let that sink in.

More people visit your service department in a single day than the showroom sees in a week. And if you add in the oil change lane, that number jumps to five to eight times more traffic than your showroom. That's not just opportunity, that's gold dust waiting to be mined.

Now, imagine if you greeted every single one of those people as they came in, with a smile, a handshake, and a genuine introduction. Not to "sell" them, but to get to know them. To build connection, to offer value, to become their car person.

Why the Service Drive is a Prospecting Powerhouse

Here's what makes the service drive so valuable:

- 70% of those customers didn't buy their vehicle from your dealership.
- Many moved from other cities or states and are now in your backyard.
- Others had their salesperson leave the industry (turnover is sky-high due to lack of training and leadership).
- Most haven't had a single follow-up call since their last purchase.
- Most people are driving 1-2 hours to get a great deal or even further with internet shopping and car buying being easier in some places.

That means they're what we call "Orphan Owners." They don't have a sales rep. They're waiting for one, and that could be you. It's your opportunity to make a first impression that lasts, to build trust where none existed, and to plant seeds that will turn into future sales, referrals, and repeat business. As John Maxwell says, "You can't win people if you don't first walk among them." The service drive is where you walk among your future clients.

How to Work the Service Drive Like a Pro

Here's your daily game plan to start mining the gold in your service drive:

1. Show Up Early – Be There When the Doors Open

The best time to meet service customers is first thing in the morning when they drop off their cars. This is your "rush hour of opportunity." Be visible, be approachable, and be helpful. Say good morning. Offer a bottle of water or coffee. Small gestures create big impressions. "First come, first served" isn't just a phrase, it's a sales advantage.

2. Greet Everyone – With Intention and Energy

Don't just stand there waiting — walk the lane. Smile, shake hands, introduce yourself:

"Hey, I'm Daniel with the sales team — I like to stop by each morning to meet folks and make sure we're taking good care of you."

That one line disarms people and opens conversation naturally. You're not "selling," you're serving.

3. Pass Out 3 Business Cards to Everyone

This is the rule of multiplication. You're not just meeting one person, you're meeting their network. Give them three cards and say:

"Here's a few extra in case you know someone looking for a vehicle or needs an honest car guy."

Now you've planted seeds that can turn into future deals or referrals.

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4. Offer a Free Equity Check — Not a Trade Appraisal

Words matter. When you say “trade appraisal,” customers instantly throw up walls — they assume you’re trying to sell them something right now. Instead, say this:

“Would you like a free equity check on your vehicle while you’re here? Sometimes people don’t realize how much equity they’ve built since the market changed.”

The phrase “equity check” feels like information, not obligation. It positions you as a consultant, not a closer, and it starts conversations that lead to sales. If you’re confident, even add to build trust and open doors:

“No strings attached. If it makes sense, great. If not, at least you know where you stand.”

5. Build Relationships, Not Transactions

Every “hello” in the service drive is a long-term investment. Even if they don’t buy today, they now know your name, your face, and your energy. When they’re ready, or when a friend mentions they need a car, you’ll be the first person they think of. People buy from people they know like and trust. In this case, they need to buy into you before they buy another car.

6. Track and Follow Up

Every person you meet in the service lane should go into your CRM or personal contact list. Label them “Service Prospect.” Send a quick thank-you text later that day to show you are not just another salesperson, you care:

“Hey, it was great meeting you this morning in the service lane! If you ever need help with anything, I’m here for you.”

Turn the Gold Mine Into a Growth Plan

If you commit to showing up just one hour early every morning to greet service customers, you could easily meet 10–20 new people per day. That’s 200+ potential new relationships every month. Now imagine if even 5% of those eventually buy or refer someone — that’s 10 extra deals a month, just from conversations you initiated. That’s not theory. That’s math, and math never lies.

Mindset: You’re Not Interrupting — You’re Serving

Too many salespeople hesitate because they think, “I don’t want to bother people in service.” But you’re not interrupting, you’re adding value. You’re offering help, information, and genuine care. Most customers in service are bored, waiting, or stressed. You showing up with confidence and kindness is often the brightest part of their visit. The secret to the service drive is simple: show up where the people are. There’s no place in your dealership with more daily opportunity than right there in the lane.

Bonus Gold Opportunity — The High-Service-Bill Strategy

Here’s a hidden gem that most salespeople overlook: the high-service-bill customer. Every so often, service will have a client facing a large repair bill, sometimes hundreds, sometimes thousands. That’s your cue to pick up the phone. Why? Because in many cases, you can trade them out of that repair and into a new vehicle, covering the bill in the process and giving them peace of mind with a fresh warranty.

Even warranty repairs can open the door to opportunity. If a client’s vehicle has had repeat issues or major repairs, they might already be questioning its reliability. That’s your moment to step in and offer a solution, more dependability, more coverage, and a better experience.

This doesn’t work every single time, but it works far more often than ignoring the opportunity altogether. Every dealership has customers in this exact situation, and they’re often frustrated, vulnerable, and ready for help. Remember, this isn’t about taking advantage, it’s about serving. You’re giving them an option that protects their investment, saves them stress, and strengthens their loyalty to your store.

Pro Tip: Build a relationship with your Service Advisors. Ask them to flag high-bill tickets or warranty frustrations. Those leads are pure gold waiting to be refined.