

APPOINTMENT-FIRST

WORD TRACKS

Stauning Solutions Group

The Appointment-First Approach

Why It Works

The average vehicle buyer spends weeks or even months looking for the perfect vehicle before they ever call or submit a lead. This means that by the time they reach out to your team, they believe your vehicle is a great fit and at the right price. In fact, most of them want nothing more than to see, touch, feel, and drive your vehicle.

The Appointment-First Approach isn't rude or harsh; it's simply a more-direct way to invite the prospect in for the road-to-the-sale step they most want to take next: the Demo Drive.

Don't overthink the Appointment-First Approach: it doesn't work every time, just better than anything else you can say when you're communicating with a sales prospect.

Word Tracks

APPOINTMENT-FIRST – OUTBOUND CALL TO A VEHICLE INQUIRY

Situation: A TrueCar lead arrived for a specific, in-stock vehicle. As soon as we're sure we've reached the prospect:

Hi Barbara, this is Steve from the TrueCar Desk at Stauning Chevrolet and I'm just calling to schedule your priority test drive on the 2025 Equinox. Now, we've got priority two test drives open on that Equinox this evening; we've got a 5:15 and a 5:45. Which one of these works better for you?

Now, be quiet and wait.

APPOINTMENT-FIRST – OUTBOUND CALL TO A TRADE-IN REQUEST

Situation: The consumer submitted a Kelley Blue Book trade-in request. As soon as we're sure we've reached the prospect:

Hi Barbara, this is Steve from the Kelley Blue Book Desk at Stauning Chevrolet and I'm just calling to schedule your priority appraisal on your 2019 Impala. Now, we've got priority appraisals open on sedans this morning; we've got a 10:15 and a 10:45. Which one of these works better for you?

Now, be quiet and wait.

Both scenarios above are examples of appointment-first and leveraging the lead source. Be sure to leverage the lead source (if it's a name the consumer would know) when responding to leads.

APPOINTMENT-FIRST – INBOUND CALL: STOCK CHECK

Situation: The prospect called to check availability on a vehicle posted online. If the salesperson or BDC agent reviewed the store's inventory when they arrived for work, then they can confidently address this question and use an appointment-first approach.

Is it in stock?

I saw that vehicle this morning, but at the price we have it listed for it will not make it to the weekend. Now, I do have two test drives open on that vehicle this morning. I've got a 10:45 and an 11:15. Which one works better for you?

Note that the salesperson or BDC agent attempts to set the appointment first, instead of trying to collect the customer's name and contact information. These are gathered after the appointment is set.

If the prospect has a legitimate question, they'll ask it. If they have a legitimate objection, they'll raise it. In those instances, the salesperson/agent can move to a traditional information-gathering/needs-analysis script to gather the information and set the appointment.

VEHICLE IS NO LONGER IN STOCK – VOICEMAIL

Situation: The prospect has inquired about a vehicle that is no longer in your inventory. Your goal is a reconnection (to generate a call back) because you can often not entice them to call you back by offering alternate choices in a voicemail, even when these might be better options for them. The voicemail is a simple:

Hi Barbara, this is Steve from the Autotrader desk at Stauning Toyota, and I've got some information about the Tacoma you inquired about. If you could please call me today at (number); I promise to be brief. Again, that number is (number). Oh, and don't worry if you can't reach me right away; I'll try you again later. Thanks, and have a great day.

VEHICLE IS NO LONGER IN STOCK – OUTBOUND CALL TO INTERNET INQUIRY

Situation: The prospect has inquired about a vehicle that is no longer in your inventory. If you reach the prospect on your outbound call, your goal is to set an appointment that shows. Therefore, be sure to have selected two alternate choices for the prospect before making this call.

Hi Barbara, it's Steve from the Autotrader desk at Stauning Toyota, and I've got some bad news and some great news about the Tacoma you inquired about. The bad news is that as of this morning that vehicle has been sold. The great news is I have two (describe alternates and why they're better choices), and I can have both vehicles cleaned, sanitized, gassed, and parked right out front so you can inspect them and take one or both for a test drive.

Now, we have two priority test drives open on these vehicles this afternoon. We have a 12:15 and a 12:45, which of these times would work best for you?

APPOINTMENT-FIRST APPROACH – EMAILS AND TEXTS

Situation: The prospect replied to your auto-response, some other email, or an Opt-In text message. Your email or text reply should most often use the Appointment-First Approach:

EMAIL REPLY

Excellent <CUSTOMER NAME>; thank you! The next step in the process is to schedule a time for you to inspect and test drive the <MODEL>. So, let's do this. Let's schedule your no-hassle, priority test drive on your <MODEL>, so that we can have it cleaned, gassed, and parked right out front for you.

We have two priority test drives open on that <MODEL> this <morning/afternoon/evening>, we have a <FIRST TIME> and a <SECOND TIME>.

Please let me know which of these works better for you, and we'll get everything ready for your arrival.

Best wishes,

<SIGNATURE>

TEXT REPLY

Great! Thank you! The next step is to schedule a time for you to inspect and test drive the <MODEL>. We have two priority test drives open on that <MODEL> this <morning/afternoon/evening>, we have a <FIRST TIME> and a <SECOND TIME>. Which one of these works better for you?