



STEVE PAYNE

GENERAL SALES MANAGER

BIRCHWOOD BMW

“CUSTOMER RETENTION REALLY COMES DOWN TO CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE.”

Hi, Steve. Can you tell me a little about yourself? How did you get to become the General Sales Manager at Birchwood BMW?

I started in Sales in 2003. I sold cars at a couple different stores before landing at Birchwood Toyota in Birchwood Automotive group in 2008. I quickly became a Used Car Sales Manager and after 3 years on the used side I moved to New Car Manager. In March 2014, I was given the opportunity to move to our group's BMW Store as General Sales Manager.

That's quite a move! Can you describe your current role and how it directly impacts Retention?

The main responsibilities of my job are team member growth, long term financial performance, inventory management, marketing and Customer Retention.

Customer Retention really comes down to Customer experience. If you can keep your Customers happy throughout the life of their purchase, the more likely they are to buy their next vehicle from you. Customer happiness also leads them to tell others about how great your store is to deal with and that in turn should lead to another sale.

For this to all happen, you need to make sure your store is all on the same page in knowing how important Customer experience is. If each department doesn't buy into this mentality, then repeat and referral business will be very difficult.

Agree with that! Are you able to share some Best Practices which helps Birchwood BMW stay Engaged and Connected with your BMW FS Lease and Finance Customers? i.e. Why do you feel that Engagement with the Customer is critical to your success? How do you ensure BMW Group FS Customer Requested Contact Leads are followed-up on immediately?

We engage and connect with our Customers in a few different ways.

We run 2 sales campaigns per month notifying our entire data base and social media of what we have on special. Always included in the campaigns are all the details someone may need. We don't leave anything out. All payments, money down, interest rates, etc. are always very clear. By doing this, we know that if a Customer reaches out to us about the campaign they're ready to buy.

As part of our marketing strategy we make sure Birchwood BMW is represented where our Customers spend their spare time. This includes many different Galas, Golf tournaments, etc. Most recently we were the Title sponsor and Vehicle sponsor for Pride Winnipeg's 30th anniversary celebration. Our vehicles and logos were front and center to tens of thousands of people over the 5-day event.

We hold product launches to showcase any new product we may have received. Most recently we held a 5-Series product launch at one of our top restaurants here in Winnipeg. We had over 200 RSVP's and the event was a tremendous success that even caught the attention of local media.

Each year we hold a Birchwood BMW ///M driving school where we teach past and present M Customers how to push their vehicles to the limits and truly appreciate what they own. The school is held over 2 days and is completely complimentary.

///M Driving School? Sign me up! Who do you work with at your Retailer to secure a repeat or loyal Customer? What strategies do you or your team use in retaining your Customers?

I think we do all the same things that most stores do when looking for potential leads. Look in Infobahn for all expiring lease and finance contracts with a heavy focus on 90-day expiries.

My Sales Manager consistently prints off the 90 list and runs new lease and loan scenarios before ever contacting the Customer. This step gives the Customers a large wow factor as you can typically answer all their questions before they know they had any.

It's really all about focus for us. There are so many things (mainly emails) that come up throughout the day that may seem important and need attention, but really they don't. I try to make sure my management team is always asking themselves "Is what I'm working on right now helping me sell another car?" If the answer is no, then don't do it.

We have a sort of mantra in our store. It's "find a way to say yes". We adopted this mantra throughout each department. All it means is if a Customer needs something to stay happy or make their life easier, as long as it makes sense, do it. We have received an overwhelming response by our Customer base that this is something that is truly appreciated.

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SHARE YOUR WORLD.

We would love to hear from our readers regarding any articles, topics of interest and personal (or nominations!) interviews to include in our next issue!

If you would like to contribute or have any questions/comments/feedback, please send an email to TRUSTCAREEASY@BMWFS.COM.

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In your mind, what are the main benefits of booking a Customer on a BMW Financial Services contract?

This really comes down to ease for us. The more business we can keep with BMW, the easier our life gets later. We don't have 3rd parties such as other banks in control of buyouts etc.

It is also a lot easier to talk to someone and BMW Financial Services. If you have a question, concern or need, there is always someone there to help.

It really is one big team at BMW.

How do you create loyalty with your loan portfolio?

Have you had an success in converting a loan Customer to a lease Customer?

We treat loan Customers the same way we treat lease Customers. Meaning, we start having next vehicle conversations around the 2 year anniversary of their purchase.

Do you use InfoBahn? What areas do you use the most when working with the FS Customer Portfolio?

We use InfoBahn every day in our store. We like everything about how easy it is to look up a buyout, calculate remaining payments find out if the Customer has requested a payout etc. I've worked for a couple different manufacturers and InfoBahn is unique in the way of it all being on one site.

With the rise of social media, do you connect with your clients through LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook?

We use Facebook and Instagram quite a bit. We make sure we have at least two posts a week that include content such as new product, videos and hot topics surrounding BMW and MINI. We also run 1 to 2 sales related posts per week.

That's great!

Do you have any tips that help you to understand the needs of your Customer and proactively address them before they have an opportunity to leave the brand?

We feel by always being where they are and always finding a way to say "yes". By truly caring for the Customers wants and needs and all of our efforts and Customer service will make it very hard for them to leave Birchwood BMW and the brand.

Thanks so much, Steve!

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BMW/MINI NO-CHARGE SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE.



Did you know that some of our main competitors do not offer Scheduled Maintenance **free of charge** to their Customers, which also fosters loyalty? Ensure you inform and educate your New Car Customers of this benefit and explain how it reduces the cost of ownership versus some of our competitors!



A TOTAL FOCUS ON EXCELLENCE.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US.
Service.Programs@bmwgroup.ca