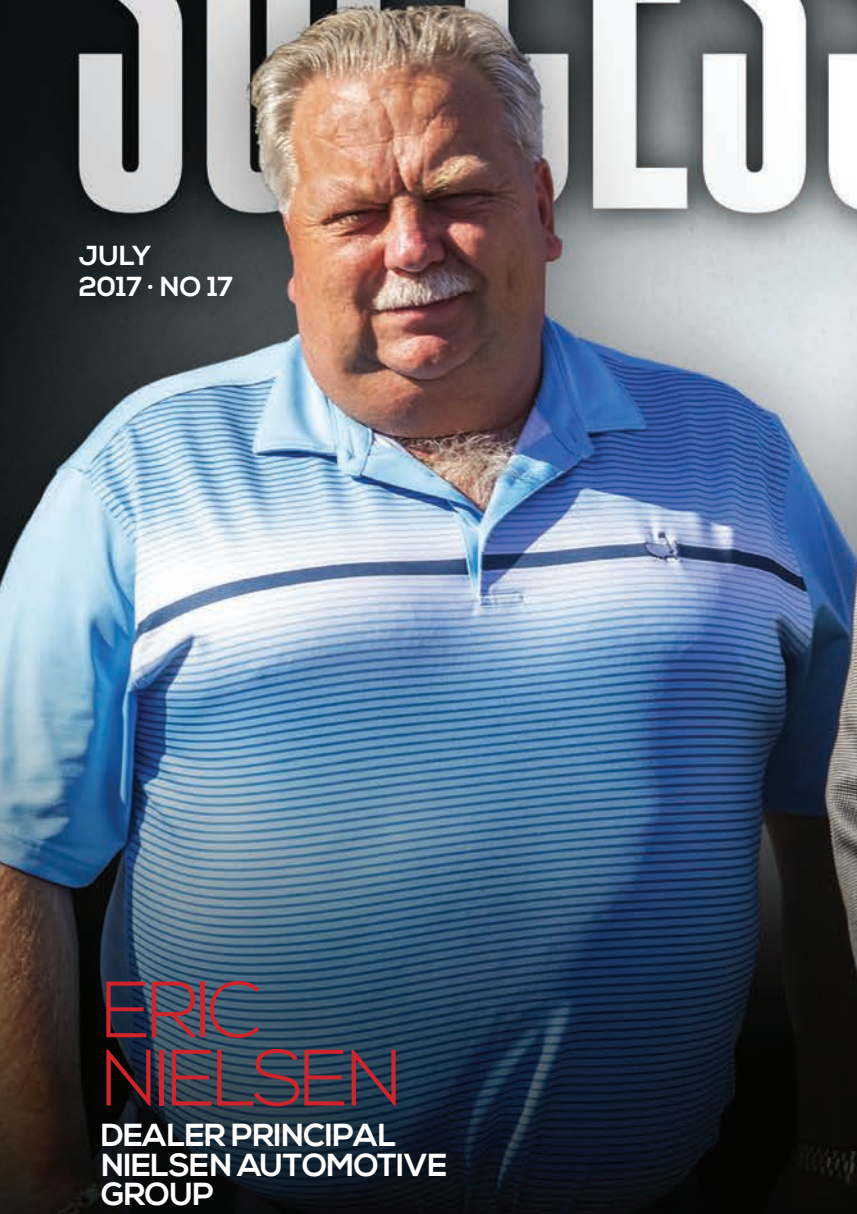


SUCCESS STORY

JULY
2017 · NO 17



ERIC
NIELSEN

DEALER PRINCIPAL
NIELSEN AUTOMOTIVE
GROUP



BILL
SNOUFFER

GENERAL MANAGER
NIELSEN AUTOMOTIVE
GROUP

NIELSEN AUTOMOTIVE GROUP

SALES UP **24%**
IN MAY

FINDING SUCCESS IN A CHANGING DIGITAL LANDSCAPE



SALES UP
IN MAY **24%**

FINDING SUCCESS IN A CHANGING DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

In 1980, Bill Snouffer started on the sales floor of Dover Chrysler Plymouth in Rockaway, New Jersey. Little did he know that 37 years later, that dealership would evolve to become part of one of the most profitable dealer groups in the country. The dealership is now part of Nielsen Automotive Group where Snouffer serves as General Manager. Located in Northern New Jersey, the group includes five stores; Franklin Sussex Auto Mall, Dover Dodge Chrysler Jeep, Franklin Sussex Hyundai Genesis, Nielsen Chevrolet and Nielsen Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram.

Over the years, Nielsen Automotive Group has seen tremendous growth and change, however, the philosophical foundation of the group has remained consistent. As Snouffer says, it all comes down to one word: loyalty.

"I believe that our success as a dealership group comes from taking care of our customers the right way," Snouffer said. "And not only our customers, but every relationship we touch. You've got to maintain and value your relationships with your employees, your vendors, your banks and everyone else you do business with. We're very loyal people, and it's served us well."

Snouffer knows that the way you treat people at the start of a relationship establishes how that relationship will grow in the future. "Eric Nielsen, my Dealer Principal, is who I credit for instilling loyalty as a core pillar to my philosophy. We're very loyal to the vendors that we partner with," he said. "We're also loyal to our employees, and we ask for their loyalty in return. We are all about the customers. They

know we'll take care of them, and that brings them back in."

CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Throughout their 37-year relationship, Snouffer and Nielsen have identified certain aspects of the business to focus on, which has worked in their favor as the company has grown. "Eric focuses on the corporate structure and I'm the people and business mover," Snouffer said.

As part of his duties, Snouffer oversees the marketing efforts for the entire group and has developed a feel for what works best for the company. His main goal is to create a distinction between Nielsen Automotive Group and the competition. One of the ways Snouffer differentiates his stores is by creating marketing plans that include special efforts to form ties to the local community. "We try to remain unique in the marketplace," he said. "Every single month there's some type of event going on in the area that we try to incorporate into our marketing. Event type selling and experiential marketing have been great for our brand".

In late June, for instance, Franklin Sussex Auto Mall was the main sponsor of the "Rock, Ribs and Ridges Festival" at the Sussex County Fairgrounds. The event featured live music from artists such as The Charlie Daniels Band, Molly Hatchet, The Kentucky Headhunters, and the Marshall Tucker Band, along with BBQ competitions, camping and other activities.

Snouffer made sure his dealership played an integral role in the festivities. "To kick off the festival, we had a rib-eating contest at the dealership," he said. "We reached out to 10 nonprofit organizations in our area and asked them to compete. We guaranteed them a \$100 donation for participating \$500 if a

representative of their organization won the contest, and \$200 for second place. We also had one of the festival bands perform at our dealership."

This is the way Snouffer connects with the community — by making sure his dealership is a part of it. "Whatever you're seeing in the community, we're participating," he said. "Our Dover Dodge store, for instance, does a lot of animal rescue events at the dealership. They work with the local radio stations, and this past weekend they had pony rides and all kinds of entertainment for the kids, along with a pet adoption day at the dealership."

"Our philosophy is that — if we take care of the community, if we're a part of what's going on in the lives of those around us, the community will consider us when they're looking for a vehicle," he said.

EMBRACING A CHANGING DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

Snouffer recognizes, though, that the marketing landscape has changed. Consumers are buying cars differently than they did 10 years ago, doing more research online than ever before. The trick is to make a connection with them where they are researching and shopping online. "I'm coming up on 60 years old, so the digital space can be a challenge for me," he said. "In my position, I handle most of the marketing for our stores. I have a pretty good feel for what works for the dealership but when it came to digital marketing, I was getting overwhelmed."

Understanding that he needed assistance with connecting with potential customers in the digital arena, Snouffer began looking for help and created a position in the group to tackle the new digital frontier. "One of the things that we've recently done at the dealership is hiring

a Digital Marketing Manager,” Snouffer said. “It’s a new position that we never had in any of our dealerships.”


Working with his IT department, Snouffer put together a job description and started interviewing highly qualified candidates, which posed challenges of its own. “I started interviewing applicants who were totally different than other people I’ve interviewed in the past,” he said. “I’ve interviewed salespeople, sales managers, F&I managers and the rest, but this was something new we were looking for. We ended up hiring a young Millennial who we felt would have a great impact on our future.”

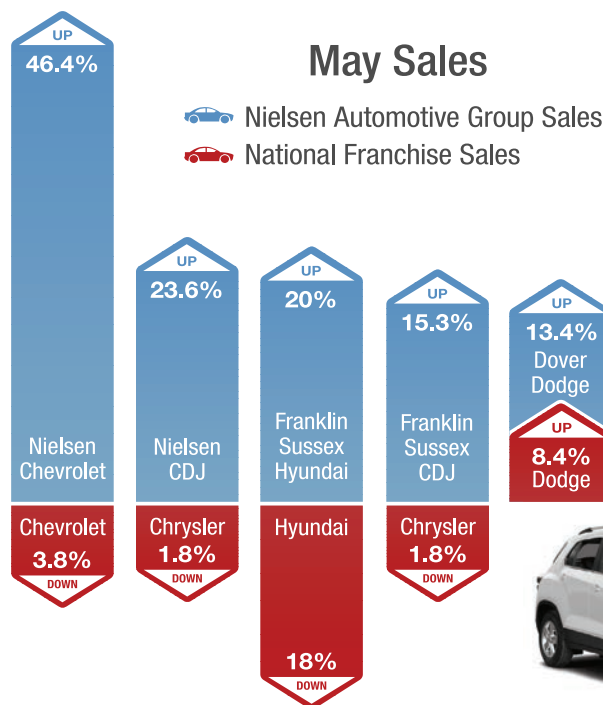
With an in-house Digital Marketing Manager in place – someone who could analyze and understand the dealership’s digital strategy to determine what was working – the next step was to identify a partner who could get Nielsen Automotive Group to the next level in their marketing efforts.

“It’s difficult,” Snouffer said. “There are so many vendors out there in the digital space. I had every single vendor coming at me every day with a solution, with the answer to my dreams, telling me how they were going to make me sell more cars and get more people in for service, and make me more money. It’s hard to know who you can trust to generate the activity you need, drive the traffic to your website and showroom, and generate leads through that marketing.”

In the end, Snouffer chose Team Velocity Marketing to oversee and maintain their digital marketing strategy. “Our in-house manager identified some inefficiencies in

May Sales

 Nielsen Automotive Group Sales
 National Franchise Sales



CHARTING A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE

Snouffer knows that the one thing you can count on in the automotive business, especially in the past few years, is change. By combining marketing methods that have woven his dealerships into the tapestry of the community with new digital approaches to bring customers through the door, he believes his company is on the right path for future growth.

“Dealer Principal Eric Nielsen and I both have the disease of ‘never enough,’” he said. “We’re always looking for more, and trying to figure out what works and what we could be doing better.”

Part of striving for “never enough” and having a winning culture, though, is to define what “winning” looks like. “For us, we believe that success, true success, is being in a position to help others,” Snouffer said. “That might mean producing more business in our dealerships’ showrooms and shops so our employees can provide better for their families. In turn, that puts us all in a better position to be able to help others. It’s worked for us. That’s how we’ve grown, and hopefully we won’t stop growing.”

our digital marketing where we were wasting money,” Snouffer said. “With Team Velocity, we have one vendor handling the digital marketing for all our stores, instead of a different vendor with a different strategy for each dealership.”

Nielsen Automotive Group has only been with Team Velocity for a few months, but they’re already seeing results. “Since partnering with Team Velocity, our average Click-Through-Rate has increased to 8.5%. Considering the average Click-Through-Rate in the automotive industry is 3.8%, we are thrilled with those results. In May, when almost every brand was down, all of our stores were up significantly. Nielsen Chevrolet, for example, was up 46% and service RO’s are through the roof,” Snouffer said.

ONLINE DISPLAY ADS

728 x 90

160 x 600

300 x 250

APOLLO TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM

MOBILE

RESPONSIVE OFFER SITE

All of Nielsen Automotive Group targeted marketing is managed from a single platform, Apollo™. This allows them to deliver consistent branding and offers across all of their media channels and monitor the results from all of their campaigns from a single, Web-based dashboard.

To learn more about Nielsen Auto Group and the strategies outlined in this article email: successtories@autosuccessonline.com

**For more information
on the strategies and companies used by Nielsen Automotive Group,
please email info@TeamVelocityMarketing.com**

Reprinted from AutoSuccess July 2017 for:



TEAM VELOCITY MARKETING

www.teamvelocitymarketing.com 1-855-213-3586