

# DOUBLING DOWN

## How One Auto Group Achieved Double-Digit Growth Amid the Pandemic with the Help of Integrated Technology

By Amy Antenora, Contributing Editor

While other dealerships have scrambled to quickly adapt to changes brought on by this year's pandemic, the Murgado Automotive Group's position never wavered, thanks to the keen foresight Mario Murgado and his partners had during the economic recession from 2008 to 2010.

Mario Jr. serves as the marketing and operations director at the Murgado Automotive Group – Brickell Motors, which his father founded back in 2001. The Miami-based business has over 18 locations that sell a wide selection of brands, ranging from mass-market Honda and Nissan to luxury Bentley and Ferrari.

"After graduating from college, I came back to the automotive world and focused on sales management. My return took place right after the 2008–2010 economic recession. Back then, we really had to change our business into an internet sales model, or digital-forward model, that a lot of the automotive industry really had not adapted to or taken initiative yet," Mario Jr. said. "Being a little bit younger and exposed to more of the technological side of the business, it was a good opportunity for me to look into how we could create an internet sales department that would withstand the upcoming market change."

That opportunity led Murgado to launch the company's Business Development Center (BDC).

"When most of the dealerships in our market were taking a step backward or losing year-over-year sales, we were actually pushing forward because we had a [BDC] division that focused on helping customers who didn't want to visit the dealership anymore still find a means to communicate and find a car that best fit their needs. And this was back before the pandemic," he said.

The automotive group continues to make things easier than ever for potential car buyers today with its Fast Pass program. Fast Pass offers customers a 100% online sales and service process,

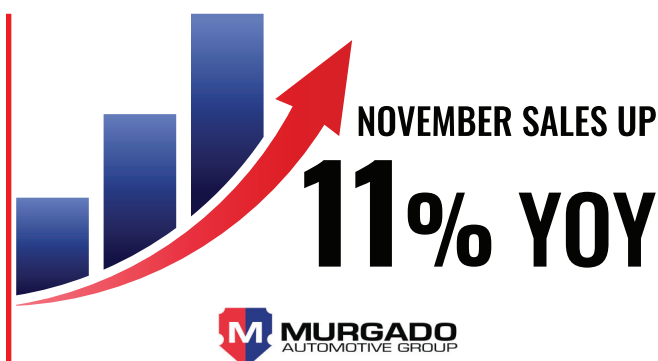
with remote test drives, online service pickup and delivery, and the ability to purchase or lease a vehicle entirely online with a guaranteed three-day/100-mile return policy.

Mario Jr. noted that the Fast Pass program and the ability to provide its customers with a safe, virtual and contact-free transaction have helped the company manage through the most challenging months of the pandemic.

While most of the industry has caught up with the trends of digital retailing, Murgado still continues to pave the way with the latest technology to improve the customer transaction process. This is what makes Murgado such a perfect partner to collaborate with Team Velocity, a marketing technology company that serves clients with a customer experience platform that creates a frictionless consumer experience from an initial engagement to the final transaction.

Through Team Velocity's proprietary customer experience platform, Apollo, Murgado Automotive is able to create a consistent brand message that is distributed across all customer touchpoints, digital and print included. As a full-service partner with Team Velocity, the Murgado Automotive Group is able to take advantage of the full suite of integrated technology applications that make, manage and measure the entire customer journey – from equity mining, sales retention and digital marketing to even direct mail. For Mario Jr., the ability to send communications customized to meet the individual customer's needs is vital.

"The Apollo platform allows us to send targeted messages to our customers based on their current needs. For example, customers that recently purchased a vehicle from us would not receive a sales message but an upcoming service reminder message and a coupon. All messages are customized to each customer based on their vehicle history, equity position, trade value and engagement. Apollo allows us to send timely communication that



makes sense for our customers, depending on where and what stage they are in the purchasing funnel," he said.

"They help us in all areas of our marketing operations," Mario Jr. added. "They help facilitate this entire process, from our websites and our marketing messages, to the emails, direct mail and TV advertising that we're sending out. The main thing that was important to me was the notion of a 'consistent' message, and Team Velocity does a fantastic job of making sure that we incorporate that message into all of our customer touchpoints."

### **FAMILY CULTURE**

Mario Jr.'s passion for consistent brand messaging and a seamless customer experience isn't just business savvy. For the Murgado Automotive Group family, having a deep respect for both employees and customers is a major part of the company's culture. This family-first culture is ingrained in every aspect of the Murgado Automotive Group, thanks to standards Mario Jr.'s father set when establishing the business 19 years ago.

"This is a family business. We want to take care of our employees and our customers. We know that if we take care of our employees, our employees in return are going to be able to take care of our customers — a rewarding cycle that ensures expectations are set right," Mario Jr. said.

"The automotive industry doesn't have a good reputation. As a young professional in this business, I want to make sure that I can change that. I want to be able to give our customers the ability to see a different side of the automotive industry and see how many opportunities we are able to provide to not only our employees but to our customers and to their families. We're usually helping them with the first or second largest purchase for their family. It's a big deal. Sometimes, our team gets used to it. It's so repetitive that we lose sight of what this purchase truly entails. I always want to remind everyone that this is a huge deal and that it is really important. We need to take care of our customers, and that DNA is from the top down. That's the way my father taught me and the way that I would like to continue to teach throughout our organization. If we do things the right way, we're able to change the perception of one customer at a time, leading to a bigger impact in our market — with our name, our reputation, our brand and what we stand for.

"I'm very proud of what my father has been able to accomplish. He came from Cuba, migrated to Miami and was able to build this story from nothing. It's my pleasure and honor to be able to take his legacy to the next level," he said.

*To learn more about Murgado Automotive Group and Team Velocity, visit [murgadoautomotivegroup.com](http://murgadoautomotivegroup.com) and [teamvelocitymarketing.com](http://teamvelocitymarketing.com).*

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