

GPS as an Option for Customers: What Technology is Best for Your Dealership?

Scott Ferguson

Scott Ferguson founded Inilex in 2003 after more than 15 years of experience in marketing, operations, and product and revenue management at several self-started companies.

It goes without saying that high value, security and convenience are top priorities among car buyers when it comes to purchasing this particular asset. When dealers are able to combine these qualities into one value-added product for their customers it can mean a vast increase in sales. That is why so many dealers and dealer groups are choosing to front load their inventory with a sound GPS security product or offer it as an upgrade to customers. Additionally, it adds an extra layer of security to your inventory while it sits on the lot. As the GPS and vehicle security market grows, so do the options. Dealers already know there is money to be made in offering GPS security products to customers. Here's how to choose the right one to offer your customers:

GPS, or, Global Positioning Systems, is a technology that was originally used by the US Military in the late 1970s and expanded to consumer applications, such as vehicles, in the mid-90s. People now use GPS technology for everything from personal navigation (watches and cell phones) to helping them find where they're going in their vehicles, to tracking their vehicles in the event they are stolen. GPS security systems are a great added value for your customers. Here's how:

There are different kinds of GPS security options for car dealers to choose. The first is your basic GPS system. This basic product can attach anywhere on the car (dealers usually choose to keep it hidden from sight) and can trace the car's location via the satellite technology. Some GPS systems these days come with navigation screens. Drivers can use it for

obtaining directions and helping to understand where they are on a map. Other GPS products allow drivers to map their car via the Internet. For instance, drivers can monitor online where their car is in the event of theft and report the location to police. Other popular GPS products have service providers that track the vehicles for them. Users can call this service in the event of theft or an emergency, and the service provider will contact the right authorities on their behalf.

The next step up is a GPS security system that has added convenience features. These include security functions such as geo fences and quick notification if a car is moved from its location. Some high-end GPS security products allow drivers the power to lock and unlock their cars remotely and even start the ignition and heat or cool the car's interior through a user-friendly website. Convenience features such as these are usually an easy up sell for dealers, especially in extreme climates and areas with a high auto-theft rate.

The best offering a dealer can provide in the way of GPS security is a product that has a bevy of convenience features to go with it. The higher-end GPS security products on the market will actually connect to a vehicle's computer, allowing the driver to control several functions including lock and unlock, checking diagnostics, scheduling maintenance appointments with the dealer online, setting up speed and location perimeters (for employees using company cars and teenagers) and can even monitor a vehicles' speed and location online in very-near real time.

Perhaps you've already decided to start offering a GPS security product or want to explore a change from the current product you're selling. Here are a few key questions to ask the GPS security distributor before you make a purchase:

- 1) **In the event of theft, how will the customer be notified and how quickly?** There are some GPS security systems that do not alert the customer when their car has been stolen. It is up to the customer to make the discovery, contact the GPS provider and then ask them to locate the vehicle. If a vehicle is stolen overnight or while a customer is on vacation, they may never see their car again. Timing is everything.
- 2) **Can I use this product to protect my inventory before the vehicles are purchased?** Many GPS security providers are now offering special options designed just for the dealers who install and sell their products. If you experience a high rate of theft in your area, this might be a good option to take advantage of.
- 3) **What are the features included with this product?** Make sure the vendor gives you a detailed list of all features including any added convenience features. Some products out there do only one thing; track the car. If you want to offer better value to your customers you need to be thorough.
- 4) **How much will my customers need to pay a month to maintain this service?** There can be hidden fees in the monthly subscription, make sure your customer isn't getting overcharged just to keep their car safe. You'll want to be certain you're offering the best possible value to your customers.
- 5) **What are the exact locations serviced by this company?** It's surprising to many dealers to find out that the GPS security system they sell doesn't work in several locations throughout the country. It's very important to know where your customers can, and can not, expect to receive service.
Including a GPS security system in your list of offerings is a great option and one that's increasingly requested by the 17 million car buyers a year. Choosing the right product for your customers and your dealership can be tricky with so many to choose from. Hopefully, this has helped you to understand what the options are and has given you some guidance in how to choose your GPS security partner. 