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4 MISTAKES THAT LIMIT THE POTENTIAL OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

As seen in AutoSuccess

If people from a century ago were to peek into the modern-day world, the technology they'd see would seem magical: doorbell cameras, smart thermostats, artificially intelligent devices, self-driving cars...

Today's technology has the potential to make our lives — and our jobs — easier and more efficient. Yet despite this potential, research from Wakefield Research and Concur shows that 84% of small business owners are still using manual processes involving spreadsheets, filing cabinets and handwritten records.

While that research was specific to small businesses, I've seen this at many large dealerships as well.

The obvious answer to solving the issue of manual processes is to implement technology to help automate or digitize those tasks. If your employees are wasting time filling out key control logs, you can implement an electronic key control system. If you have file cabinets overflowing with paper records, you can move

your data to the cloud. If you're not following up with prospects because nobody remembers to do it, marketing automation can help.

The thing is, while technology can help you improve productivity and increase revenue, making any of the following mistakes will limit the value you get from it.

1. Not Getting Buy-in

Put yourself in your employees' shoes for a moment. Imagine your boss pulls you aside one day and tells you that the dealership has purchased a Shiny New Gadget (SNG). As a result, part of your job now includes Tasks A, B and C involving SNG. Sure, you'll do what you need to do, but are you enthusiastic about it or do you perform these new tasks begrudgingly?

If decision makers implement a new tool and communicate to end users the *what* but not the *why*, enforcing new tasks — let alone creating champions for the new solution — will be an uphill battle. Create buy-in by helping

employees understand the benefits:

- Does it save the dealership money?
- Does it solve a problem?
- Does it put more time in employees' days?
- Does it make certain tasks easier?
- Does it improve customer satisfaction?

While benefits to the dealership are important, also try to explain how the solution will benefit the end user specifically. For example, instead of saying, "SNG will save our dealership money," say, "SNG will save us money, helping us provide job security for our employees."

2. Not Taking Advantage of Training

One of the first things you do when you roll out a new system is set up training. At minimum, training should include all staff members who will be using the new solution, but you might also include management so they're aware of how the solution works.

To get the most out of training sessions, incorporate at least two senses (e.g., visual and auditory) to help participants grasp and retain

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the information longer. Hands-on activities also help employees put the information they've learned into practice.

Ideally, you should customize training for various job functions and even generations (millennials, baby boomers, etc.). By keeping information relevant and presenting it in an interactive format, you'll increase employee engagement and knowledge retention.

Just because your employees are done with initial training doesn't mean you can check the training box and move on, however. Set up recurring training sessions — a must considering how quickly the digital world evolves — and encourage employees to take advantage of any resources the vendor offers for ongoing training, such as written or recorded tutorials, best practices documentation, phone training and live webcam sessions.

Helping your employees learn more about the new technology implemented in your dealership is worthwhile.

3. Not Designating an Internal Administrator

Even technology that's largely hands-off needs someone to keep an eye on the results to

make sure it's performing as expected. When implementing a new solution, designate an internal administrator who's familiar with how the system works and understands the results it should deliver.

The person you choose should be full-time and employed with your dealership for at least a year. They don't necessarily have to be a member of management, but they should be a trustworthy employee, especially if they'll have access to sensitive information or broad security permissions.

You'll want to designate more than one administrator in certain situations:

- **Your dealership has high turnover.** Having more than one system administrator helps avoid interrupting dealership operations if a system administrator leaves.
- **The tool provides access to valuable assets.** Any time someone handles sensitive data, expensive keys and vehicles, dealership funds or other valuable assets, checks and balances are essential.
- **The system requires a lot of oversight or affects multiple departments.** Having multiple administrators allows several employees to share the responsibility of overseeing the system, saving them time

and allowing them to deal only with systems functions involving their department.


By designating one or more administrators, you can ensure that your investment is meeting your expectations.

4. Not Setting Clear Expectations

Speaking of expectations, does your team know what your goals are for the new technology? If you don't clearly communicate your intentions — both during training and in the form of written policies and procedures — you likely won't see the results you're looking for. It's important for employees to know what you're asking of them.

As they get used to the new processes in your dealership, be sure management provides feedback on performance. Always be open to adjusting your expectations and practices to keep things moving in a positive direction.

Technology has the power to banish manual processes and improve your dealership's operations, but make sure you're implementing it the right way. By taking the time to build solid training, processes and expectations around the system, you'll be able to realize the value you expect. ○



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