



Autotrader

Company:
AutoTrader.com

Applications:
Sales Force Enablement
(code name AMP)

"This app has been a game changer for us. It has made it much easier to get information and has changed the way we work."

—James Tom,
Senior Director Sales Strategy

AutoTrader.com, launched in 1998 and is headquartered in Atlanta, Ga. It is the Internet's leading auto classifieds marketplace and consumer information website. AutoTrader.com aggregates into a single location almost 4 million vehicle listings from 40,000 dealers and 250,000 private owners. It provides the largest selection of vehicles attracting more than 14 million qualified buyers each month. Through innovative merchandising products such as multiple photos and comprehensive search functionality, AutoTrader.com unites buyers and sellers online, thus dramatically improving the way people research, locate and advertise vehicles.

AutoTrader.com has two key businesses: Digital Media and Software Solutions. These two businesses have transformed the retail automotive industry, reducing friction between dealers and consumers and allowing them to transact with greater ease, confidence and efficiency.

Using MicroStrategy platform to enable their mobile sales force

AutoTrader has a sales force of approximately 1,000 Advertising Consultants (AC) that interact on a daily basis with auto dealers throughout the United States. Many hours used to be spent each day by the ACs gathering information to prepare for meetings and presentations. Armed with spreadsheet printouts and their laptop, the AC would meet with dealers. Even with extensive preparation, the AC could not be prepared for every possible request posed by a dealer and often; they would be asked questions that required additional research. In order to answer the dealers' questions, the meeting would have to stop so that the AC could start up their laptop and research the answer. This time delay to gather the necessary information could cost the AC an opportunity.

Now, with their MicroStrategy iPad application called Strategic Account Management Process (AMP), all the information ACs need is at their fingertips and they can instantly respond to any question posed, making effective use of time spent with the customer. According to James Tom, Senior Director Sales Strategy, "Taking the MicroStrategy powered app and sitting down with their customer, the AC can pull up a report or map and show the impact of their advertising on the spot." AMP not only provides detailed information in an intuitive manner, it also frees up ACs from the time they previously spent preparing for meetings and gives them more time to work on additional opportunities. Tom Pacini, District Sales Manager, says, "The issues we faced previously were the inability to access information on the go. The sales force had to access several websites, multiple excel sheets and reports to gather information to run their business. It was time consuming." The AC can now view everything they need from their iPad and can be more productive and interactive with their customers.



The iPad has become an indispensable tool for the ACs. They can see their book of business, instantly see how they are trending for the month and view how they are performing. Also, they can view their information whether they are connected to the Internet or not.

Why mobilize with the MicroStrategy platform

Scott Salter, Senior Director of Enterprise Data and Shared Services, states, "We have used MicroStrategy for a long time on our desktop and our research indicated that MicroStrategy was on the leading edge of mobile so we decided to go with MicroStrategy. We have a large mobile sales force and historically we have been delivering reports manually via spreadsheets and shared drives. We needed to enable the sales force with real-time data. Using the MicroStrategy Platform to create a mobile application was the answer. We had a pilot application up within 6 weeks and then released to entire field within three months. We have seen a huge increase in positive feedback from the field. They can interact with their reports and receive them wherever they are located."

Return on investment

"One of the things we measure as the value of the platform that we enable with MicroStrategy is the usage from our customers (dealers and sales force) and the usage of the platform has grown 40 times from 4,500 requests weekly to 175,000 requests weekly. This is big success for us and MicroStrategy is a big part of this success," continues Scott Salter. AutoTrader has also received very positive feedback from their sales force. The most frequent comment is that this app (AMP) saves them time and gives them a more professional and polished look. They are also able to quickly respond to any question posed.

Future mobile development

According to Scott Salter, AutoTrader is not stopping with just one app but have several in the works. One application will allow their customers to access their data via a mobile device that is currently only available on the desktop. Also, another project underway is giving the field representative the ability to sell advertisement availability. The sales force will be able to see advertisement space, reserve it using MicroStrategy transaction services, all while presenting to the customer from their iPad. Finally, another application called Speed (Sales Process Enablement and Efficiently Discovery) is underway to allow a comprehensive look at the entire sales process and help find ways to streamline.