



Three indicators that can help you measure customer willingness to purchase during times of uncertainty

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During these uncertain times, it is essential to know when your customers are looking for a vehicle and when they're ready to purchase. Your dealership should know the indicators of when it is time to spend on advertising and what messaging and advertising channel to focus on.

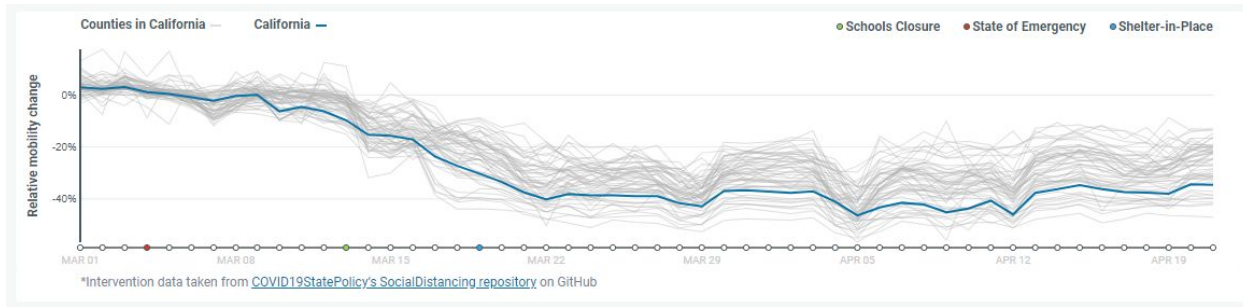
These unprecedented times must be dealt with in an unconventional approach, which leads to having consistent open communication with your marketing team and those at the dealership. There is no "one size fits all" solution for your marketing efforts, and to begin the discussion with your team, there are three indicators that can help you determine whether your dealership should be putting your budget towards digital marketing.

Using mobility trends to measure local demands

In the United States, you can observe the mobility trend of your state and county to determine how you would like to manage your marketing efforts. The [Facebook Data for Good Mobility Dashboard](#) gives insight into the current mobility trend, which determines the movement of people in that area using data from Facebook's mobile app.

To determine when your dealer is ready to put more funds into paid search, you should take a closer look at the trend at the beginning of the COVID-19 situation as compared to now. Most of the United States began stay-at-home orders around mid-March to early April. As May begins, your dealer should take a look at the relative mobility change from the start of the stay at home order until now. In California, the stay-at-home order began on March 19. California's relative mobility change began to plummet after the order began. On April 5th the rate was at -47%. As of April 21, the relative mobility change increased to -35%.





With a 12% increase, your dealership can see that the state is becoming more mobile, and you can begin the discussion of allocating your advertising budget into paid ads. With increased movement, it is a good idea to begin advertising again or reaching out to current leads. To dive deeper, you can take a look at the county of your dealership to determine if that area is ready to purchase a vehicle based on their mobility.

To ensure the best approach towards allocating your budget towards your advertising efforts, you must analyze the current trends and metrics of your dealer's location and the metrics of your online website shoppers. With your findings, you will be able to indicate which shoppers are *only* browsing versus those who are ready to purchase a vehicle.

Using website metrics to measure purchase interest

It is crucial to look at your website data during this time to determine when your shoppers are ready to purchase a car. Many people are at home and may be interested in a vehicle, but they are not ready to purchase yet. A few metrics that your dealership should take a look at are site visits, engagement, and conversions.

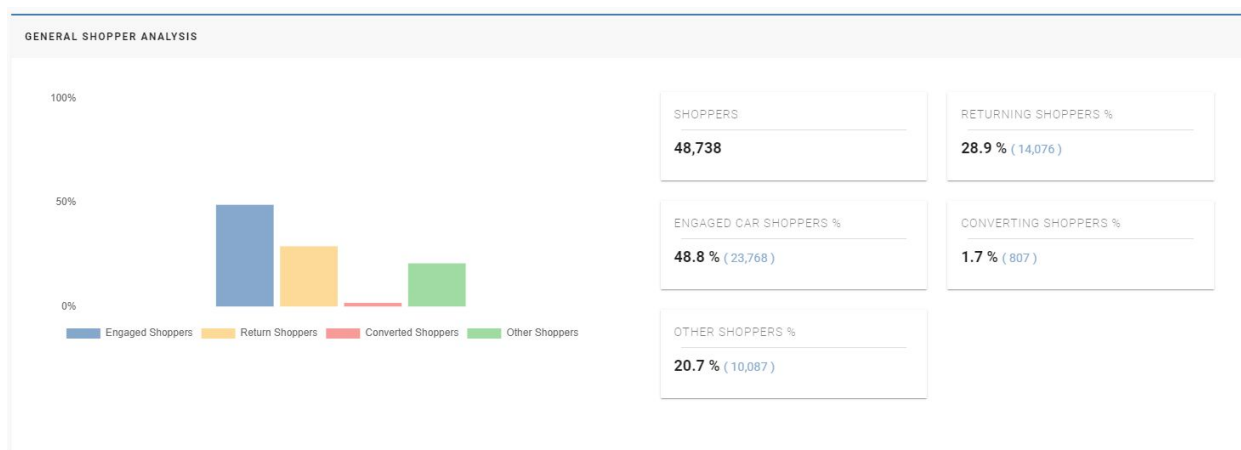
If your website visits remain the same or if the website visits are declining, your dealership should *not* be allocating marketing dollars towards conquest advertisements due to a lack of market demand. If the number of visits on your website is increasing, it may mean that the market demand in your area is increasing. It is also important to look at your organic traffic as it will show purchase interest for your dealership.



You can correlate the numbers of the visits to the relative mobility change to determine whether your dealership should allocate some funds into conquest ads. However, even if your website has an increase in visits, it does not clearly indicate the intent of purchasing a vehicle. It is good to keep an eye on this metric and discuss with your marketing team to see if conquest advertisements are the best route for the dealership.

Looking at the engagement of your shoppers can also be a good indicator of showing interest in purchasing a vehicle, but even with an increase in engagement, these shoppers may not be ready to purchase right away.

Orbee's platform tracks the percentage and number of engaged shoppers out of the number of total shoppers to give your dealership on how many of the shoppers are engaged shoppers, returning shoppers, or converting shoppers. You can change date ranges to compare data between the beginning of the stay-at-home order and the present to see whether your customers have an intent to purchase.



If there is an increase in engagement and conversions from your website visitor data, it is a good indicator that your dealership may be ready to increase your digital marketing spend. If a shopper increases their engagement through the visit duration or page depth on your site or if the number of engaged shoppers increases, your dealership should keep a close eye on these numbers to see if they keep increasing week over week.

If the market demand is increasing and the number of conversions from your website are also increasing, you should prioritize engaging with active shoppers. The first step to engaging active



shoppers can be through the use of email marketing and retargeting advertisements on both Google and Facebook.

Using sales data to measure purchase intent

The most important measure to consider during these times is the purchase intent. Many people are looking at vehicles during this time because of the offers and incentives that OEMs are advertising. However, this doesn't mean that people are ready to purchase a vehicle yet. Taking the mobility trend of your state and local areas, looking at the website metrics to determine the interest of your shoppers, and comparing it to those who have returned are important factors to consider when reaching out to the interested shoppers.

In normal market conditions, you could expect to close a lead within 7-14 days with a lead to sales closing ratio of ~10-15%. However, during times of uncertainty, you might be receiving similar amounts of leads as normal market conditions but might have a significantly lower sold or appointment count. If your closing ratio is lower than normal, you can focus your advertising to keep your current set of customers engaged so that they will remember you when it is the right time to buy. Coordinating your CRM data with digital marketing will help you understand how to engage with shoppers.

Email is a key tool to keep shoppers who expressed a purchase intent engaged. Send emails with incentives on the vehicle they were viewing or the measures that your dealership is taking to ensure their safety is important. Your dealership can also provide information on whether your showroom is open or if you're offering online sales and various delivery options.

Reacting fast to changing conditions will be the key to successfully navigating your dealership during uncertain times. Make sure to communicate as frequently as needed between your sales team, internal marketing team, and your digital marketing vendors. Market conditions today might look completely different tomorrow because a stay-at-home order was lifted or because a cluster of confirmed cases was announced.

