

REAL-WORLD RESULTS:

MEASURING IN MINUTES WITH FOOTSTEPS™; KELLY'S PORT REDUCES RESPONSE TIME AND DRIVES SALES

By Kyle Kelly, Vice President – Kelly's Port

At Kelly's Port, we believe that every lead is a potential buyer; no matter how insignificant the initial inquiry may appear at first. Prospects from multiple sources range from hot leads to long-term boat buyers who are just starting their research – and everything in between.

With that in mind, our lead management strategy is designed to meet the needs of a variety of prospects at every stage of the buying cycle.

That's when FootSteps, ARI's lead management solution, has made a difference for our dealership since 2008. Every member of our team is actively using FootSteps to manage all leads in support of our sales goals while saving time and increasing productivity.

All leads are not created equal but they all have one thing in common: they must be attended to promptly and efficiently. Studies have shown that the "five-minute contact rule" increases lead qualification rates by seven times over waiting an hour. Leads convert 22 times more often when you make contact within 5 minutes.

We aim to measure response time in minutes – not hours. Each type of lead is taken care of based on a clear management protocol that has proven successful for Kelly's Port.

KELLY'S PORT LEAD MANAGEMENT QUICK FACTS

- FootSteps Fan since: 2008
- Lead sources: 25
- Email campaigns frequency: Monthly
- Email campaigns average open rate: 28.23%
- Online lead conversion rate: 20%
- Online leads to total sales ratio: 75%

WALK-IN LEADS

The minute our receptionist is done greeting walk-in prospects and serving them refreshments, she takes down their full contact information, including name, address, phone number; and email, then cross-references their name in our FootSteps database.

If it's a new lead, she enters it in FootSteps and assigns it to a salesperson who will complete the profile right after the presentation, including level of interest, buying horizon, source, etc., and schedule a follow-up email.



In addition, Frank Petrizze, Sales Manager, sends a "Thank You" note as soon as the prospect leaves the dealership, using a Kelly's Port-branded, customizable email template from FootSteps.

The rest of the follow-up process is left up to our sales team whose extensive experience and proven track record have demonstrated their ability to properly manage walk-in leads from that point on.

The above strategy supports one of our core business principles, namely that the sales process is not about what you are buying but rather whom you're buying from. We are a family-owned business with a 34-year history of taking good care of our customers. By sending a walk-in customer a "Thank You" email that will reach his inbox before he even gets home, we are saying that we care and reinforcing that first positive impression we made during his visit at our dealership.

ONLINE LEADS

An online lead is every bit as valuable as a walk-in customer because an email inquiry is an expression of a prospect's interest in our dealership. Our goal is to respond as soon as possible to keep potential buyers from continuing to search the Web and focus their attention on our business. In case we are approached among other dealers, we want to be the first to respond which demonstrates our high level of customer service and builds trust immediately.

To begin with, FootSteps is integrated into our website, also provided by ARI. Sales inquiries from all online lead sources are sent directly to Frank. Day or night, he forwards leads to the most appropriate and responsive sales team members who are all equipped with smart-phones. We also leverage FootSteps Mobile which allows us to respond immediately to customer requests for information and view our current sales pipeline – anytime, anywhere, 24/7.

Our current average response time is 12 minutes, compared to 24 minutes in July 2010 (down from 1 hour and 22 minutes the year before). Our goal is to bring it down to less than 10 minutes to get one step closer to the "five-minute contact rule."

WE ATTRIBUTE THIS SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT TO THREE KEY FACTORS.

First, FootSteps allows us to keep our ducks in a row and improve continuously.

Second, Frank oversees every single lead to ensure that every inquiry is taken care of properly and that no opportunity falls through the cracks. If he notices a lead that hasn't been replied to, he either sends it to another sales team member or he takes ownership of it and handles it immediately.

Last but not least, response time has become top of mind following the many best practices conversations we've had with Bob McCann, Director of Education at ARI. To quote Bob: "When a customer walks in your dealership, you stop whatever it is that you're doing and take care of him right away, right? So, why would you treat online leads differently? It's just another way of talking to customers and building relationships."



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A CLOSER LOOK

CASE STUDY KELLY'S PORT

At Kelly's Port, we believe that our improved response time and prospects communications have played a pivotal role in our ability to close 20% of all online inquiries. We strive to increase this ratio through a series of ongoing efforts, including answering prospects questions clearly, following up by phone to set the stage for an in-store appointment, and making sure that we have the right inventory to meet their needs – all best practices recommended by ARI. Today, Web leads represent 75% of our total sales.

PHONE LEADS

An unanswered call is a potential lost opportunity. All phone leads are transferred directly to a salesperson's smartphone – never to their office. If the salesperson can't answer his phone because he's otherwise engaged, he follows up as soon as he's done.

Once on the phone, we aim to qualify the lead and more importantly, to create the opportunity for a scheduled appointment. We build the comfort level that any potential buyer would expect by answering any questions they may have and giving them a better understanding of who we are and how we do business.

Another goal, during the call, is to secure their phone number and email address which will be entered into FootSteps as soon as the conversation is over. From that moment on, FootSteps does the heavy lifting and allows us to keep up the good work thanks to template-driven emails, calendar management, reminders and more.

Bottom line, we treat our website and resulting leads as gold. With a partially automated lead management strategy supported by FootSteps, we follow up consistently to accelerate the buying cycle with new prospects and sustain a personalized relationship with existing customers to drive incremental sales. We currently stay in touch with 4,953 prospects and customers to keep them engaged and stay at the forefront of their mind so we can continuously build the pipeline for future sales.

