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Offering test rides: Worth the effort?



Fact one: Today when a motorcycle shopper walks through the door of a dealership, 77 percent of the time there will be no mention at all of the possibility of a test ride.

Fact two: Motorcycle dealerships that offer test rides to prospects at least three-quarters of the time retail on average 43 percent more motorcycles than those who do not.

Few dispute the fact that test rides sell motorcycles, so why do so few dealerships figure out how to offer test rides? Offering test rides is not a simple process, and developing a well thought-out dealership test ride process is not straightforward and easy. Give any of us 15 minutes and we could come up with a dozen strong reasons

why offering motorcycle test rides is complicated, maybe dangerous and clearly difficult.

On the other hand, my wife has a saying, "You do what you want to do." Her point is if it's important enough to you, you will find a way to do it, and we see from the facts that dealerships that go through the trouble to develop a dealership test ride process are rewarded with incremental sales.

Insurance? It's available. Damage? You work at a dealership that repairs motorcycles. Too much mileage? What a great way to offer a small discount to make the demo bikes sell quickly, so that you can replace them and go through the process again. Too many models to provide a demo for each? Offer the shopper a ride on a "similar" model, or if there are enough requests, make the decision to take a floor model and turn it into a demo.

What will your manufacturer do to help? Many will provide an allowance or discount to help with your demo efforts.

Even if it's just not possible to develop a full-on test ride demo program right now at your dealership, at a minimum have your salespeople encourage every shopper to sit on the bike they're interested in ("poor man's test ride") and mention a test ride can be arranged at a future convenient date and time. Then if the shopper is motivated enough to make a special trip to return, prep a new bike for him or her to test ride. At that point, chances are better than 50/50 that they will end up buying it.

Where there's a will, there's a way.



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By **Jim Anderson**, October 2, 2009 @ 2:48 pm

Test Rides done right sells bikes. I designed a survey for a Victory store to determine the prospects needs (AND EXPERIENCE). At the halfway point of the pre-determined route (scenic and well traveled) The salesperson would ask (as we take the pic of the prospect next to the bike) how this vehicle met those specific needs as well as how it affected their senses. Upon returning to the shop we completed the survey reinforcing features and benefits.

This worked extremely well.