

Boston Ford drives customers online



Customer: Boston Ford

Key Facts:

- Sole ford dealer in Jamestown, SA
- 43 years in the industry
- Small town in remote SA

Challenge:

- Required a re-designed website, which was simple to use and offered visuals of the company's product

Solution:

- Newly designed website where content can be easily managed and uploaded

Results:

- Efficient website management
- Product online catalogue now available

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Richard Boston, Principal Dealer, Boston Ford

After 43 years in the car industry, it's safe to say that Richard Boston knows a bit about cars. What he wasn't so sure about, until recently, was how he could use the Internet to help grow his car business, Boston Ford. Now, thanks to his refreshed website, Mr. Boston is reaching a broader range of customers without having to leave his dealership.

Since its inception, Boston Ford has proudly operated as the sole Ford dealer in the small town of Jamestown, South Australia. Over the years, the dealership has grown to include many other franchises such as Briggs & Stratton engines, CBC bearings and a range of lawn mowers. In addition, it has also become the only Stihl power tool dealer in the area. But, like all small town businesses, it faces the challenge of acquiring new customers.

“In a town of only 1,800 people, it's hard to directly increase your market share,” says Mr. Boston. “We have to look to neighbouring towns to help grow our customer base.”

The only catch is that most towns are a few hours' drive away.

“We advertise in local newspapers to target potential customers, however, because of the distance, it becomes inefficient, as we need to drive the car out to the customer so that they can see it, which not only takes time, but also takes staff away from the dealership,” says Mr. Boston.

Giving the website a tune-up

Mr. Boston soon realised that the only way to market to customers outside of the local district was to come up with a way his customers could view the cars for sale beforehand.

“I had customers phoning about a car they had seen for sale in the newspaper, however, didn't have a convenient way of showing them what it looked like and my website wasn't equipped to provide such a service,” he says.

“It was clear my website needed a refresh. I needed to become more visible online and get my cars out and available to my customers as the car business is just as much about what the product looks like, as well as how well it operates.

“Plus, I needed to ensure remote customers could see what they were interested in before they made the long drive out to Jamestown.”

Putting the wheels in motion

Mr. Boston has been hosting his website and email with Melbourne IT for 15 years, so when it was time to give his website a make-over 18 months ago, he knew who to call.

“Melbourne IT was enthusiastic about our new concept and created a new look which was even better than I could have hoped for,” says Mr. Boston. “They brightened up the site and made it look fresh and clean, but most importantly, they made the site easy for me to maintain.

“I can now upload information and photos quickly and efficiently as well as save huge

amounts of time updating my website.

“Before, I would need to spend a number of hours per week, whereas now, I only need to invest around 30 minutes a week.”

Having the inside track

According to Mr. Boston, the new website’s capabilities have not only helped with business, but have also helped him connect with a more technology-savvy clientele.

“It’s an intelligent business move to get online and embrace the Internet, so I have also started using Facebook and Twitter to help promote the dealership,” he says.

With a significant number of consumers now turning to the web to purchase goods, it’s important for businesses to have a presence online. But, according to Mr. Boston, it’s not just about being online.

“It’s about making the website easy for customers to use,” he says, “Which Melbourne IT completely understand.

“The car industry handles a range of different and varying clientele, so to ensure we can communicate effectively with all of them, our website needed to be simple, easy to understand and navigate, as well as visually attractive.”

Enjoying the smooth ride

And as far as Mr. Boston is concerned, working with Melbourne IT was extremely easy.

“They were professional, creative and patient and they did a fantastic job of helping me achieve my goals,” he says.

“Having my business and products available online has helped me to reach out to remote customers as well as keep my feet grounded here at the dealership.

“Plus, customers can now see what Boston Ford is all about, as our staff and workshop images are now available on the website.”

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