

Dealership Assistant– Proof of Concept/MVP

Background

The purpose of this document is to define the business requirements for an AI-powered Car Dealership Assistant Program. The program will automate lead engagement for car dealerships by responding to website inquiries, following up with prospects, and communicating via email and phone.

The solution aims to increase lead response speed, filter serious prospects, improve customer experience, and maximize appointment bookings while reducing manual workload for dealership staff.

Business Objectives

- Increase lead-to-appointment conversion rate
- Filter out unserious buyer
- Reduce response time to new leads
- Follow-up with prospects
- Improve customer engagement outside business hours
- Reduce manual effort required from sales staff
- Leverage AI to deliver personalized, context-aware responses

In-Scope

- Automated email communication with website leads
- AI-driven understanding and response to customer emails
- Appointment (showing/test drive) suggestion and booking (Nice to have)
- Automated follow-up workflows (Basic for the MVP)
- Phone-based AI communication during off-hours (Basic for the MVP)
- Reporting and analytics (Nice to have)

Out of Scope

- Vehicle pricing negotiation
- Marketing campaign creation

Functional Requirements

Lead Intake

- The system shall receive leads from the dealership website contact form (Standalone form for the POC/MVP)
- The system shall capture and store:
 - Customer name
 - Email address
 - Phone number
 - Vehicle of interest

- Message/Comments
- Timestamp and source

Automated Email Response

- The system shall send an automated email within X minutes of lead submission
- The email shall:
 - Acknowledge the inquiry
 - Reference the specific vehicle(s) of interest
 - Invite the lead to book a showing or test drive
 - Provide a booking link or suggested time slots

AI-Powered Email Understanding & Response

- The system shall use AI/Natural Language Processing to analyze incoming customer emails
- The system shall identify:
 - Customer intent (e.g., availability, pricing, financing, trade-in)
 - Vehicle preferences
 - Sentiment and urgency
- The system shall generate context-aware responses based on:
 - Lead-provided information
 - Vehicle details
 - Previous conversation history
- The system shall escalate conversations to human staff when confidence thresholds are not met

Follow-Up Automation

- The system shall automatically follow up with leads who do not respond
- Follow-up rules shall be configurable (e.g., 24h, 48h, 72h)
- Follow-up messages may include:
 - Reminder emails
 - Alternative vehicle suggestions
 - Revised booking prompts

Appointment Booking

- The system shall allow customers to book showings via email links
- The system shall integrate with dealership calendars (not required for the MVP)
- The system shall notify dealership staff upon booking

Phone-Based AI Communication (Off-Hours)

- The system shall place or receive phone calls during dealership off-hours
- The AI voice assistant shall:
 - Identify itself as a virtual dealership assistant

- Answer common customer questions
- Suggest and schedule appointments
- Capture voicemail-style messages if needed
- Calls requiring human intervention shall be logged for follow-up

Handover to Sales Staff (Not Required for MVP)

- The system shall transfer qualified leads to sales representatives
- Full conversation history shall be available to staff
- Staff shall be able to take over communication at any time

AI & Machine Learning Requirements

- Natural Language Processing for email and voice understanding
- Contextual conversation memory
- Intent classification and sentiment analysis
- Continuous learning from historical interactions
- Confidence scoring for escalation decisions

Reporting & Analytics (Nice to have)

- Lead response time metrics
- Email response rates
- Appointment booking rates
- Conversion funnel analytics
- AI vs human-handled interactions

Success Criteria

- Increase in booked showings
- Reduced average response time
- Higher lead engagement rates
- Positive customer feedback
- Reduced workload on sales staff