

Ultimate Car Sales Playbook (Modern + Traditional)

A no-fluff handbook that blends time-tested road-to-the-sale fundamentals with modern digital selling. Use it to train new hires, sharpen veterans, and install consistent processes that scale.

1) First Principles (What Never Changes)

- **Trust closes deals.** You earn it with clarity, speed, and delivering on small promises before big ones.
 - **Process beats personality.** Charisma helps; consistent steps win.
 - **Control the frame, not the customer.** Set an agenda, remove friction, invite decisions.
 - **Value > Price.** You justify the number *before* you ever defend it.
 - **Activity drives outcomes.** Track dials, texts, appointments, write-ups, demos—daily.
 - **Speed matters.** First response in minutes, not hours. *Time kills excitement; delay creates doubt.*
 - **Ethics aren't optional.** Transparent quotes, accurate disclosures, clean paperwork. Play the long game.
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2) The Modern Road-to-the-Sale (RTS)

Digital-first, showroom-ready. 1. **Lead/Up Intake** → Log 100% in CRM; confirm best contact method. 2. **Connect & Qualify** → Short discovery (needs, budget, timeline, trade, credit comfort). 3. **Appointment/Visit Setup** → Send calendar invite & confirmation text w/ map. 4. **Greeting & Agenda** → Welcome, set the game plan, permission-based control. 5. **Deep Discovery** → Why now? Use-case, must-haves, nice-to-haves, payment target. 6. **Vehicle Selection** → 2–3 matches; build value before price. 7. **Presentation** → Feature→Advantage→Benefit tied to the buyer's "why." 8. **Demo Drive** → Planned route; pre-close questions. 9. **Trade Appraisal** → Silent walkaround + customer story + recon reality. 10. **Write-Up / Figures** → Payment ranges (good/better/best) or OTD clarity. 11. **Objection Handling** → Isolate, empathize, solve, close. 12. **TO (Manager/F&I)** → Warm handoff with recap; protect momentum. 13. **Paperwork/Delivery** → "New car day" experience; tech setup. 14. **After-Sale Follow-Up** → 24h / 3d / 7d / 30d / 90d cadence; reviews & referrals.

Classic Variant: Meet & Greet → Needs → Walkaround → Demo → Sit-Down → Write-Up → Close → F&I → Delivery → Follow-Up. Same bones; modernized pacing.

3) Lead Handling: Internet, Phone, Text

Golden Window: Respond inside **5 minutes** with a human touch.

Internet Lead (Email + Text) — First Reply Template

- **Subject:** *Your [Model] — quick question*
- **Body:**
 - Thank them; mirror their ask.
 - Ask **one** clarifying question that advances the sale (e.g., budget range or must-have feature).
 - Offer **2 appointment windows + virtual options**.
 - Include a soft CTA to **text back** for speed.

Text Example:

Hi {First}, it's {YourName} at {Store}. We have the {Model} you asked about. Is your focus monthly payment or total out-the-door? I can have it upfront & ready. Today 5:40 or tomorrow 10:20?

Phone: First 90 Seconds (Talk Track)

1. **Purpose:** "I'll get you accurate numbers and save you a trip."
2. **3 Criticals:** Vehicle of interest, timeline, payment/OTD focus.
3. **Trade Hook:** "What are you driving now? Miles/condition? Any photos handy?"
4. **Appointment:** Offer two times + text confirmation link.
5. **Micro-Commit:** "If I have it pulled up, fueled, and the numbers ready, will you ask for me by name?"

Voicemail That Gets Callbacks

"{First}, it's {YourName} at {Store}. I'm matching you to **the right {Model} and payment**—need 30 seconds on **miles & options** on your current car to **unlock the best number**. I'll text too. 555-123-4567."

4) Discovery That Sells (Short + Sharp)

Use **PAST-Fit**: - **Purpose** (commute, family, hobby) - **Authority** (who decides?) - **Spend** (payment/OTD comfort) - **Timeline** (today vs. later) - **Fit** (must-haves, deal-breakers)

Pre-Close Seeds: "If we can get the {trim} with {must-have} around your target, are we good to move forward today?"

5) Presentation & Demo Drive

Walkaround Rule: Feature → Advantage → Benefit → Tie-Back. - **Plan a route** with quiet road + highway merge. - During drive, ask **ownership questions**: "Where will the car live? Who else drives it? First road trip?" - **Trial Closes:** "On the {safety/tech}, is this the right setup for you?"

Demo-Drive Close:

"If we can make the numbers make sense, is this the one you'd want in your driveway?"

6) Trade Appraisal (Retail-Ready)

- **Silent Walkaround:** Let the customer show blemishes and history.
- **Story Gather:** Service history? Tires/brakes? Accidents? Payoff?
- **Photos/Video** if sight-unseen; request **odometer + VIN + problem spots**.
- **Recon Reality:** Show what retail-ready means (tires, detail, windshields, keys).
- **Anchor to Market:** "Auction lanes & local listings show a **range**; your car sits **here** because {miles/condition/options}."

Line to Use: "I don't buy trades; I help the store invest wisely. My job is to get you **every dollar the market supports**—and show you **why**."

7) Presenting Figures (Desking Without Drama)

- **Structure:** Payment menu (good/better/best terms), or OTD with taxes/fees cleanly itemized.
- **Payment First?** If they demand it: "Happy to show that—**with the right vehicle and terms** so it's real, not a guess."
- **Rate Reality:** Explain that **credit tier, LTV, term** drive the APR; you'll present confirmed options, not hypotheticals.
- **Cash vs Finance:** Always show both; financing often protects liquidity and may qualify for incentives.

Numbers Script:

"Here are three ways to own it: **Short-term** for fastest equity, **balanced**, or **lowest payment**. Which column fits your plan?"

8) Objection Handling Matrix

4 Steps: Acknowledge → Clarify/Isolate → Solve → Close.

Common Objections & Word Tracks - "Payment is too high."

"Totally fair. Are we **\$40 a month** away or more? If I can bring this to where you need **without changing the vehicle you love**, are we good to go?" - "I want the OTD."

"Absolutely—**here's your exact OTD** with taxes and fees. Do you prefer to compare that to a **shorter term** or keep the **lowest monthly**?" - "Your trade number is low."

"If we add tires & a windshield we're **\$1,300** into recon on day one. If I can narrow that with my buyer, are you comfortable moving forward now?" - "Need to think about it / talk to spouse."

"Makes sense. What part needs the decision—the **car, the numbers, or the timing**? If it were just you today, which piece would you change?" - "I saw it cheaper online."

"Some ads exclude fees or show **non-stackable** incentives. Let's apples-to-apples the VINs. If we match the equipment and terms and I'm within **\$X**, are we good?"

Closes to Master - Assumptive: "Title and insurance under your name or both?" - **Alternative Choice:** "Black or the blue you drove?" - **Puppy Dog:** "You've already pictured the first trip—want to take **this** one home tonight?" - **Ben Franklin:** Pros/Cons list—sum in customer's words. - **Sharp Angle:** "If I do that, are you a yes at this payment?"

9) F&I Turnover (Protect the Experience)

- **Set the Stage:** "{F&I Manager}" will show the final options to **protect your purchase** and speed future service. I'll walk you over."
 - **Menu Mindset:** VSC, GAP, tire/wheel, appearance, maintenance—**position, don't push.**
 - **Compliance:** Accurate stips, clean OFAC/Red Flags checks, privacy & adverse action protocols.
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10) Delivery Done Right

- **Prep:** Fuel, detail, plate, two keys, owner's manual, phone paired, app installed.
 - **Teach 3 Things:** Safety, Convenience, Connectivity.
 - **First Service Appt:** Book before they drive off; introduce Service Advisor.
 - **Photo + Review Ask:** Provide direct link via text; "It helps people like you find us."
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11) Follow-Up & Referral Machine

Cadence (Sold): 24h → 3d → 7d → 30d → 90d → quarterly (value touches: how-to tips, service coupons).

Cadence (Unsold): Day 0 txt/call → Day 2 value email → Day 4 comparison → Day 7 "lost-sale save" → Day 14 inventory update → Day 21 last-chance value.

Referral Ask Script:

"Who else in your circle will be changing vehicles in the next 6–12 months? If I take great care of them like I did for you, would you connect us by text?"

12) Prospecting That Works (Old-School + New-School)

- **Service Drive Mining:** Appointments list → trade keys → equity conversations.
 - **Orphan Owners:** Take care of customers without a current salesperson.
 - **Community Presence:** Local clubs, youth sports, faith groups—*be known before they need you.*
 - **Video Messages:** 30–45 seconds: show the exact car, say their name, one benefit, and a next step.
 - **Social Proof:** Post deliveries (with permission), features-in-60s, customer wins—not payments.
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13) New vs. Used vs. CPO (Positioning)

- **New:** Latest tech, full warranty, predictable maintenance.
 - **CPO:** Warranty confidence at used pricing; reconditioning proof.
 - **Used:** Payment/value flexibility; mileage stories; cherry-pick units with clean history.
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14) Pricing Strategy & Market Reality

- **Market-Based Pricing:** Align to listings within radius; justify with **condition + reconditioning + scarcity**.
 - **Inventory Turns:** Move aged units with compelling **payment-focused** ads; refresh photos weekly.
 - **Advertising Truths:** Lead with **benefit + payment + CTA**; keep disclaimers accurate.
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15) Credit & Structuring Basics (Salesperson Level)

- **Signals:** Job time, residence time, income proof, down payment comfort.
 - **Tiering:** Don't promise a rate; promise **best approved option**.
 - **Deal Structure:** LTV, DTI, term right-sizing; co-signer when appropriate.
 - **Leasing Language:** "Pay for the part you use," mileage fit, wear-and-tear protections.
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16) Showroom Control & Time Management

Daily Rhythm (12-Car Baseline) - 8:30–9:00: Pipeline review, 10 hot leads. - 9:00–11:00: New outbound (phone/text/video). - 11:00–1:00: Appointments & lot. - 2:00–4:00: Deliveries/demos. - 4:00–6:30: Follow-ups + next-day set.

Manager TO Rules - TO within **10 minutes** if stalled. - Manager re-frames value and advances **one** decision.

17) KPIs That Matter (Scoreboard)

- **Response Time (Leads):** <5 minutes.
- **Appointment Set Rate:** 45–60% of contacts.
- **Show Rate:** 55–70% of appointments.
- **Write-Up Rate:** 60–75% of shows.
- **Close Rate:** Internet 12–18%; Phone Ups 20–30%; Showroom 25–35%+.
- **Demo Rate:** 70% of shows.
- **PVR (Front + Back):** Track 30-day rolling; coach to mix, not just gross.
- **Products per Deal (F&I):** 1.5–2.0+ target.
- **CSI/Reviews:** Goal 4.7★+ average.

Inspect daily, coach weekly, comp monthly.

18) Scripts & Word Tracks (Quick-Use)

- **Greeting:** “Welcome in! I’m {Name}. What brought you in today—researching, selling your car, or ready to drive something?”
 - **Agenda Set:** “We’ll confirm needs, drive the best match, and if you love it, I’ll show exact numbers—fast. Sound fair?”
 - **Price-First Deflection:** “Happy to show it; let’s make sure it’s the **right car** so the number is **right** too.”
 - **Trade Bridge:** “Tell me the story of your {year/make}—what do you love and what would you change?”
 - **Close:** “If I can align the payment with your comfort zone, are you ready to move forward?”
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19) Compliance Essentials (Know Your Lane)

- Present real numbers; no bait-and-switch.
- Accurate disclosures; secure customer data; follow identity-verification procedures.
- Fair credit practices; adverse action processes when required.
- Recordkeeping: deal jacket completeness, signed menus, we-owe forms.

You’re a salesperson, not a lawyer. When uncertain, pause and pull a manager.

20) Coaching & Practice Plan

Weekly: - 2 role-plays (objection + full write-up). Timer on. Peer + manager feedback. - 10 call reviews (2 per rep) with scorecards. - Feature-in-60s: one product video per rep.

Monthly: - Competitive comparison workshop; mystery-shop top 3 local ads.

30/60/90 for New Hires: - **30:** Product basics, CRM hygiene, shadow 5 deliveries, 2 solo write-ups. - **60:** Own full RTS; 8 demos; close with TO. - **90:** 12+ cars, 15 reviews, 2 referrals, solo desk with oversight.

21) Tough-Love Truths

- If it’s not in the **CRM**, it **didn’t happen**.
 - “Just looking” means “**Show me I’m safe and respected.**”
 - Price shoppers will still buy **here** if they believe delivery, service, and time-to-solution are better.
 - You don’t need better leads; you need **better follow-up**.
 - The pro’s edge is **preparation**: reps who know inventory, scripts, and market win the tie.
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22) Checklists

Appointment Set - Confirm route, parking, and entrance; send name/photo & desk location. - Vehicle pulled up, fueled, clean; spare keys located.

Demo - Child seats? Weather route? Insurance card ready for drive?

Delivery - Tags/Title/Temp plate; second key; app installed; service intro; photos & review link.

23) Templates (Copy/Paste)

Unsold Day-2 Value Email

Subject: *The 2 picks I promised*

Hi {First}, based on what you told me (space for {dogs/kids/gear} and heated seats), these 2 hit your plan. I can have either ready with **numbers in writing**. Want me to prep the {Option A} or the {Option B} for you?

Sold Review Text

"Thrilled for you, {First}! If I earned 5★ today, would you mind sharing a quick review here: {link}? It helps great people find us."

24) Personal Operating System (Your Promise)

- **Be first.** Respond fast with substance.
 - **Be clear.** One next step at a time.
 - **Be honest.** No games. Ever.
 - **Be consistent.** Daily activity makes monthly magic.
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Appendix A: Objection→Close Quick Map

- Payment → Reduce to difference → Swap term/structure → **Sharp Angle Close.**
- Price → Add value stacks → Market comps → **Alternative Choice Close.**
- Trade → Recon transparency → Market range → **If-I-Could Would-You.**
- Think → Isolate → Solve true blocker → **Ben Franklin Close.**

Appendix B: Daily Scorecard (print)

- New leads: __ | Responses <5 min: __ | Appts set: __ | Shows: __
- Demos: __ | Write-ups: __ | Sold: __ | Reviews: __

• Outbound calls: __ | Texts: __ | Videos sent: __

This playbook is built to be tailored. Add store-specific word tracks, inventory focus, and CRM steps so everyone runs the same offense.