

# Choosing the Right Dealership

YOU'VE TOTALLY RESEARCHED YOUR RIDE. NOW, DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO BUY IT?

**IMAGINE TAKING YOUR TRADE-IN TO A DEALERSHIP FOR APPRAISAL, THEN HAVING THE RIDE STOLEN, AND WORST OF ALL, HAVING THE STORE BLOW YOU OFF.**

Can't happen, right?

"It was bizarre," says John Isaac, president and CEO of MyDealerReport.com, a company designed to provide dealership information to automotive consumers.

"The dealership acted like they didn't know what she was talking about. About a week or so later, the vehicle was found—destroyed—and the woman was without a car."

An extreme case, to be sure, but it happened.

Isaac wants consumers to share all their dealership experiences, including the positive ones.

"Consumers had the ability to research insurance, vehicle pricing, financing, and vehicle history, but they didn't have the ability to research dealerships," he explains. "Consumers have a right to know who they're doing business with."

That philosophy was formalized in 2003, when Isaac and Richard Lowery,

then car salesmen, founded MyDealerReport.com, an independent industry watchdog. The interactive website allows consumers to, among other things, rate dealerships, check dealership ratings, view dealership amenities, learn trade secrets, and how to read car ads.

It's all meaty stuff. After all, a vehicle is the average person's second-largest purchase. Toss in the fact that many people find the dealership experience daunting, if not aggravating, and consumers need all the help they can get.

"If you take your car to a bad dealership, that doesn't make the experience any better," says Isaac, adding that uninformed consumers will often resort to patronizing dealerships with the biggest newspaper ads, or the ones closest to them.

"You should go to the ones that treat you right. And that's where we come in."

Isaac says a mutual distrust often dooms the

dealer-consumer relationship before it ever starts.

"There's this, 'I'm not going to tell him this,' kind of thing that's there from the beginning. But if you can select dealerships that have been proven trustworthy, that's one less thing you have to worry about," he advises.

Used by as many men as women, the website was developed with consumers in mind. "Everything came from that perspective," Isaac says. "But as things evolved we looked at how the site could help dealerships, make it valuable for them."

For one thing, dealerships often make changes based on posted consumer comments, Isaac asserts.

Dealers also use the site to resolve disputes and to chat anonymously with consumers, whose most frequent complaints are dishonesty and poor service.

"There are some bad dealerships out there, and the ones that are good are hurt by the bad ones," he says. "If dealerships get good ratings we're helping them. That separates them from the rest."

According to Isaac, the website's ratings and reviews sections are the most popular. "You can go anywhere and find out how to buy a car," he explains. "We want to help you pick the right dealerships." ■



▲ JOHN ISSAC, president and CEO, MyDealerReport.com