



**HIGH BAR  
BRANDS**

# A NEW WAY TO SELL ACCESSORIES



## **When looking at your finance department, do they often miss an opportunity to upsell?**

For years truck salespeople have tried to sell accessories during the sales process but either ended up giving them away to keep the deal or avoided selling them for fear of scaring the buyer away with higher prices. It's time for a new approach to successfully upsell and maximize profits.

# TOP PROFITABILITY PRACTICES FOR YOUR DEALERSHIP

During the typical truck sales process, the specs of the truck are all settled on before the truck buyer meets with the Finance & Insurance (F&I) department. Typically the F&I department at a truck dealership only handles the financing of the truck and may also try to sell things like purchased (extended) warranties, gap insurance, packaged maintenance plans and special financing options.

It is the salesperson's job to talk about available accessories and explain that these options will drive up the cost of the truck. What often happens during these encounters is that the truck buyer will ask for an accessory — such as a floor mat — to be thrown in for free. Anticipating things like this, many dealers bake the cost of these “free” items into the base price of the vehicle.

Often during the sales process, customers will express interest in accessory items like headache racks, upgraded wheels or tires, radios, GPS and even chrome items. Salespeople often resist “upselling” because they are afraid the customer will see them as pushy.

Some car dealers are handling accessory sales differently and rather than having their new and used car salespeople initiate the discussion about add ons, that conversation has been moved to the finance office.

But will that same approach work for medium and heavy-duty truck sales?



## SIMPLIFY THE SALES PROCESS

Certainly commercial truck customers are different from car buyers. However, a commercial truck buyer can be compared to a car fleet manager who is purchasing cars for his sales staff. Utility takes precedence over everything. Like their truck fleet counterparts the car fleet manager wants vehicles that will get the best total cost of ownership while still ensuring driver safety and comfort.

But moving the sale of accessories out of the hands of the salesperson and into the hands of the F&I department is something to consider.

Moving the selling of accessory items like floor mats into the F&I department will allow the dealer to move away from the common practice of “throwing in” accessory items. Some dealers actually do give items like floor mats away,

but most cover the cost with what is called a PAC, which is a charge a dealer puts on a truck deal to cover a myriad of miscellaneous charges — mud flaps, advertising, cleaning, minor chrome, etc. Typically that charge is about \$750 on a medium-duty truck and \$1,500 on a heavy-duty one. A lower number is involved when dealing with used trucks.

What ends up happening is the salesperson tells the customer that he is throwing stuff in, but the reality is the customer is paying for it.

Switching from the typical sales model to the one in which these add on items are handled by the F&I department should simplify the sales process and make the deal more transparent to the customer.



# MOVING THE SALE OF ACCESSORIES TO THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Car dealers have been using this approach for years; there is no reason to believe that the same approach will not work in the truck business. Taken a step further is the idea of developing an add-on book which the customer could look through and decide what he or she wanted on the truck. For example, if the customer said, “I want a headache rack, fenders and floor mats” the F&I manager could say, “We can do that for you and it will only add \$X a month to your payment.” Depending on what accessories he wants that additional cost could be as little as the price of a cup of coffee a day.

Rather than walking away from accessory sales, maybe it is time to take a different approach and move them into the finance department. Tying accessory sales into the truck deal during the discussion of how the truck will be financed allows the customers to avoid a big one-time bill and get some things he wants, often for the price of a cup of coffee. It's worth considering.

To learn more about adding accessory items to the truck sales and to discuss a aftermarket buying guide, please contact Minimizer's Marketing Department at 800-248-3855 or email Steve Hansen at [steve@highbarbrands.com](mailto:steve@highbarbrands.com).

There are several things to take into consideration before moving the accessory sales to the F&I department:

- Make sure the Federal Excise Tax isn't unnecessarily increased
- Make sure the finance company is advised. Credit approvals are for specific amounts and purchase-money liens apply.
- Determine what (if any) effect this “upselling” will have on the salesperson's commission. Does the normal percentage apply or are the add-ons compensated for in a different manner? Or will these sales be credited to the finance person with no spiff to sales?
- Confirm who has the authority to add the extra items. You don't want to have a driver add extra and find that the fleet owner does not want them.