



**DEALERS BOOK MORE  
APPOINTMENTS WITH A**

**PHONE BRIDGE**



## WHAT'S ACTUALLY HOLDING BACK SALES?

Dealers are **losing the majority of their hottest leads within the first 15 seconds of each call**. The culprit? Poor phone routing.

It's a common misconception that the only way to provide good customer service is to point every call toward a receptionist. Unfortunately, studies show this practice leads to poor connection rates and frustrated customers. **The faster a caller connects to someone who can help, the better the chance they do business with you.** The easiest way to do this is by implementing a bridge.

A bridge, sometimes called a phone tree or IVR, is the simple, friendly, recorded greeting you often hear when calling a business. For example, *"Dial '1' for Service, '2' for Sales, and '3' for Parts."*

You may be thinking, *"But wait! My receptionist answers every call!"* Sure, but **answer rate does not equal connection rate**. The important part is to ensure callers are quickly connected to a qualified agent – someone who can actually help the caller.

This Car Wars case study provides the data and the reasoning on why a bridge is probably in your dealership's best interest.

## IT'S A SIMPLE NUMBERS GAME

Implementing a bridge has helped Car Wars dealers connect more callers, book more appointments, and drive more sales than ever – without spending an additional nickel.

One of our Honda dealers in Long Island without a bridge was connecting only 55% of callers to someone who could actually help. Yikes. That means **45% of callers were left stranded** in hopes of speaking to a qualified agent.

Car Wars and the dealership got to work by building a custom bridge. This bridge separated Service, Sales, and Parts callers. Immediately after implementing a bridge, the dealer realized the biggest culprit of stranded callers was their Sales department. In fact, callers who selected the Sales extension only connected to a qualified agent 46% of the time! The bridge helped this dealership pinpoint the problem and quickly **improve their connection rate by more than 20%**.

Let that sink in. If this dealer received 100 sales calls a week, they were missing 55 of them. Identifying the leakage point allowed them to receive 20 more sales

**Car Wars data tells us this dealer is selling 4-5 more cars a week just by using a bridge.**

opportunities. Let's say the dealer sets 12 firm appointments out of those 20 sales opportunities and at least 9 show up for their appointment. Car Wars data tells us this dealer is selling 4-5 more cars a week just by using a bridge.



**“Do more with the leads you’re already driving. On average, dealers who ask for the appointment land it at least 90% of the time. It’s a simple numbers game from there. The more callers you get connected with someone who can help, the more appointments you’ll book, and the more cars you’ll sell. After reviewing millions of calls for more than 10,000 dealerships across the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico, we’ve found dealers using a bridge consistently connect far more callers than those who don’t.”**

**MIKE HAEG**  
*Vice-President, Automotive*

We recently did a study comparing automotive groups' phone processes and found a drastic difference in the number of sales opportunity calls. 28% of all calls entering a dealership group who utilize bridges were verified sales opportunities. On the flip side, only 12% of calls were marked sales opportunities at a dealer group without bridges in place. Was the group not using bridges receiving less sales calls? Nope. They just had a significantly higher number of calls never connected to someone who could help.

**In the same study, we found that one group using bridges was receiving 241% more sales opportunities than the groups not using bridges.**



**How would you like your Sales team speaking with 20, 50, 75, or 100 more callers each month?** Recently, a dealer in Tennessee asked for assistance in connecting more calls to salespeople. We quickly set up **Cari**, our bridge feature built using sophisticated artificial intelligence. Cari allows all calls to bypass a receptionist and go directly to an available sales agent. We also implemented this bridge to point each sales opportunity toward an available agent with the highest Set score first. These top performing agents would get the first crack at hot sales leads. Not only have their agents received more sales opportunity calls with Cari's help, but they're also experiencing a spike in booked appointments by funneling more opportunities to their best agents.

## JUST HOW MUCH DOES EXPERIENCE MATTER?

A ringing phone is more valuable than the person wandering around your showroom. Yes, you read that right. That showroom shopper is already in the dealership and likely to buy. The caller, however, is still in the process of determining which dealership may be a good fit to purchase from. In a recent study, **73% of mobile callers to a sales line were ready to buy**<sup>1</sup>.

Data shows that consumers still prefer calling to begin the purchase process. In fact, **consumers are more than twice as likely to call a business than to fill out a form** (65% vs. 24%).<sup>2</sup> Most shoppers will interact with your dealership by picking up the phone at some point during their buying journey,<sup>2</sup> so ensuring every caller has the best phone experience should be top of mind.

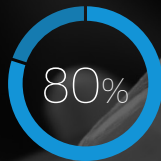


Car Wars' artificial intelligence agent, Cari, is the best employee you'll ever hire. She instantly recognizes prospects and quickly connects them to someone who can help, and ensures leads are handled by sales agents who set firm appointments. But she doesn't stop there. Cari takes it a step further in that she logs only sales leads in CRM, writes a recap of each call, and helps your staff speak with more live prospects when outbound calling. Cari ensures that every dealer not only focuses on – but excels in – the first step to Owing The Phone: connecting callers to qualified agents.

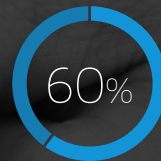
<sup>1</sup>Marchex, Auto Insurance Industry Benchmarks for Digital Marketers, Fall/Winter 2016  
<sup>2</sup>Invoca, State of the Mobile Experience

# PHONE EXPERIENCE AFFECTS REVENUE

## POSITIVE PHONE EXPERIENCE

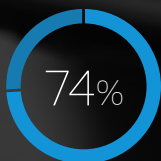


*A positive phone experience leads to repeat customers*

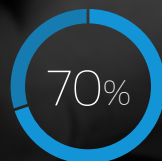


*A positive phone experience results in increased spending*

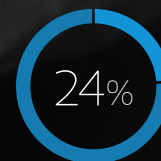
## NEGATIVE PHONE EXPERIENCE



*Likely to choose another business*



*Likely to complain to friends/family*



*Likely to complain on social media*

According to a recent study, the biggest frustrations customers experience when calling a dealer are having to repeat information to multiple people and not connecting with someone who can help.<sup>3</sup> Additionally:

- 49% reported that long hold times are one of their top annoyances.<sup>3</sup>
- 74% reported that they are likely to choose another business after a poor phone experience.<sup>2</sup>
- 70% said they're likely to complain to friends or family.<sup>2</sup>
- 24% said they're likely to voice their opinion on social media.<sup>2</sup>

A positive phone experience is directly tied to additional revenue. 80% of survey

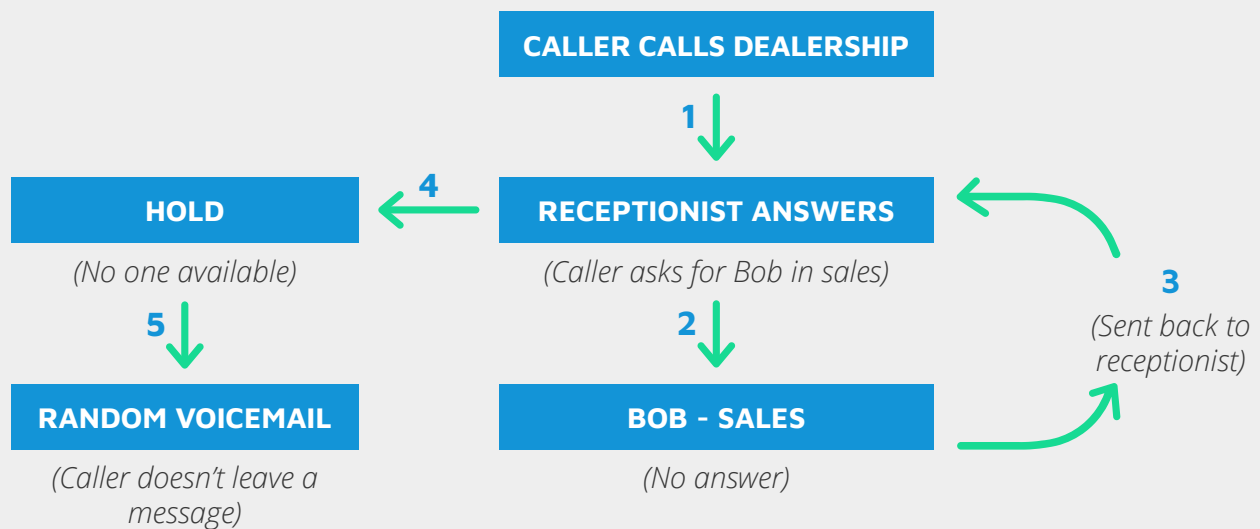
respondents said that a positive phone experience would lead them to become repeat customers, and 60% admitted that a positive phone experience would likely cause them to spend more on their current purchase.<sup>2</sup>

The shopper's initial call experience is the most important factor in determining their likelihood to purchase. Unfortunately, dealers still struggle with those first 30 seconds of a call since they **place callers on hold or transfer calls 68% of the time.**<sup>3</sup>

This common but frightening statistic is where your receptionist seems to come into play. She often serves as a switchboard operator but just doesn't have the time to handle the call volume of a typical dealership. A bridge prevents funneling the bulk of calls through a frazzled receptionist and quickly

<sup>2</sup>Invoca, State of the Mobile Experience

<sup>3</sup>Marchex Study, Intro to the Auto Industry, January 2017



connects each caller to the person at your dealership with a financial incentive to handle the call properly.

## THE CURRENT STATE OF COMPLACENCY

The reason most dealers don't implement a bridge is because they assume customers prefer a friendly receptionist over a friendly recording. This is a common misconception. Remember, some of callers' top frustrations are getting put on hold or transferred.

A receptionist at a typical dealership with no bridge might field hundreds of calls a day. Those important calls often end up looking like this: a caller asks for Bob in Sales but Bob doesn't pick up. The caller is sent back to the receptionist, put on hold while she pages someone else, yet still no one is available. Finally, the caller is sent to a voicemail other than Bob's, and hangs up in frustration without leaving a message.

This caller is much less likely to purchase from

you, and a lot more likely to share frustrations with someone or publicly on social media.

Without a bridge, you are guaranteeing frustration for at least half your callers! You simply don't achieve your desired outcome when the receptionist is fielding every call for Sales, Service, Parts, Finance, and Vendor Relations. The more effective approach is to route callers as quickly as possible to someone who can help immediately.

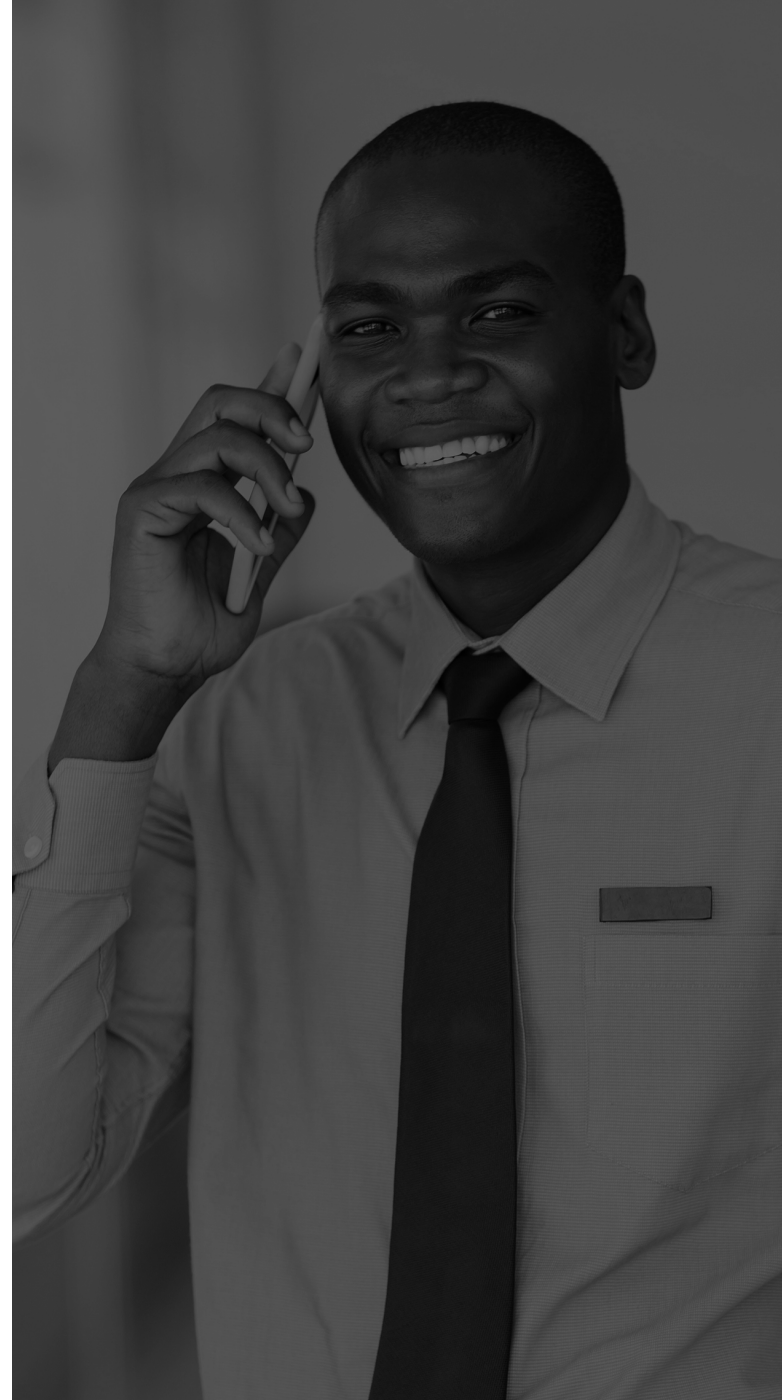
Some dealers also claim a bridge negatively affects connection rates by offering callers too many options. Experience suggests this is usually due to a poorly-crafted bridge. Of course a bad bridge harms the dealership, which is why **it's important to have an intelligently-crafted bridge that provides no more than five options and minimizes the required inputs** to reduce connection time.

Both arguments against a bridge – preferring a receptionist to handle all incoming calls and that a bridge provides too many options – fail to account for how it saves time and drives more true appointment opportunities to your Sales team.

## HOW A BRIDGE CAN TRANSFORM YOUR DEALERSHIP

In summary, here's what most dealers can expect by implementing a bridge:

- Reduces connection time on average by 12-15 seconds.
- Connects more callers quickly.
- Helps you manage your CRM.
- Filters only the most important sales calls, and immediately pushes appropriate calls into the CRM, **allowing you to focus more on sales calls.**
- Helps your agents more easily find and follow up with potential sales opportunities and hottest leads.
- Reflects only sales calls in Car Wars reporting.
- Distinguishes the amount of call traffic coming into each department and extension line.
- Eliminates unnecessary spam calls.



## GET MORE OUT OF DOING LESS

When callers aren't connected easily and quickly to someone who can book an appointment, the chances of winning their business decrease drastically. **You don't need to spend loads of money on fancy tactics to fix this.** A bridge (it's free!) allows you to do more with the leads you're already driving. A bridge decreases the connection time between a caller and someone who can help by 12-15 seconds and can increase sales opportunities by 241%, allowing your team to book more appointments and sell more cars.

