

3 Ways

Specialty Vehicle Dealers Can Deliver a Better Customer Experience


Cincom's Charlie Carson Discusses
Insights from the McKinsey Report
on Dealer/Channel Solutions



Engaged Dealers Sell More

For over 30 years, [Cincom](#) has worked with many of the most advanced manufacturers of specialized vehicles, whether on wheels, treads, air or water. This gives us a unique bird's-eye view of what worked then and what is

working today. Most of these manufacturers sell through dealer organizations that are more critical to revenue success than ever before precisely because they are closer to the customers in the marketplace.



Dealers Want to Optimize the Buying Experience


The opportunity for dealers selling specialty vehicles—from fire engines, long-haul trucks and trailers, aircraft and tanks to forklifts and cranes—is going through a deep and fundamental change. The customer is now in charge. [🐦](#)

This shift is global as buyers in every country are in the process of modernizing or replacing aging


vehicles and have realized their power by using multiple ways of purchasing smarter. If the experience from dealers is not what customers seek, they move on to those who are willing to provide a positive customer experience—in both the buying process and after purchase.

A background image showing a close-up of several people in business attire. One person's hand is pointing at a tablet held by another person. The tablet screen displays a colorful bar chart. In the foreground, there is a clipboard with some papers. The overall scene suggests a collaborative business meeting or presentation.

Informed Dealers Sell Even More

Dealers need a deeper understanding of what customers want to buy and how they go about making the purchase.  It starts with a realization that what worked yesterday likely will no longer get the same result today.

If the interchange between dealer and prospect does not deliver an awesome experience for the

buyer, the deal is probably fading into the sunset with a different team winning the sale. An awesome customer experience begins with a customer-centric culture that delivers positive impact, supported with process and technology that make it easy to buy from your organization. 

Are You Easy to Buy from?

As important as the customer experience is, it is alarming how often we don't seem to understand what is important to them. [🐦](#)

A McKinsey¹ study verified that customers value three attributes:

- 1) Customers care that dealers conduct open and honest dialogue
- 2) Customers want dealers to act responsibly across supply chains
- 3) Customers expect dealers to have a high level of specialist experience

McKinsey found that companies totally ignored the first two most important attributes and agreed only on the third. [🐦](#) It is evident that we often talk past customers rather than talking with them about things they care about. This can stop a positive customer experience dead in its tracks.

¹ – McKinsey: How B2B Companies Talk Past Their Customers, October 2013





3 Ways Dealers Can Deliver a Better Customer Experience


1. Begin with access to accurate, current product information

Manufacturers and dealers need to work from the same source of knowledge that is accessible online, locally in the customer's office, at a job site or wherever the customer is.

This reality acknowledges that a totally different set of people are now involved in a more fluid purchasing process that accesses information beyond your company website.

- Today, a peer-to-peer network revolves around each purchase, with people in the network sharing opinions. Do your best to join the conversations by being visible on essential social media such as LinkedIn.
- Respond to criticism with an open and honest dialogue.
- Make sure that everything you say about your company is true (no stretching the truth) and is consistently delivered at every customer touch point.

2. Make it easy for customers to get what they want

Giving customers what they want starts from the extensive experience that strong dealers possess to accelerate the entire buying process.  The dealer can help prospects buy smarter by making the experience a true exchange of ideas and solutions.

- Give customers multiple ways of finding what they are looking for, from a highly guided approach to a checklist of available options.
- For products with customer-specified features, options or dimensions, you might consider enabling them to automatically select an appropriate engineering drawing or a 3D model, based on their needs.

This calls for a closer sense of partnership between manufacturers and dealers than in years past.

- Manufacturers and dealers need to work together as a single unit, with a primary purpose of meeting customer needs and making the experience one that is valued.
- Emphasize how your special capabilities deliver exceptional value to customers.
- Take advantage of technology to provide a customized path to the knowledge that will most impact the customer experience and the success of a sale.

Configure-Price-Quote (CPQ) Solutions can help a company drive sales effectiveness by playing a critical role in the lead-to-win sale process².

² – Technology Evaluation Centers: Market Landscape Report: Configure-Price-Quote (CPQ) solutions, October 2014



3. Enable customers to win faster 🐦

Speed to market is a huge advantage to any company today that wants to get value from a specialty vehicle. However, "fast" and "easy" have different meanings for different types of customers. Those who have purchased highly engineered products before want "nothing but the facts," while less-experienced customers will need more guidance. 🐦

Dealers should establish processes and develop solutions that can help your customers maximize their ability to make faster decisions on the purchase of a vehicle or equipment needed to run their businesses efficiently.


Manufacturers can help dealers by providing them with fast, accurate price quotes.

For highly engineered transportation equipment and vehicles, this is best answered with modern configure-price-quoting applications that cut quoting time from days to minutes while increasing quote accuracy. Manufacturers can often make this capability directly available to dealers so that the two teams can work together to support buyers.



A background image showing a close-up of several hands interacting with mobile devices. One hand is holding a smartphone, while another points at a tablet screen. The image is slightly blurred, emphasizing the action of using technology.

The Buying Process Begins at the Point of Need

Dealers are increasingly mobile, and they require remote access to manufacturers' information.  This calls for manufacturers to have people, processes and

knowledge applications available to their dealers—anywhere and on any platform or any device—in order to optimize the customer's buying experience.

Siemens: A Real Customer Experience Manufacturer

Siemens has established over 100 years of market leadership in the electric motor industry through fast, efficient response to customer demand. Although quotation times of 3-5 days are common for this market, Siemens was striving for higher levels of customer satisfaction.

Cincom CPQ was selected to help them automate processes that would decrease customer response time while maintaining consistency and increasing productivity. They were able to:

- Reduce quotation times from 3-5 days to just minutes
- Increase quote volumes (currently about 500 per month)
- Cut motor performance data generation time from 4-6 weeks to less than one hour

By deploying via the Siemens channel portal, all dealers are able to quickly and confidently configure, price and quote faster than their competition. In this way, they are fully leveraging the size and market presence of Siemens to solve problems that require multiple integrated products. Siemens is a classic example of empowering the channel to deliver more value by delivering integrated solutions at the point of need.



About Cincom

Manufacturers of specialty vehicles and transportation equipment face unique challenges, including strict compliance and quality-control issues, lengthy and complex supply chains, daunting project cost estimation requirements and aggressive delivery schedules. Cincom has deep industry and product expertise that reflects this understanding. We have been helping specialty vehicle manufacturers win more business, operate efficiently and deliver as promised for five decades.

For more information on Cincom CPQ, contact us at info@cincom.com or visit our website at www.cincom.com/cpq.

Charlie Carson has been in the software industry for 35 years. He has extensive experience of both ERP and CPQ and is currently the program manager for Cincom's Configure-Price-Quote platform in Europe. Charlie is co-author of the book "Growing Modular – Mass Customization of Complex Products, Services and Software".



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