

How Social Media is Helping One Toyota Dealer

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Earl Stewart Toyota in Lake Park, Florida has been experimenting with social media for about a year but they never saw real results until the Toyota recall.

“Our [social media tools](#) have helped us tremendously since the Toyota recall,” said Stu Stewart, General Manager of Earl Stewart Toyota. “It has been a very effective way to share information with our customers and respond to their questions.”

Stewart believes that social media is better than traditional advertising like radio and TV when it comes to interacting with customers and earning their trust.

“We don’t advertise sales on Facebook or Twitter. We give customers objective information and news updates,” he said. It seems to be paying off. Here are some customer comments from the Earl Stewart Facebook page:

- Earl, that was very informational. Thank you for sharing! This is obviously a very confusing time for Toyota owners and it is good to see a dealer trying to help them sort out the truth from the lies. I truly believe this will pass for Toyota as a manufacturer and your commitment to customer service will ultimately pay dividends for you as a dealer.
- Great information! It certainly does put things in perspective.
- Don't know, but the report about "Toyota having problems since 2002"? I have had three Toyota's since 2002, never had a defect, problem, or recall in any of them! I've known two people with Toyota cars with over 250k miles; they still run! This is all being hyped up by the media too much!

Few car dealerships use social media as effectively as Earl Stewart Toyota. They understand that it’s more about making friends and building a community than it is about selling a product or a service. Here are several [social media network sites](#) they use to communicate with their customers:

- Earl Stewart Facebook Fan Page
- Twitter twitter.com/EarlsToyota
- YouTube
- “Earl Stewart On Cars” - A Personal Blog

It isn't easy being a Toyota dealer these days. Bad news seems to keep coming in every day. The good news is that it hasn't affected sales at all. In fact – new car sales at Earl Stewart Toyota are up 33% from a year ago. But this is a small consolation for a car dealership that is committed to customer satisfaction.

Stu Stewart said, "The one thing that cheers me up is when I go to work in the morning and customers come up to me and say: 'You guys are doing a great job.' "

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