

## Findings: Two Major Themes.

### Theme #1: Too Flashy.

The participants' desire to have an easy, straightforward experience came through during the post-test interview and spontaneous feedback:

- One participant preferred Fairfax VW because “the colors were more subdued so it wasn’t as overwhelming to look at...the forms were as simple as they could be while getting all the information they needed so it didn’t look like there was a bunch of superfluous boxes to fill in... I didn’t want anything to start flashing at me—I hate it when they flash at me...”
- Another participant said that Lia was “boring, but more effective [than Rosenthal]...boring is good when looking for a car. I am looking for a car, I don’t want to be entertained.”
- Another user said this of Lia: “I think it’s good because it is not too showy and it’s not too tacky; you know.. it’s kind of just there.. which I think is fine when you’re looking for a car, cause you’re looking at so much information that you don’t want too flashy a site, because there’s already a lot of information that you’re trying to absorb.”

In fact, all four users indicated either during or after the test that they were or would be put off by flashy graphics. One user said this of the Rosenthal group home:

“This one is too flashy for me. There’s just too much stuff going on... It looks like a popup ad. It doesn’t look like a web site you could go to to do some serious spending.”

Another participant’s post-test email comments included the following:

“I liked the picture feature of Rosenthal’s site [referring to large vehicle images in QuoteFactory 4], but Lia was more helpful with everything else, mostly because the links worked better. When shopping for a car, it is most important to provide as much data as possible in the most simple possible way. people buying a car do not need to be wowed at the web site, they only need to get the info they need so they can determine if a trip to the dealer is in order. Think straight-forward and obvious with the critical aspects of the car (i.e. what will it cost, what does it have for features, is it available in the form I want, how does it compare to others). The idea is to draw people to the dealership, not sell them the vehicle online. No one actually buys a car without checking it out first.”

Remember that content sells far better than pictures, even in the case of cars. Make sure flashiness does not stand in the way of content.

## Theme #2. Privacy concerns and generally negative attitude toward the dealer because of the experience on the site.

When asked about how he felt about e-notifier one participant said that: “basically it would be putting me on their mailing list and sending me a bunch of crap that I don’t want, so I wouldn’t do it. I tend to shy away from that stuff. I have one specific email address that I dump all those into when I need to enter my email address just to sign up for something. That’s not something I would take advantage of... in terms of notifications that way.” Another participant used the expression “passive aggressive” to characterize the dealer’s efforts to collect her

personal information. Yet another participant’s initial reaction to the CarFinder tool was “It’s going to send me junk mail.”

Recommendation: unless you love everyone, you can’t sell anyone. Show concern for the customers—explain how the tools work, how their personal info would be used, why certain information is required, give them options regarding what they give you and what you do with it—and they will reward you by giving you their business.

## Pre-test: User Experience and Technology.

All users were “power users”: they used Internet all the time, for a long time. All users accessed the Internet via a broadband connection. All tests were done over a broadband connection.

While all users researched cars on the Internet before, only one had actually bought one. Two users had visited dealership web sites previously.

## Pre-test: User Expectations.

In aggregate, user expectations regarding what they should be able to find on a dealer site included:

- the list of cars and models the dealer carries;
- detailed car information, including price, options, colors;
- inventory listings / detailed info about cars in stock;
- financing information / explanation of the process;
- contact information / directions;
- ability to schedule a test drive / appointment;
- information about specials / bundles.

Overall, easy access to high quality information was the central theme for *participants who have visited dealer sites before*:

- Being able to get to the information quickly and not “have to sort through a lot of crap” was important to one user, who “basically wanted to find out as much as [he] can about the car without talking to a salesman;”
- another wanted “a straightforward, easy to use site where [she] could get her questions answered;”

I wonder how much their previous experience with car dealer sites had to do with their strong preference for “information-forward,” easy to use site.

One participant also said: “I think you would go to a dealer web site to get more specific details than you can get from a manufacturer web site.”