

Lost and found

Return.Me helps customers retrieve lost keys — and dealerships keep customers

BY ZARA McALISTER

IT CAN COST CUSTOMERS hundreds of dollars to replace their vehicle key fobs. Knowing they could retrieve their keys would give them peace of mind.

That's the service Return.Me provides.

The Montreal, Que.-based company supplies recovery key tags branded with the dealership's messaging that dealers can activate for their customers in case they lose their keys.

These tags, along with other promotional marketing materials, are then packaged as gifts dealers offer to customers, or even prospects.

"If someone has just purchased a new car and two weeks later they pay \$300-400 for a replacement key fob, that's going to leave a sour taste in somebody's mouth," said Justin Gandhi, Automotive Channel Manager at Return.Me.

When customers need to purchase a replacement set of keys, they're losing more than money. It's also a hassle to lose keys, and then wait for the new ones to arrive. Chances are they've also lost their house or office keys.

That's not going to be a positive experience for the customer at the dealership, said Gandhi.

Instead, Return.Me offers dealers a low cost service that can help them retain customers. The service costs dealers only \$2 per unit, which includes a branded key tag, custom flyer and 24/7 global coverage for life of that tag, provided it's activated, said Gandhi.

The service is also run by Return.Me, making it virtually hands-off for dealers. The only time dealers need to invest is a



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couple of minutes to activate the customer's key tag through contact info, said Gandhi.

Hickman Automotive Group offers the Return.Me key retrieval service across all of its stores in St. John's, N.L.

"We want the entire customer's buying and ownership experience to be a positive one. And we think this has been a great fit for that," said Kevin Peters, COO for Hickman Automotive Group.

Peters said that when customers purchase a vehicle at a Hickman store, the sales staff will hand them the thank you gift, which includes the Return.Me key retrieval tags and a number of branding pieces.

As part of the welcome, the salesperson will then take the time to introduce the customer to team members at each department in the dealership, said Peters.

Schwab Auto Group in Alberta also

uses the key retrieval tags to promote service, said Chantel Segan, the group's Advertising & Marketing Manager.

Along with the key tags, Segan said the salespeople also hand out a service folder with promotions for a first free oil change or maintenance inspection. The service advisor will often flip through the service book with the customer to help promote maintenance at the dealership, she added.

Some of the salespeople at Hickman, like Scott Baggs, have really taken an active approach to explain the Return.Me service to customers, and then help them activate it.

Baggs said he's gotten a few calls from customers who were able to use the service — and were grateful for it.

"It just reminds [customers] that we're here to take care of you, and this is just another way to do that," said Gandhi.