Impel AI

How Major Dealer Groups Are Rethinking Service with AI

Introduction

Automotive AI is no longer just a buzzword—it's now a foundational driver of success in the industry. As a major dealer group managing multiple brands and locations, you need practical solutions that deliver real results at scale while driving efficiency. The goal? To streamline processes and deliver enhanced customer experiences that drive long-term customer loyalty.

At Impel, we collaborate with the world's leading dealer groups to maximize the potential of AI. And when it comes to fixed ops, we've learned that there is plenty of reason to be excited – when you approach the operational opportunity strategically.

Here, we provide a clear overview of how enterprise-level AI is transforming fixed operations to address the unique challenges major dealer groups face.

Turning Group Complexities into Opportunities

Managing service operations across multiple stores presents challenges that single-location dealers simply don't face. Ensuring consistent customer experiences and driving retention across a group requires a centralized view of service data that informs synchronized processes across the network. When an entire enterprise operationally aligns on how to serve customers, delivering reliable and cohesive customer care across all locations becomes far more efficient.

But driving standardization across thousands of staff members is no small feat.

The good news? **AI-powered** platforms create unprecedented opportunities for dealer groups to replicate and scale best practices.

If you're leading a major dealer group and searching for ways to create a cohesive service experience across your network without overextending your team, budget, or resources, this guide is your roadmap.

Where Service Misses the Mark Today

Many service departments across dealer groups still rely on outdated practices that were never designed for enterprise-scale operations.

These limitations create a cascade of problems:

1 **Impersonal Marketing**

While dealerships collect valuable customer data, most still send generic, one-size-fits-all campaigns. This impersonal approach isn't enough to stand out in crowded inboxes and mailboxes, nor does it yield any meaningful ROI.

3 **Constant Staff Turnover**

With service teams constantly in flux, maintaining a consistent customer experience is a challenge within one store - let alone multiple locations. The never ending cycle of hiring, training and ramping up staff makes it challenging to consistently deliver exceptional customer service experiences.

2 **Inefficient Scheduling Systems**

Customers can encounter different experiences or processes depending on which location they visit – lengthy phone waits at one dealership, clunky online booking at another. These inconsistencies create friction that prevent customers from scheduling service and increase your operating costs.

By addressing these pain points with an AI Operating System that doubles as a concierge service for customers and a virtual assistant for service representatives, dealerships can provide everything both parties need at exactly the right time. This creates a seamless experience that transforms service operations into a true asset for customers while strengthening the dealer group's bottom line.

Building the Dealership Service Drive of the Future, Now

The most innovative enterprise dealer groups are already putting AI to work, and they're going far beyond ChatGPT or other open-source models. With enterprise-grade Automotive AI, they're scaling and delivering premium experiences at every single location they operate. This creates a consistent service identity that customers recognize and value, regardless of which rooftop they visit.
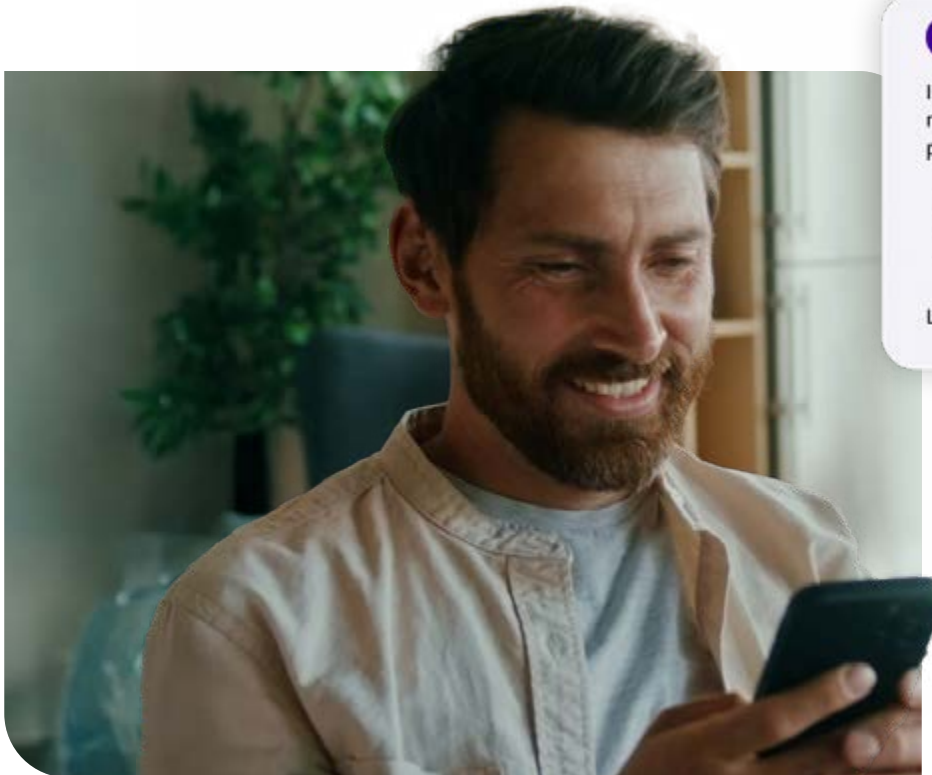
AVA

I understand that pricing is important, and I will ensure a service team member reaches out to you with more information. In the meantime, please let me know which of the available appointment times suits you best:

- Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at 8:00 AM
- Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 11:00 AM
- Friday, September 27, 2024, at 4:45 PM

Looking forward to your response!

Think about your favorite retail or restaurant chain. The experience remains consistent no matter which location you choose. This reliability and predictability provides the sense of comfort that customers value most, increasing the potential for long-term customer retention and future sales pipeline.

Here's how **AI** is transforming **the future** of dealership service operations ▪▪➡

AI-Powered Concierge Customer Service

Think about how a great personal assistant increases productivity. Now, imagine giving that same level of support to every customer in your service ecosystem.

That's exactly what AI-powered concierge systems deliver by:

» Unifying customer data like sales and service history, driving behavior, make and model, OEM service guidelines, communication preferences, and more into one holistic view of each consumer's needs

» Making conversational appointment scheduling effortless— whether your customer prefers texting at midnight or calling during lunch

» Delivering relevant offers and services tailored to each individual customer's needs

» Keeping customers in the loop during service visits with real-time updates that reduce those "Is my car ready yet?" calls

AI Assistants for Service Staff

Service team members are the face of fixed operations and are crucial to driving repeat business. Relying on them for DMS mining and proactive outreach is out of the question – they're pulled in far too many directions. In fact, they're often stretched too thin to properly and consistently serve customers standing right in front of them.

AI changes this dynamic completely. Here's how AI assists the service department:

» Schedules appointments for customers, reducing inbound phone calls

» Proactively engages and follows up with customers with timely, personalized communications based on DMS data

» Reaches out to and persistently follows up with abandoned customers

» Manages recall communications

» Consistently generates zero-party data, which helps update DMS records

By handling administrative busywork, scheduling, and delivering detailed handoffs to service advisors, AI frees your team to do what humans do best: build genuine relationships with customers that foster loyalty.

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However...

The gap between good and exceptional service operations isn't simply about adopting technology—it's about using it strategically to **unlock the full potential of your fixed operations.**

This insider checklist highlights six best practices that leading dealer groups are leveraging with AI to transform their fixed operations departments into powerful customer loyalty hubs.

Six AI Best Practices for Group Fixed Operations

① Integrate AI with your DMS (and don't stop there)

Groups achieve greater efficiency by integrating not only their DMS but their entire tech stack with one centralized AI platform. This provides a comprehensive view of the customer journey across brands and locations, enabling customer retention within the group, not just within a single location. It also enables the AI to act like the group's "central nervous system," unifying and cleansing data, intelligently coordinating outreach, and harmonizing different platform capabilities into one seamless customer experience.
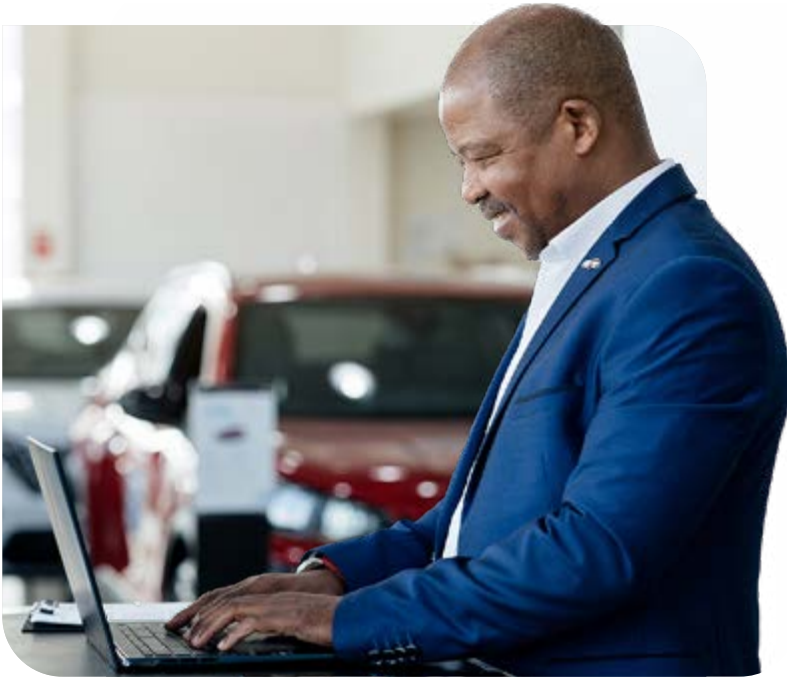
② Centralize Data & Reporting

Break down the walls between your locations. When a customer visits any of your dealerships, their complete history should follow them. This enterprise-wide view improves the customer experience and reveals service opportunities invisible to single-point dealers.

③ Smart Recall Management

Make the most of the opportunities that recalls can offer. Use AI to notify customers proactively, schedule service efficiently, surface additional service opportunities, and keep them engaged after the recall appointment to continue building customer lifetime value.

Six AI Best Practices for Group Fixed Ops

4 **Integrate Conversational AI with Marketing Outreach**

Integrating conversational AI with marketing campaigns ensures leads receive instant engagement, no matter the channel. By replacing traditional Call to Actions (CTAs) with QR codes or a link that starts a service scheduling conversation, conversational AI can drastically reduce the effort and steps needed to schedule an appointment from a marketing campaign.

5 **Amplify Your Brand Voice**

Every dealer group has a unique identity. Identify which parts of your brand and business apply across the enterprise, and where a localized approach might be needed - then configure your AI platform to reflect your brand, policies, and OEM standards, while enabling local dealer flexibility where appropriate. No detail is too small – you can even customize your AI to support a one-weekend promotion! Not all AI platforms are this sophisticated, so research carefully before choosing a provider.

6 **Unify the Entire Customer Experience with AI**

Fixed operations is the ideal starting point for AI—quick wins in efficiency and revenue make it a no-brainer. But the true power of AI lies in creating a seamless, coordinated customer experience across every step of the journey, from marketing to sales to service, no matter which store they visit.

Choose an **end-to-end AI platform** that acts as the central nervous system for your dealership, enabling a unified, effortless experience for every customer and unlocking long-term value for your business.

The ROI of AI in the Service Drive

Measuring Real Results with Artificial Intelligence

The benefits of AI in the service drive make sense in theory, but how do they translate into tangible outcomes? Discover the key success metrics major dealer groups track when deploying AI—and the actual results they're achieving.

More Service Appointments & Revenue

+27%

increase in repair orders
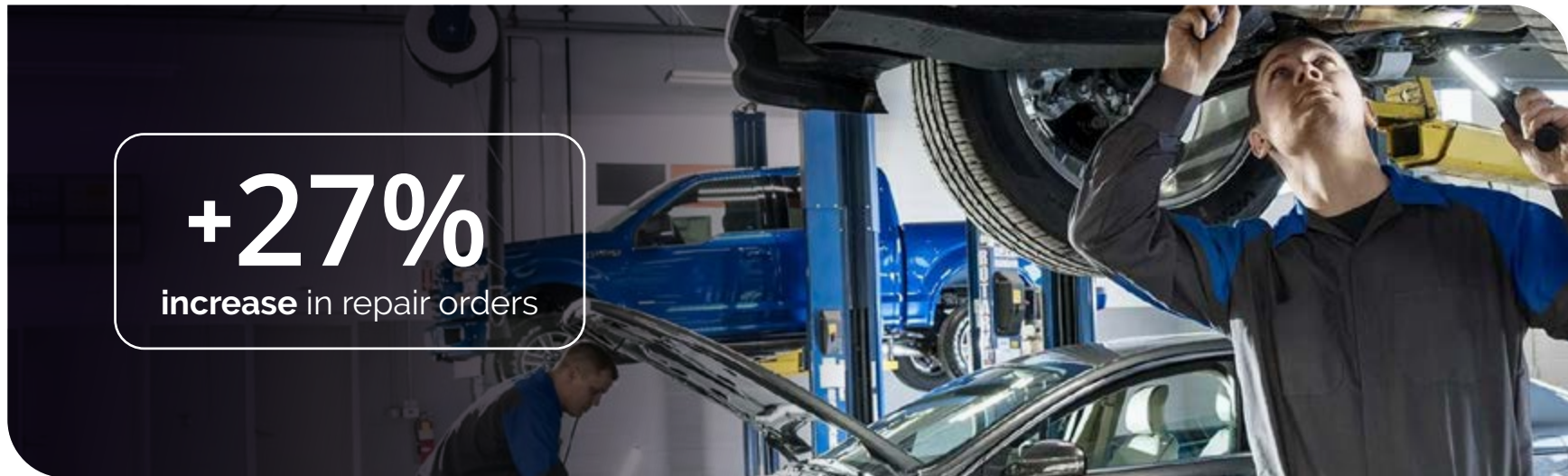
For the average dealership, that's an additional 95 Repair Orders completed per month

How it works:

Engaging customers with timely, hyper-personalized service reminders based on their unique history, on their preferred communication channel, drives significantly better response rates than generic communications.

Source: Impel Customer Data

Greater Customer Retention & Repurchase

+24%
higher vehicle repurchase rate
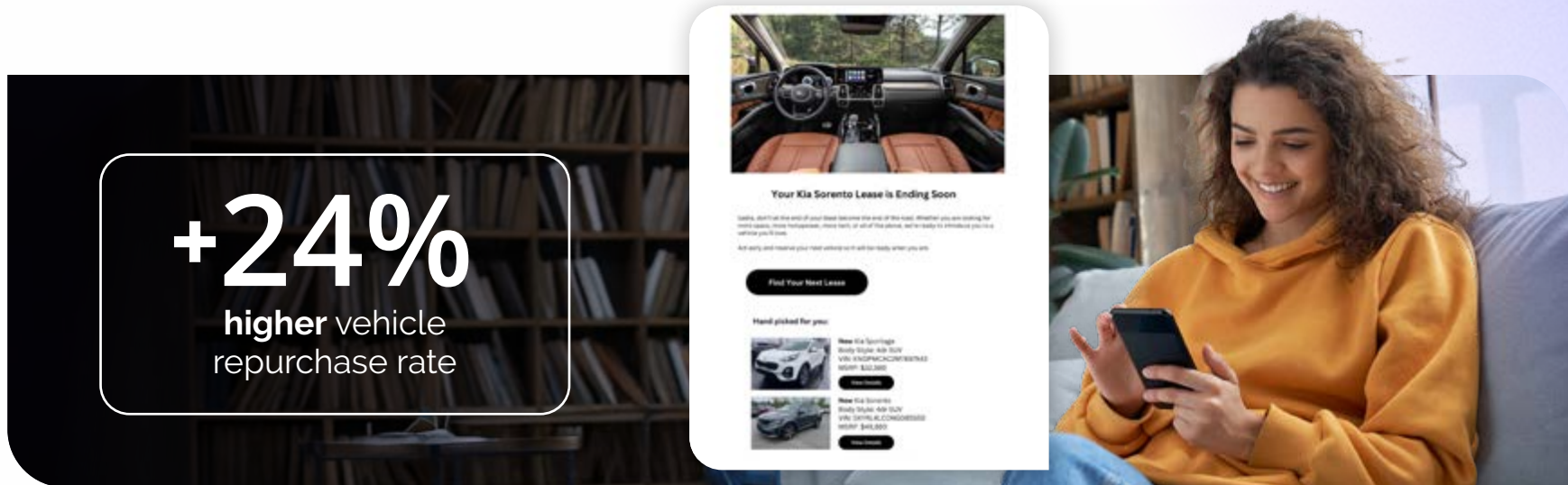
74% of customers *who purchase a vehicle and then come to your dealership for service will return to purchase their next vehicle from you.*

Source: Cox Automotive

How it works

AI creates long-term loyalty through continuous engagement:

» Timely, relevant messaging and offers

» Personalized service experiences

» Consistent follow-up across all
dealership locations

Enhanced Operational Efficiency & Productivity

218

additional equivalent human labor hours per month on average

How it works

AI takes low-value work off your service team's plate by:

- » Scheduling appointments and reducing inbound phone calls

- » Responding to questions and clarifying customer needs

- » Answering service inquiries in webchat

Source: Impel Customer Data

AI gets to work, completing critical tasks your service staff simply doesn't have time for:

- » Sending tailored recall alerts

- » Expiring warranty reminders

- » Inspection renewals

- » VIN-specific service reminders

Future-Proofing the Dealership Service Drive

Dealer groups that transform their service drives into centralized, AI-enabled customer loyalty centers will **increase retention and maximize customer lifetime value more effectively.**

Those who hesitate to embrace this evolution will fall behind and ultimately become obsolete.

By implementing **AI** along with the right strategies into your service operations, you'll exceed customer expectations and position your dealership for sustained growth.

Don't wait—your competition isn't.

Stay Secure

> Implementing new technology successfully requires comprehensive security and privacy controls and compliance.

Data breaches, cyberattacks, and information security remain critical concerns globally. According to IBM's 2024 Cost of a Data Breach Report, the average global cost of a data breach has risen to **$4.88 million**, a **10% increase** compared to the previous year. Every dealer, especially those with an enterprise footprint, must know what to look for in an AI platform.

Essential safeguards include:

» Advanced AI guardrails that prevent unauthorized access to sensitive information or user manipulation - and ensure the system only produces accurate, appropriate responses aligned with your dealership's policies and values

» AI technology providers with verified enterprise-grade security certifications such as SOC 2, TCPA, CCA, and GDPR compliance

» Partners who maintain robust infosec and data privacy processes, protecting your dealership's and your customers' sensitive information

Download our recommended ***Automotive AI Checklist here.***

View Now

Stay Ahead with Impel

The dealer groups thriving today aren't waiting for the future. They're driving it.

With Impel's enterprise-grade AI Operating System, you can transform your service operation to deliver a cohesive experience that customers value and competitors envy.

Discover how Impel enables dealer groups to build future-ready service drives. **Get in touch with us** today to learn more and position your dealership group for long-term growth and greater customer loyalty.

Schedule Demo

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