

NAME

Laethem Part 2 Audio.mp3

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START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:02]

So there's other dealer owners out there. What's your recommendation to them?

[00:00:07]

What they do first to come to, you know, come up with cloud, enable virtualization in their dealership.

[00:00:16]

It starts with the phone call. The amount of people that want to be heard from right now and whether it's us calling them or or them calling into us, they want answers quickly. They are as lost as we are about how things are going forward. So just that contact with customers staying in touch with your customer is the most important thing. Now, we we saw the statistics looking at the data of who is making the phone calls from home. One guy in particular, Bob, at our dealership who's always been one of the top Buick salesmen in the country. He was on the phone more than ever. I mean, I think we've talked before about his phone being SHINee first because he uses it so much. Well, he has his statistics were off the hook looking at looking at them while we're gone. And the first day that he was he was back in business. He sold six cars, not not this Monday, but the Monday before. So, you know, I think that this is a time that technology reminds us to get back to basics about getting in touch and keeping in touch with, you know, with the people that make our business happen, that the, you know, the customers, the customers that that want they want answers. We want to know how to move forward.

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So. So here's a plug for our phone service or really any advanced phone service is that you were able to see statistics of calls that Bob made. Yes. And instead of being limited to only calls coming in, which which there's many calling analytics companies that serve the dealership community, any community, but there's only a handful like us that I can think of.

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Right. That has those staying. Same statistics on the outbound calls, whether the calls made from a computer or cell phone or what some people think of click to call or a desk phone or an app on a smart phone.

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The that's that's enough of my plug.

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I love bar graphs. I'm a pie chart guy personally. They're a little more simpler.

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And isn't that key to it for myself?

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Of course we have the serum's. We have our own analytical reporting.

[00:03:04]

And my team will gather up a number of reports and hand them to me. And I think, wow, this is overwhelming. Yes. I don't have the time to sit and really make sense of what all the reports mean. Right. So I like simple, clean, clear reports. So I'll go to our team and I'll say something like, I want to know of this group of salespeople. How many calls did they make outbound last week? Show me a graph with the whole and each person so I can see who is really taking advantage of the time and the opportunity.

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Right.

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And then I get a graph, because if this system is designed right, then those reports are simplified in our already drilled down to the information that the business manager or the owner is looking for.

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I just went off on a tangent.

[00:04:14]

Know what I mean? You know, back to back to before before the crisis, one of my favorite reports was looking at service advice or phone calls inbound that that went to a voicemail. And there was there was a couple advisors that had some of our worst customer satisfaction scores. And they, not surprisingly, had the most calls that went to voicemail, you know, and that was something that we started looking at. And they realized that they didn't realize that they had a problem with it. They didn't they didn't know that they get busy, but they they changed their they changed their ways. We we make every point of data. We're very transparent with our with our data. And we publish. We publish that. It's not a shame thing, it's just it's the score, baby.

[00:05:07]

Well, you're hiring people who want to do a good job and who want to succeed. And I believe that that except for the occasional outlier, everybody who we hire really wants to do their best. And he says, I think that's human nature. Early states, it's the American way. Yes. That's built into us.

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But we don't necessarily know what we have to do or how to succeed or move to the next level. And that's where coaching and counseling and having some some data helps with prompts.

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Another question for me. So what? Well, we didn't talk about Jeff is who do you count on to help navigate and really decide what technologies you're going to put into your dealership?

[00:06:04]

I do a lot of traveling to digital dealer and and different in different shows across the country to know how we can ultimately simplify the business. It seems like it's making it more complex. But all of these steps make it simpler, simpler for us and simpler for for the customer.

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So when you come across a vendor that you may not have heard of because they're not a multibillion dollar company yet, that's what what helps you through the risk of trying them or using them?

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It really comes down to interviewing who that that company is interviewing some of the other dealers that have used those that company at some point. I look at it and if you see that the technology is extremely well done. There is a strong faith that the rest of it comes along with it. I don't know if that makes sense, but but once when somebody is smart enough to see something that works so seamlessly and has, you know, that kind of oh, they thought of that. They thought of that. Well, they they've they've got to be they've got to be good. But then it comes down to that final interview stage of asking how they will execute. We're going to come together. But I'd never do it without calling, you know, two or three different guys that are using using that vendor to know how the initial implementation, because that's usually that's where literally the rubber hits the road is. How did that initial implementation. Two or three days go? How did the training go? How did the ongoing training go? That's that's really the key questions that I'm asking. I'm asking dealers, is, is is that critical? First few days and follow up.

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What I hear you hear you're saying is that you accept what what's being sold in your. If if the details check out and what you're being told that the product will do, then then you assume the product will do what they're selling. Yes. The gap or the question that's not asked that you dive into is getting from where you are today to getting to the benefit of what they've sold. Yes. Tonality. What's that road looks like? Is that a big piece of really the overall cost and in drag on dealership resources in your mind, in your time and getting to know what the product or service is planning to do?

[00:08:47]

Right. And probably the untold piece of this is is if you have a bad initial implementation that that echoes throughout your organization and then they don't want to use the technology. So even even if the technology works perfectly, it's you know, you've got that one time to make that first impression and you're making it. In our case to 160 some people.

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Anything else that you want to add that's top of mind?

[00:09:16]

Well, the two things where we are on lockdown, we are not able to have customers in the showroom right now. So

we are we are showrooming on the on the phone and test, driving out outside, signing papers digitally. We we've gone from split. We've gone to split shifts. So on the day off a day just to limit exposure. And we we made the decision yesterday to on Monday that we're going to go back to just one shift going back to normal. Other than the showroom not being open. One thing I can tell you is that we didn't know how that was going to go over and overwhelmingly, overwhelmingly ever since its time. We are ready. We know that. We've put in not only the innovations, but the safety, the safety equipment and the things that are that make us feel comfortable to come to work. Now, how how I think this is changing the industry. It is it is fast forwarding it to where it needs to be to a simpler, more transparent way of doing business. I think that as a whole, the industry has resisted it to keep control on pricing, to keep control on the way the process worked. It's just been accepted that that's the case. But everywhere else and everything that we do, with the possible exception of purchasing a home, has moved past our traditional retailing. See the customers being significantly more in control. We we put on our Web site where you can do where you can desk the whole deal. You can figure out your payments down to the penny, have 90 percent of the work done for hitting the showroom. I envision relatively soon that if a customer comes to pick up the car, most important part is going to be our expert, showing them how everything functions inside that car so they have a great ownership experience. So it's forcing the lubrication of our industry and I think that that's a great thing.

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I'm curious, have you used mobile video to have a customer connected with your salesperson, your salesperson on?

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They're using a smartphone, walking to a vehicle in the showroom and doing a virtual tour, but a real time customer virtual tour while in conversation with with with a prospective customer.

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Yes, we have a showing different colors, showing different features, and also had some times where since we cannot deliver that car and be inside the car at the same time, the customer we have done a walk through of the technology inside the car via video chat. We have also had our dance department do interviews over video chat to keep up with the legality of there are certain things that need to be gone over in person and they are accepting meeting as that. So it's happening fast. Everything being unified, you know, you've got so many different apps that we're going to right now. Just we did our we did our meeting where we decided to go open completely on yesterday. So we love the fact that it's all unified with some dealerships.

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Look at upgrading their phone service. They're looking at this, the phones and maybe go with the local guy who's going to have the server and, you know, at the dealership and and plug in the old school phone lines. There's a comfort level to that time because that dealer principal might know the person because the what what would you say to to that decision making process?

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If you will be stuck, you'll be stuck and not able to do the things that are necessary now after after this crisis. And probably we're going to happen either way.

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But you're stuck with a boat anchor, an expensive boat anchor.

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Yes, I understand the comfort maybe from knowing the person. It can't be from the technology because it really ties you. It really ties you to your building.

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And everybody knows now that that doesn't work.

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Hey, thanks, Jeff. It was great chat with you today. Hope to see you soon. When Michigan opens up.

END OF TRANSCRIPT