
MARK: the Blueprint for Winning More Consumers Online

From an interview with Pat Ryan, Jr., CEO and Co-Founder of INCISENT Technologies.

MARK is a revolutionary new approach to online car advertising that helps you win more consumers by speaking their language. While you and other pros know everything there is to know about a given model (like all Honda Pilots have third row seats), you have to ask yourself—"would my mom know that?" Do your ads answer the core questions consumers ask themselves when shopping for cars online?

Why Most Online Car Ads Don't Work Well

If you browse through car ads online, you'll quickly see that most ads fall into two categories. The first category is blocks: big, impenetrable blocks of text. The worst offenders are generic VIN explosions that list features in alphabetical order, putting not-so-in-demand equipment like "automatic power door locks" and "automatic power windows" at the top of the ad. When the typical search returns 175 cars and your ad is a block of text like all the others, consumers can't see the value of your vehicle and are quick to move on to the next listing.

The other category of online car ads are full of dealer speak. Dealer speak ads are filled with phrases like, "so clean you could eat off the floor mats" and "hot, hot, hot!" Wordy, over-the-top ads tax consumers' attention span and ping their "too good to be true" radar. Instead of focusing on third-party evidence of why you have a good car, engaging in dealer speak means you're not maximizing relevance to the consumer. When you're trying to establish trust, in an industry where consumer trust is already low, you can't use spin to sell your vehicles.

MARK: Maximizing Consumer Relevance to Sell on Value

MARK is a revolutionary new way to win consumers online. Our INCISENT Labs research team devoted two years to researching the cutting-edge of how consumers make decisions today and studying the innovation of top Silicon Valley companies. Instead of big blocks of text or dealer speak, ads built with MARK use evidence to give the consumer reasons to buy.

The MARK process starts by capturing virtually all the relevant information that the average consumer spends 6.5 hours researching online. However, 6.5 hours worth of information would be drinking out of a fire hose for the consumer. Thus, MARK selects the most relevant insights available for your vehicle and maps them to the consumer decision making process and selects the most relevant parts.

Every car has hundreds of attributes, but research shows that people can only retain 4-7 variables at a time. To help consumers retain the key selling points of your cars, MARK maps the information about each car to the decision making



To view a short video of Pat Ryan discussing the MARK process, visit www.ConsumerOptimization.com

Pat Ryan, Jr. is the Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of *INCISENT Technologies*, maker of FirstLook Inventory Management Systems and MAX Internet Advertising and Marketing Systems. The Company was ranked as the #4 Fastest Growing Software Company in the United States in *Inc Magazine's* Top 500 List as well as the #1 Fastest Growing Company in the Automotive Sector.

Pat is widely followed as a thought leader and speaker and can be reached at pat@incisent.com.

process, organizing it around the into 4–7 core questions consumers typically ask when buying a car.

The 4 MARK elements are:

- **Mission**
- **Affordability**
- **Risk**
- **Key Differentiators**

The Components of MARK

Mission

Mission lets the consumer know if your vehicle meets their needs. If a consumer is looking for a family vehicle, which attributes of your car make it a great choice for families? It's important to include that info so the consumer can quickly confirm that the car fulfills their most important criteria.

Affordability

Affordability is about demonstrating that your vehicle's price is fair. Most car shoppers have a fear of getting ripped off, so providing evidence of the fairness of your price is critical. One great opportunity is that only 2% of online car ads list the price versus a consumer guide book, so if your price compares favorably to Kelley Blue Book, Edmunds or NADA, that's excellent evidence of value to share.

If you've reduced the price, this may represent a buying opportunity for the consumer, motivating them to buy. Knowing how the current price compares to the original MSRP provides evidence of the value of your vehicle and gives another reason to buy your car.

Risk

Risk gives the consumer confidence that the car is not a "lemon." If the car has only had one owner, has a clean title or hasn't been in an accident, feature those facts in the Risk section. Low mileage gives the consumer a sense of less wear and tear. J.D. Power Quality Ratings offer evidence that the car will be reliable over the course of its lifetime.

Typically, ads for Certified cars just say "Certified," but the typical consumer has limited understanding of what the benefits of a Certified program are and why that justifies a higher price. Highlight the 2 year/24,000 mile Certified warranty as well as high-perceived-value features, such as free loaner cars or 24/7 roadside assistance. Finally, any remaining free maintenance or factory warranty gives the consumer an even greater degree of comfort with purchasing your car.

Key Differentiators

Key Differentiators, the final MARK component, make the car stand out from others on the market. Key Differentiators are broken out into four separate sections: *Awards and Accolades*, *Expert Reviews*, *Most Searched Equipment*, and *Dealer Differentiators*.

- **Awards and Accolades**, like 5-star crash ratings, Motor Trend Car of the Year and other model awards, give strong reasons to choose the vehicle over similar vehicles. J.D. Power ratings by consumers are also powerful

IDEAL FOR YOUR FAMILY

This Volkswagen CC VR6 4Motion is perfect for families with safety features such as 5 Star Crash Rating, Child Safety Locks and Overhead Airbag. TECHNOLOGY PKG, Leather Seats, Navigation, Sunroof, Heated Seats, Alloy Wheels, All Wheel Drive, Electronic Stability Control and ABS. Windy City VW has what you are looking for... 4Motion with Deep Black exterior and Black Leather Seats features 6-Speed Automatic Transmission and V6 Cylinder Engine with 280 HP at 6200 RPM*.

A GREAT TIME TO BUY

JUST REDUCED FROM \$32,995; \$2,400 below Kelley Blue Book; Approx. Original Base Sticker Price: \$42,420*

OWN WITH CONFIDENCE

Get peace of mind with Volkswagen Certified featuring: 2 years/24,000 miles from date of purchase or upon expiration of the New Vehicle Comprehensive Limited Warranty, No Deductible, 112-Point Inspection and Reconditioning, Vehicle History Report, 24-Hour Roadside Assistance, a clean CARFAX Vehicle History Report; Qualifies for CARFAX Buyback Guarantee.

evidence; when consumers know that others have had a good experience with a car, they become more confident that it's a good buy.

- **Expert Reviews** from trusted third-party sources like Kelley Blue Book and Edmunds showcase your car's strengths and lend credibility to your ad. Quoting the same sources consumers use to do their own research is likely to build trust and confidence.
- **Most Searched Equipment** highlights the features of your car that are in high demand to set your vehicle apart. By analyzing consumer search behavior, we identify the equipment that is most popular with consumers: leather, navigation, sunroof, 3rd row seat, seat heaters, manual transmission, DVD, tow hitch, bed liner, alloy wheels, quad seats, turbo and overhead airbags.
- **Dealer Differentiators** show consumers why they should do business with you. Including your tagline is fine, but third-party rating and accreditations, like dealer awards and BBB affiliation, give greater credibility than rhetoric.

If you apply MARK and provide compelling, digestible information to the online consumer that proves your car's the one to buy, your ad will connect with the consumer. MARK helps you answer the questions consumers ask when searching for cars online, so you're communicating with them instead of talking at them. **When you speak the consumer's language, you win: more sales, more traffic and the opportunity to earn value with margin.**