

Online Reviews and Compliance

60% of the car buying process is spent conducting online research.

78% of online research is spent using third-party sites or apps.

Because of this it has become standard practice for dealerships to be listed on websites like:

Google



yelp

edmunds.com



POSITIVE

NEGATIVE



Examples of cutting corners to build positive online brand presence

- Asking customers to leave a review while in the dealership, on a device owned by the dealership, which puts extra pressure on the customer to leave a positive review.
- *Google monitors for this and penalizes companies who use this tactic.*
- Using contract provisions, including online terms and conditions, to penalize consumers for posting negative reviews or complaints.
- *This is illegal under the Consumer Review Fairness Act.*



The CRFA prohibits companies from using contract provisions to:

- Bar or restrict the ability of a person to review a company's products, services or conduct.
- Impose a penalty or fee against someone for leaving a review.
- Take ownership of a person's review when they mention the company's name, thereby requiring people to give up their intellectual property rights of the content in the review.



Which government bodies with jurisdiction over dealers can enforce the CRFA?

The Federal Trade Commission



State Attorneys General

WHAT DO DEALERS NEED TO DO TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE AND CREATE POSITIVE ONLINE ENGAGEMENT?

1. **Review all contracts** with your legal team to remove any provisions that violate the CRFA.
2. **Allow customers to think** on their experience so they can give you an honest review that resonates more with your customer base.
3. **Respond to all consumer feedback** in a timely manner.
4. **Thank consumers** for positive reviews, and reach out to those who posted negative reviews to resolve any questions or concerns.

Source: AutoTrader Car Buyer Journey Study

