Free Digital Marketing Checklist

For Independent & Family-Run UK Car Dealerships

Is your dealership visible where buyers are searching?
Work through this checklist to find out — and fix what's missing.

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Your Free Digital Marketing Checklist

Buyers start with search — not your showroom. Use this checklist to audit every channel that determines whether your dealership gets found, trusted, and chosen. Work through it section by section. Tick what's in place. Act on what's missing.

01 | Google Business Profile

- [ ] **Profile claimed and verified**
  Your GBP listing is live and ownership confirmed via Google.
  → *Go to google.com/business to check status*

- [ ] **Business name, address and phone number (NAP) accurate**
  Consistent with your website and all other directories.
  → *Inconsistent NAP data damages local search rankings*

- [ ] **Business category set correctly**
  Primary category should reflect your franchise or vehicle type (e.g. 'Car Dealer', 'Used Car Dealer').
  → *Secondary categories can include finance, servicing etc.*

- [ ] **Opening hours up to date**
  Including Bank Holiday and seasonal adjustments.

- [ ] **At least 10 photos uploaded**
  Exterior, showroom interior, stock and team. Real images outperform stock photography.
  → *Google rewards active profiles with better local visibility*

- [ ] **Google Posts published monthly**
  Promotions, stock highlights, events. Treated as fresh content signals by Google.

- [ ] **Reviews actively requested and responded to**
  Target a consistent flow of genuine Google reviews. Respond to every one — positive and negative.
  → *Review velocity matters. Stale profiles lose ranking position*

- [ ] **Products / Services section populated**
  List your key makes, services and finance options.

- [ ] **Q&A; section monitored**
  Answer questions promptly. You can also seed your own FAQs.

- [ ] **Website URL correct and tracking applied**
  Link to your homepage or a dedicated landing page with UTM parameters so visits are trackable in GA4.

02 | SEO — Organic Search Visibility

- [ ] **Title tags and meta descriptions optimised**
  Every key page (homepage, model pages, finance page) needs a unique, keyword-targeted title tag under 60 characters.
  → *Meta descriptions don't directly affect rankings but improve click-through rate from search results*

- [ ] **Location + model keywords targeted**
  Pages should target phrases buyers actually use: "Nissan Qashqai dealer Leeds", "used Toyota RAV4 finance Kent".
  → *Think: make + model + location = high-intent buyer*

- [ ] **Google Search Console connected**
  Verify ownership. Monitor which queries drive impressions and clicks. Track indexing errors.
  → *Free. Essential. No excuse not to have it set up*

- [ ] **Google Analytics 4 (GA4) installed**
  With goals / conversion events configured for enquiry forms, phone clicks and test drive bookings.

- [ ] **Internal linking reviewed**
  Key pages should be linked from your homepage and other high-traffic pages.
  → *Orphaned pages won't rank — Google can't find them*

- [ ] **Sitemap submitted to Google Search Console**
  Ensure your sitemap.xml is error-free and submitted.

- [ ] **Schema markup in place**
  At minimum: LocalBusiness schema on homepage with NAP, opening hours and sameAs links.
  → *Helps Google understand who you are and where you operate*

- [ ] **Page speed checked on mobile**
  Use Google PageSpeed Insights. Core Web Vitals directly influence rankings.
  → *Most buyers will search on mobile. Slow pages lose enquiries*

- [ ] **No duplicate content**
  Each model / make page is unique — not copied manufacturer descriptions.

03 | PPC — Paid Search

- [ ] **Google Ads account active**
  If you are not running paid search, competitors are — and they are appearing above you.

- [ ] **Campaigns structured by intent**
  Separate campaigns for brand, model, finance, service and conquest (competitors). Don't lump everything together.
  → *Poorly structured campaigns waste budget on irrelevant clicks*

- [ ] **Geo-targeting set to your real catchment area**
  Most independent dealers operate within 10–20 miles. Don't pay for clicks from outside your territory.
  → *Tight geo = lower CPL, better ROI*

- [ ] **Negative keywords list in place**
  Exclude irrelevant traffic. E.g. "jobs", "parts only", "reviews" — terms that generate clicks but not buyers.

- [ ] **Conversion tracking installed**
  Track form submissions, phone calls and live chat leads as conversions in Google Ads.
  → *Without tracking you cannot calculate your cost per enquiry*

- [ ] **Ad copy reviewed and tested**
  Test at least two ad variants per ad group. Include your location, a finance offer or USP.

- [ ] **Landing pages match ad messaging**
  If your ad says "Kia Sportage from £299/month" the landing page must show exactly that.
  → *Message mismatch kills Quality Score and increases cost per click*

- [ ] **Monthly budget reviewed against results**
  Know your cost per click, cost per lead and cost per sale — every month.

- [ ] **Remarketing campaigns live**
  Target users who visited your site but didn't enquire. Low cost, high intent.

04 | Website Essentials

- [ ] **Mobile-first design confirmed**
  Over 70% of automotive searches happen on mobile. Your site must work flawlessly on a phone.

- [ ] **Clear calls to action on every key page**
  "Book a Test Drive", "Get a Finance Quote", "Call Us Now" — visible without scrolling.
  → If buyers have to hunt for your number, they won't wait

- [ ] **Live stock feed integrated**
  Real-time or daily-updated inventory visible on site. Out-of-date stock destroys credibility.

- [ ] **Finance calculator or representative APR displayed**
  Buyers want to know monthly costs before they enquire. Make it easy.

- [ ] **Enquiry form works and delivers leads**
  Test it yourself. Check where leads land — inbox, CRM, both?
  → Broken forms are invisible revenue leaks

- [ ] **HTTPS and security certificate valid**
  Browsers flag insecure sites. Google penalises them.

- [ ] **Privacy policy and cookie consent in place**
  Required under UK GDPR and PECR. Non-negotiable.

- [ ] **Local landing pages for each franchise**
  Dedicated pages for each make you stock: "Kia dealer in [Town]", "Ford servicing [Town]".

05 | Local & Wider Online Visibility

- [ ] **Listed on key automotive directories**
  Autotrader, Motors.co.uk, CarGurus, Cazoo marketplace (if applicable). Consistent NAP across all.

- [ ] **Bing Places profile claimed**
  Often overlooked. Bing powers Alexa and Cortana searches.

- [ ] **Apple Maps listing claimed**
  Essential for iPhone users using Apple Maps or Siri.

- [ ] **Yell.com and Thomson Local up to date**
  Legacy directories still carry citation value for local SEO.

- [ ] **Social media profiles active and linked**
  Facebook at minimum. Consistent branding, regular posts, linked to your website.

- [ ] **Facebook Business Page optimised**
  Category, description, contact details, CTA button, and regular posts in place.

- [ ] **LinkedIn profile for the Dealer Principal**
  Builds personal authority and trust. Important for the B2B/fleet audience.

- [ ] **Consistent NAP across all platforms**
  Your Name, Address and Phone number must be identical everywhere — directories, social, website, GBP.
  → *Inconsistency is one of the most common local SEO errors*

How Did You Score?

40–44 ticks	Strong foundations. Focus on refining PPC attribution and conversion rate.
30–39 ticks	Good base but gaps. Prioritise GBP, GSC setup and conversion tracking now.
20–29 ticks	Significant opportunity being missed. Start with GBP, then SEO basics.
Under 20	Enquiries are leaking to competitors today. Act immediately — start at Section 01.

Want a Free Audit of Your Dealership?

I work exclusively with independent and small franchised UK car dealerships — under 10 rooftops. No big agency overhead. No generic advice. Just 27 years of motor trade experience combined with specialist SEO and PPC knowledge.

If you want to know where your dealership is losing enquiries and what to do about it, get in touch. The first conversation is free.

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This checklist is provided free of charge as a practical audit tool. All recommendations are based on current UK search marketing best practice. © 2026 Graham Lower Digital Marketing. All rights reserved.