

HOW TO GET THROUGH THE OFF-SEASON BLUES AND BUILD A BETTER DEALERSHIP



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It's high season, you and your team are working tons of hours, and the balance sheet is looking mighty sweet. The temptation will be there to expand your dealership. **But always know that slow season will be just around the corner.** No one's saying never to expand your business, but you may want to get a year or two in business under your belt, to experience the highs and lows, to be a better judge of when and how to allocate your funds.

Manage Your Time

It's your business, your baby. But that **doesn't mean you have to be on 24/7.** Stress can lead to **health issues** and **poor decision making.** Embrace being slow now and then by slowing down yourself. You owe yourself a break here and there.

Plan Ahead

It's vital for small businesses to plan ahead for at least six months to a year. After 12 months in business, a small business owner should develop at least a basic understanding of the **sales process** and cycles in the industry, and therefore be better able to project sales data based on seasonality. If your small business is just starting, research peers and industry sources to get a better idea on how seasonality affects your dealership.

Diversify

One way that ambitious dealership managers can handle downtime in a seasonal business is to branch out during the slow season. **This article recommends you don't disappear,** but instead use the slow time to increase your community outreach, so when the busy season rolls around again, your name and offerings will be top of mind. Another idea may be time to get creative with your resources. Example, it's not uncommon to see landscaping businesses in the snow belt convert their landscaping trucks to snow plows in the winter. Think about what resources you have and how you might create other revenue streams.



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Acknowledge Your Advantages

Most dealerships tend to grow as an owner and his or her team gains insights, ideas, and experience in managing the product and customers. One major advantage you have as a dealership is that the **seasonality of sales** is a very predictable cycle. Unlike natural disasters, fluctuations in the markets, or the unreliability of the economy, you can plan for seasonal ebbs and flows and use those cycles productively.

Take Time to Review and Focus

If you're thinking about implementing a new tactic, marketing strategy or other initiative, take the time to sit down, relax, reflect, and take inventory on how things went and where you want them to go. Solicit staff and to identify what worked and what didn't. **Leverage online reviews** to your advantage. Review "lessons learned" with your staff and identify trends. Then formulate or adjust your business strategy not only for the next high season, but also for the duration of the off-season.

