

5 Things the  
“**Best Dealerships  
to Work For**”  
Have In Common



## What does the blueprint to a well-structured office environment look like?

Now in its fifth year, Automotive News has just released their **annual list** of 100 “Best Dealerships to Work For.” It’s a program “dedicated to finding and recognizing the best employers in the retail automotive industry,” according to Automotive News. Needless to say, it’s a big deal for those dealerships cracking the top 100.

What can a dealership do to become a “Best Dealership To Work For” (BDTWF) and strengthen their employer reputation?



There is no single answer to this question. For most dealerships, a positive workplace environment happens organically as the leadership team recognizes the investment in finding high-caliber employees. However, there are common characteristics top dealerships share which make them excellent employers—and there are steps any dealership can take to help build their identity as an employer. All they need to know is where to start.

In this eBook, we’ll outline the five common traits all “Best Dealerships to Work For” have in common, as well as tips on how to improve dealership culture across the retail auto industry.

# 1. Authentic Company Culture

## Why go out of the way to build a workplace that focuses on employee culture?

*“When employees feel cared about as people, I’ve found they do their best work. They also stay longer, work harder, and produce more, which makes caring an amazing rate of increase. It’s a win-win for everyone. This attitude also trickles down into customer service, since relating to others on a human level should be so wholly baked into company culture. You can’t create a company without great people, and you can’t create a good company culture without recognizing the humanity in your employees.”*

—John Tabis, CEO of The Bouqs Company and Fast Company contributing author

The effort spent building a positive dealership culture can go a long way. When dealers take the time to better the workplace for their business and employees, they’re bound to see results. Here are some of the benefits they get from creating a unique culture:

- **Respect**
- **Positive Attitudes**
- **Optimism**
- **Inspiration**
- **Encouragement for Creativity**
- **Transparency Between Leadership & Employees**

In order to obtain these benefits, dealers need to know how to build the right culture — one that’s unique to them, their business and employees.

## 2. A Strong Employment Brand

Before dealerships can hire great employees, they have to recruit them first. The BDTWF are already great employers and they let job seekers know this by highlighting everything that's great about their dealership on their company website.

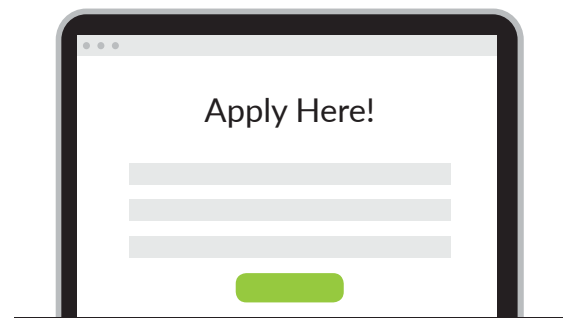
The first thing a prospective job candidate sees when researching positions with an auto dealership is the **career site** or dealership website page that's dedicated to promoting open positions and workplace culture. Applicants will not apply to jobs at dealerships if dealers don't provide them with in-depth, easy-to-follow information regarding the dealership's structure, culture and opportunities that come with the job.

Hireology looked at one dealership's hiring activities to see how employment branding affects the quality of applicants in the overall hiring process. Over a six month period, the dealership utilized both job boards and a strong career site to attract 1,825 applicants.

**Interestingly, direct, career site visitors drove 18 percent of applicant submissions, but were responsible for 79 percent of overall hires.**

This highlights the effectiveness of career sites in generating needed high quality candidates and hires for key roles.

Other findings showed that career site candidates were more likely to become mid-to top-performers after a 60-day evaluation. Employee turnover also remained 70 percent below the industry average.



"We've really thought outside the box on highlighting the benefits of starting your career with our dealership. If you visit our Facebook page or website, you'll see content we created specifically to highlight our career opportunities, and what working in our dealerships is really like. From those we've hired, we're finding that people watch and consume this content and want to work with us because of the material they've seen about our dealership and our opportunities."

**Michael Marlin, Director of Training, Ray Skillman Auto**

## 2. A Strong Employment Brand *continued*

### FOUR CRITICAL ELEMENTS

One of the key elements of having a strong employment brand is a polished career site. To build a career site that effectively drives qualified applicants, dealerships should consider the following:

#### 1. A CLEAN DESIGN:

Top candidates—especially millennials—seek companies that have a clean, well-designed site that's easy to navigate and works on multiple devices. A clean design lets users quickly learn about dealerships in a site customized to their brand and team. And if the site is mobile-friendly, applicants can learn about the dealership no matter which device they're using. This is essential as, according to a study conducted by PewResearch Center, "28% of Americans – and half of young adults – have used a smartphone during a job search."

#### 2. A CLEAR CAREER PATH:

Today's applicants aren't just looking for a job, they're looking for a career. By outlining what the career path looks like with the dealership, dealers can gain a huge competitive advantage and attract better candidates.

#### 3. CULTURE AND COMMUNITY:

Today's job seekers pursue insight on the dealership's history, culture and community involvement, among other factors. This type of information should be included on a career site—bonus points if it's visually appealing. Having lifestyle photos highlighting the dealership gives a great impression of a dealership's team, culture and history.

#### 4. BENEFITS FRONT AND CENTER:

Don't make candidates dig for details on why it's so great to work for your dealership – focus on your dealership's best qualities to excite applicants to join the team. Be sure to include details on the specific benefits your dealership offers, such as a 401K plan, health insurance, dental, compensation, etc. Additional details may further help attract job seekers for specific roles. For example, technician candidates value information regarding whether or not the dealership supplies tools and if the dealership's garage is air-conditioned. These are just some of the essential details that can help your dealership more effectively attract qualified job seekers.

## 3. Community Involvement

A great deal can be said about a company that gives back to its community, for many reasons. Community involvement (such as volunteering) has a large influence on millennial job seekers and the way they perceive potential employers.

According to a study cited in a recent Forbes [article](#), millennial job seekers take cause work very seriously during their job search — something all dealers should consider the next time they start their recruiting and hiring process. Here are some of the findings cited in the article:

- ***“63% of female employees said their company’s cause work influenced them to accept a job, compared to 45% of male employees.”***
- ***“A company’s cause work begins to influence most millennial employees during the interview. While only 39% of millennial employers said they researched their employer’s cause work prior to the interview, 55% of employees were influenced to take their job after discussing cause work in the interview.”***
- ***“Regarding volunteerism, millennial employees preferred joining a company-wide or team-specific volunteer project rather than donating to a giving campaign.”***
- ***“Millennials who volunteer with and donate to causes on their own were found to be the most likely to research and consider a company’s cause work during their job search.”***

Dealerships with the best workplace cultures know how important community involvement is in general, but for recruiting as well. Community involvement is further showcased on unique dealership websites by:

- **Highlighting company volunteering**
- **Listing their dealership’s community service mission statement**
- **Providing information on safety initiatives to help educate community on auto safety**
- **Posting pictures of dealership volunteer outings and activities within the community**
- **Offering information on any partnerships within the community that support environmental causes or green projects**

Community involvement is a win-win situation for dealerships. It’s healthy and productive giving back to the community and provides a fellowship between dealership employees and those they serve. The “Best Dealerships To Work For” do this regularly, which never goes unnoticed.



## 4. Career Paths



"We've built out our site and social channels to talk about our career opportunities. We found that a lot of our talent pool didn't realize the opportunity you can have in the automotive world and we've worked very hard to make strides here: especially with millennials."

**Michael Marlin, Director of Training, Ray Skillman Auto**

Onboarding and training employees is costly, according to a [WSJ article](#):

"To get someone through the door means you also have to train them, and that can be extremely expensive. There's usually a ramp-up of six months before they're productive, so you can't really take a risk."

Whatever the reasons employees have for wanting to leave their jobs, establishing career paths, along with a strong company culture, can significantly reduce turnover.

### PROVIDING CAREER PATHS

Low compensation and no career path have a major **influence on turnover**. Here are a few ways to help build career paths for your employees, according to a recent [article](#) from the San Francisco Business Times:

- > **Meet regularly**
- > **Ask about their objectives**
- > **Recommend—and provide—learning and training opportunities**
- > **Encourage and facilitate networking and mentoring**
- > **Don't try to be a career counselor**

A-players are attracted by a strong and **positive workplace culture**. Having a positive culture will bring out the best in employees; otherwise they will be disengaged, especially millennial employees. Here are some ways dealerships can help keep employees from leaving their company:

- > **Deliver a unique work culture that reflects their preferences**
- > **Let them know their work has meaning and purpose**
- > **Provide a flexible work-schedule that allows time for work/life balance**
- > **Offer stability via salary and benefits**
- > **Encourage individuality within a team environment**
- > **Give recognition when it's due**
- > **Require encouragement and mentorship, as opposed to giving orders**

Providing a workplace offering clear-cut career paths and a positive, productive culture can do wonders for dealership employees. It creates a team environment that produces results and builds a reputation, which helps recruit new talent coming into open positions. If current employees are engaged in their workplace, they become the best recruiters for your dealership.

## 5. A Focus On Their People

**Peter Burke, President and Co-Founder of Best Companies Group, made it clear that employee engagement has been a top focus for BDTWF dealers. During his presentation on employee feedback focus areas and trends, he noted that the award winners of 2016 showed significant improvement in certain areas since the award was first given out. Areas making the highest jumps are pay and benefits (81% in 2012 to 90% today), leadership and planning (87% in 2012 to 95% today), and corporate culture (86% in 2012 to 93% today).**

The "Best Dealerships To Work For" value their team. They place a focus on their employees who, in turn, care about the business, the customers and are fully engaged in creating the best customer experience for the dealership. This is something many other dealerships and businesses are missing.

According to an [article](#) from Inc., having disengaged employees can be costly, slowing down the progression of employees' output.

*"Seventy percent of American workers are either uninspired at work or actively disengaged, which cost businesses more than \$450 million in 2013. Employees disengage because they feel unsupported, over-scrutinized, or that their very jobs are at risk. And when employees feel unsafe, they're working from their more primitive reptilian brain. This puts people in a high-stress state where they can't concentrate and are looking for distractions, such as email and Facebook."*

It's up to dealers and business managers to provide excellent leadership that motivates employees and shows their well-being is top of mind. Otherwise, dealerships are bound to have disengaged employees and continuous turnover.

Here are just a few ways business leaders can show value in their employees to help encourage a healthier dealership culture:

### **GIVE EMPLOYEE TRAINING**

This must go well beyond the onboarding process. If employees aren't learning or developing their skills past the initial training period, they have a tendency to quit and head somewhere else. According to an [Entrepreneur article](#), "40% of employees who do not receive adequate training end up leaving their post within a year." Ongoing training for sales employees or offering certifications for auto technicians is a great way to not only develop employee skills, but also show that their careers are taken seriously.

### **SUPPORT TEAM BONDING**

To become an actual team, employees must build chemistry. If a dealership wants to succeed together, they have to trust one another. Dealership managers and leaders must spend time out of the dealership with their respective teams. Going out for dinner, bowling or a sports game are all fun ways to help get a team to know one another and bond. The best dealerships do this well, and others who emulate this are bound to have their employees work better together.



## 5. A Focus On Their People *continued*

### INVEST IN EMPLOYEES

Most people (especially Gen Y workers) take pride in themselves and what they can offer. Creativity and innovative thinking can provide real value to any business, so it's essential to support it. Dealerships should view their employees as people with certain skills sets instead of people performing certain tasks. Showing employees that they are cared for is beneficial and will give them a greater sense of respect, as well as motivation in the dealership.

If employees don't feel their contribution to the business is taken seriously, they'll resign and go to another dealership. Dealers must nurture their talent and embrace it with open arms.

### PROVIDE THE RIGHT TOOLS

Some of the best dealerships to work for provide tablets for their product specialists, tools for their auto technicians and whatever else is needed to aid performance. Dealers need to take a look at what's missing from their dealership, as far as technology and employee work supplies go, to fully grasp what their employees are working with and how they can increase their success. Providing the right tools is a simple way to get this done.



### OFFER CHECK-INS WITH MANAGERS

According to a study cited in a SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) [article](#), "Only 15 percent of employees said their companies are doing a "very good" job fostering communication. More than 1 in 8 said they'd rather join a company that values open communication than one that offers lavish perks like top health plans, free food and gym memberships."

Having regularly scheduled check-ins or one-on-one meetings with employees is an effective way to combat disengagement from employees. It also helps keep employees on track with their career paths, personal and professional goals, as well as boosts the trust and morale between dealership managers and employees.



## How Hireology Can Help Your Dealership Become a "Best Dealership"

"The Best Dealerships To Work For" know what it takes to create an effective workplace culture and are therefore rewarded not only by the press surrounded by Automotive News, but with better performance from their employees who truly care about their jobs.

Without top-notch employees, you can't have a culture that generates success. Schedule a demo today to discover how Hireology can help improve your dealership's hiring process.

[click here to schedule a demo](#)

**See how Hireology can help you build your best team.**