



TAKE CONTROL OF THE WHEEL WITH DRIVERSIDE

By Brian Wool, vice president of content distribution, Localeze

For the past two decades, consumers in the U.S. have purchased at least 15 million new cars each year, that number spiking at 17.4 million in 2000. There are 250 million cars on the road and more than 200 million drivers in this country alone. It's a huge marketplace any way you look at it. Americans love their cars and for the most part make large investments in purchasing and maintaining them.

There are several well-developed and successful automotive sites online today that help consumers buy and sell their cars. However, most of them are focused on just that—the transaction of buying and selling an automobile.

Newcomer, [DriverSide](#) is taking a different approach by focusing on the car owner as opposed to the transaction. Before the site launched this past Tuesday, I had the opportunity to view some of its pages, and to speak with Jad Dunning, president and CEO of [DriverSide](#) about what his plans are for his automotive site. And, more specifically, what's different about [DriverSide](#) than other sites in the auto vertical and how they plan to make money and engage consumers online.

Q: Jad can you provide an overview of [DriverSide](#)?

A: [DriverSide](#) is the first website specifically designed with the car owner in mind. [DriverSide](#) allows consumers to save money on service and maintenance costs, as well as buy and sell automobiles. With an in-house editorial staff, [DriverSide](#) will provide consumers with useful advice on how to own and operate a car as well as reviews on new and used cars. [DriverSide's](#) social networking capabilities allow consumers to participate in forums, meet other owners of a particular car, share knowledge and post reviews of local repair shops and car dealers.

Whether a consumer is buying, selling, servicing, maintaining or accessorizing their cars, [DriverSide](#) has brought together all the information, online tools and resources needed to make car ownership an easy and personalized experience.

Q: Are there specific features or tools you have developed with the consumer in mind?

A: There are several features we have developed around the consumer. For example about 30% of car owners are under water when they sell or trade-in their car. With that in mind, one of the many resources we developed is a tool that allows car owners to determine the future value of their car so they can determine when it's best for them to sell.

Q: Have you developed any local features?

A: We will have a local directory of car dealers, parts & accessories stores, repair shops and the like. In addition to a local directory focused on the automotive vertical, we are also providing local information. For example the costs associated with brake repair are not only dependent on make and model but the location. Therefore a consumer can access information on local repair shops, read reviews and use a repair estimator based on location.

Q: So how does [DriverSide](#) plan on making money?

A: There are several ways in which we will monetize the site. First of all, we will have Display Ads, giving our advertising partners the power to influence consumers throughout the ownership cycle. It's also important to note that CPM's in the online Auto category are among the highest. We will also have a host of online lead generation opportunities; new cars, maintenance, insurance and finance. And finally we will have a parts and accessories e-commerce function. Automotive e-commerce is a very large online category; EBay Motors does over \$7B a year in parts and accessories alone.

Q: There are a lot of great opportunities for advertisers and useful information and cool tools for consumers but what's the plan for driving traffic and marketing overall?

A: We have all of the basics covered. This includes a great platform in which we built our site on to leverage SEO. Since we are creating a site that incorporates a sense of community, we feel that there will be some viral marketing opportunity as well. We allow consumers to create and share profiles of their cars, which include photos, accessories purchased and other useful information pertaining to their cars.

As I mentioned, I did have a chance to look under the hood before the official launch of [DriverSide](#), and found many of the features of the site very interesting. It's a unique automotive vertical site that has a [Facebook](#) and [Zillow](#) flavor to it. If you are going to borrow a few flavors, those are certainly two good ones.