

Accessorizing: Selecting the Right Vehicles and Accessories

When accessorizing vehicles to display on your lot, it makes sense to accessorize your best-sellers—particularly vehicles that sell quickly. Your best-selling accessories are usually going to be made to fit your best-selling vehicles, and a slow-selling model may take even longer to sell if it has been heavily accessorized.

You'll want to stock accessories that appeal to the masses, especially if you are just starting out in accessories. If you know what sells in your area, it can take a lot of the guesswork out of planning your accessories inventory, but some trial and error is unavoidable. Offer more of what sells in high volume, and consider phasing out accessories that sit unsold for more than three months.

Before you order or install your accessories, be aware of state laws governing the use of DVD players, radar detectors, and window tinting. The installation or operation of certain items may not be legal in your area.

Creating Accessory Packages

In addition to selling accessorized vehicles and individual accessories, you can add thousands of dollars to any sale by offering an accessory package. Meet with your store managers to decide what packages to offer, paying attention to what's been selling. Packages need to include not only your most popular accessories, but also accessories that are harmonious. For example, bed liners, tow hitches, and running boards can be combined to create a truck package. DVD players, stereo upgrades, and MP3 players will be part of many entertainment packages. Also consider seasonal packages for ideal performance in typical summer and winter driving conditions.

Creating Signature "Special-Edition" Models

A step beyond the accessory package is the special-edition vehicle model, often offered exclusively to your dealership by your restyler. By customizing the vehicles on your lot with accessory packages that are unique to your dealership, you can offer entire trim levels that cannot be ordered from the manufacturer. Once you have appended the vehicle's model name and added the appropriate badging, you have branded it as unique to your dealership.

Providing Flexibility

Often, customers turn to aftermarket accessories because the packages offered by the manufacturer are too limiting in what accessories can be offered together. For example, a customer may desire a leather interior, but leather may only be available from the manufacturer as part of an expensive accessory package that also includes a sunroof, chrome accents, and detailing. Make sure your customers know that your dealership can provide any combination of accessories that they desire; in the accessories business, it is important that every customer leaves with the exact vehicle that he or she wants. If a customer wants a leather interior in an otherwise stock vehicle, your dealership can do the work even if the manufacturer cannot.

This article is adapted from the study guide/DVD training package *Accessorizing Your Way to Additional Profits* (VT21). You may order the DVD and study guide online at www.nada.org/mecatalog or by calling NADA at 800-252-NADA, ext. 2. To learn more about accessories sales, visit www.semashow.com and register for Dealer Day at SEMA, Wednesday, Nov. 4 in Las Vegas.