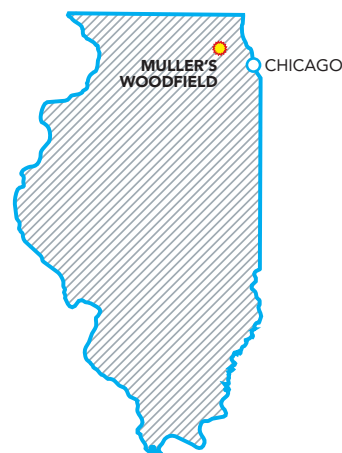


WHAT
Muller's Woodfield Acura

WHERE
Hoffman Estates, Ill.
(just west of Chicago)

WHO
Scott Muller,
dealer principal

Second Time's the Charm



Tested strategies to help you sell more Acura Certified Pre-Owned Vehicles—and why that matters now

A used car is a big opportunity for a dealership. To put it plainly, “it’s the most profitable sale a dealer can have,” says Nick Trovas, the Acura senior district sales manager for Chicago and Wisconsin. Every used car is a chance for the service, parts, finance and sales departments to profit.

The opportunity grows when it comes to Acura Certified Pre-Owned Vehicles (ACPV), which appeal more to clients than non-certified cars because of the factory-backed extended warranties. “Having plenty of certified cars in your inventory gets you more leads,” says Trovas, “because other dealerships can’t offer the same warranties that an Acura dealership can offer.”

Here’s how two dealers in Trovas’s district are maximizing their ACPV sales and seeing results.

STRATEGY 1: THE CERTIFIED CENTER

Muller’s Woodfield Acura

Hoffman Estates, Ill.

HOW IT WORKS

Two years ago, Muller’s Woodfield Acura opened a new Gen 3 facility down the block from their long-time location in the Chicago suburbs. But instead of closing the old building, they re-staffed it and turned it into what they call the Certified Pre-Owned Sales Center, specializing in ACPV sales. “The minute we started thinking about building the new Gen 3 dealership, I knew I wanted to turn the old one into a certified center,” says dealer principal Scott Muller. “I saw the opportunity to have the only dedicated certified center in the Midwest, and it put us ahead of the competition.”

The center operates like a mini-dealership, with a used-car director, two managers and six salespeople, plus a dedicated internet salesperson. The managers handle sales closings, while the director focuses on the big picture: stocking the inventory to make sure the center has a wide selection of vehicles.

There are also two service technicians, who certify and detail cars, and a finance department. Cars are certified, detailed and photographed within three days of arriving at the center, then they’re out on the lot and up on the dealership website, ready for sale. →



CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT: Inspecting an RDX to get it ready for the showroom; this building became the Certified Pre-Owned Sales Center when the main dealership moved to a new Gen 3 facility nearby; all vehicles are certified in three days or less; the Muller's team has also won Precision Team more than 15 times, including in 2018; technician Nick Chura runs diagnostic tests; the on-site car wash gets an ACPV looking its best.



The certified center is meeting Scott Muller's goal of selling 100 used cars per month, and Muller's Woodfield Acura has been in the top five dealers in the country in ACPV sales for several years.

WHY IT WORKS THE TIMING IS RIGHT

Having a separate ACPV facility makes for a fast turnover. "One of the biggest challenges of used cars is just turning inventory quickly enough," Trovas says. "It's like stocks—you have to know when to buy and when to sell." Together, the director and service technicians make sure they have the right cars on the lot at the right time.



IT DELIVERS ON THE BRAND PROMISE

Acura attracts discerning clients with high expectations, and the center's service department helps the dealership deliver. "Some used vehicles are still forty or fifty thousand dollars," says Muller. "We understand that clients are spending a lot of money and that they expect top-tier treatment."

That's why all ACPV inventory receives any necessary repairs before the cars are displayed on the lot. "The certified cars have to be perfect," Muller says. "Everything is already taken care of, so it enables us to justify our prices. And I hear clients saying all the time how nice our cars are compared to other cars they've been looking at."

IT'S A FULL PRECISION CRAFTED PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

Delivering certified cars in like-new condition is part of an overall experience that keeps clients coming back. "To be successful, we knew we had to give the

certified client the same exact experience that our new-car clients had," Muller says.

It starts with the website, where the dealership shows high-resolution, professional photos of all cars, new or ACPV. After an ACPV sale, clients are invited to the main dealership for service, where they can take advantage of Acura Accelerated Service and the perks of the Gen 3 facility. "Once they buy the certified car, all of their dealings are in the new building, where we've got a state-of-the-art service department, a state-of-the-art waiting lounge and a lot of new cars for somebody to look at."

The reality of used cars, however, is that they generally require more frequent service than brand-new cars. "New cars get better and better every year," Muller explains. "The opportunity is to get the people buying the certified cars to come back, because those older cars still need services."

Trovas agrees. "The more ACPV cars they sell, the more service business they have coming back," he says. "It's increasing business in almost every aspect."



STRATEGY 2: SELLING SERVICE LOANERS

Continental Acura
Naperville, Ill.

HOW IT WORKS

Several years ago, general manager Andy Trilla saw the opportunity to start putting service loaners up for sale on the Continental Acura website. He's since built it into a big portion of the dealership's ACPV business.

Trilla cycles service loaners into the ACPV inventory after five or six months, so there are always five to 10 available for sale. He makes sure the cars go up for sale in the ideal mileage range: vehicles have spent at least 90 days as service loaners, per Acura standards, but they're retired before 7,000 miles.

WHY IT WORKS SEEING IS BELIEVING

There's always at least one ACPV in the Continental Acura showroom—usually a retired service loaner—and the whole inventory is on the website. Seeing the cars often convinces clients who aren't sure about buying a used car, especially since retired service loaners are usually current model year cars with the latest technology.

"You have to have the vehicles out there for sale," says Trilla. "Once clients can see, feel and touch the car—to them it's like a brand-new car. It still smells new and drives new."

IT'S A GREAT ENTRY POINT

An almost-new car offers clients an option between new and used. "It's essentially another offering for clients to come in on," says Trovas.

This is key because once clients buy into an ACPV, they're more likely to come back for a new car. "In every study by independent agencies that I've seen over the last few years, a certified-car owner has a higher propensity to come back to that same brand and replace the certified car with a new car," Trilla explains. "The service loaners are the entry into the brand for that client." ⚙



TOOLS
YOU CAN
USE

Acura resources that can
help you sell even more
ACPV cars

1.

Access to the Acura.com website, where your listing can reach millions of potential clients.

"Once you certify a car, you get access to the best place for clients to look at cars and a great resource for dealers,"

says Brian Benstock, general manager of Paragon Acura in Woodside, N.Y.

"If you're not participating, you're not getting the benefit of millions of eyeballs for free."

2.

Best-in-class certified warranties that cover the vehicle for 12 months or the first 12,000 miles of ownership.

3.

Competitive finance programs on ACPVs that make them an option for a wider range of clients.

4.

Acura Care Coverage, which offers peace of mind and keeps clients coming back to the service department—and can contribute to your bottom line.

"Certified car sales have an excellent overall impact on each profit center at the dealership. Each and every transaction enhances the sales department, the service department, the parts department and the finance department," Benstock adds.

"This has to be seen as a holistic home run for client retention and dealer profitability."