

Reinventing the Brand of an Established Automotive Dealer Group

The story behind Checkered Flag's

fast • simple • smart



SPI COLLECTIVE

MEDIA | VIDEO | DIGITAL | SEARCH

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Case Study - Reinventing An Established Brand

The Challenge

Checkered Flag is an automotive group in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia. For over 50 years, they have been known for providing exceptional customer service and selling only import vehicles. Like other dealerships in the market, they competed for customers strictly on price.

Then, after more than a half-century of doing business the traditional way, Checkered Flag's owners made the decision to shift to a one-price sales model for their core brands: Honda, Hyundai, Toyota and Volkswagen, as well as their pre-owned vehicles. It was time to re-invent Checkered Flag.

Build Upon A Solid Foundation

The genesis for shifting to a one-price sales model was the a desire to deliver an even better buying experience for their customers. Since Checkered Flag was already recognized in the market for their superior customer service, this was a great starting point.

All the messaging we created was crafted around the benefits that would set Checkered Flag apart from their competitors.

Those key message points included:

Upfront Pricing

Research clearly shows that most car buyers hate the negotiating process. Not only is it very adversarial, but the back and forth over price between the customer, their salesperson, his sales manager, the manager's manager and his boss took hours to get through. Checkered Flag wanted to cut through all that by offering the same low price to everyone... right up front.

Non-Commission Product Specialists

Checkered Flag eliminated the traditional commission sales structure. They also abandoned the title *salesperson* and opted to use *Product Specialist*. This was to reinforce the fact that their associates were there to help customers find the right car... not to grind out a big commission.

3-Day, No Questions Asked, Money-Back Guarantee

To eliminate buyer apprehension over this new process, Checkered Flag wanted to make it clear that if, for any reason, you're not 100% satisfied with your new car, you could return it for a full refund.

Three Powerful Words

The first step was to distill all those customer benefits down to a concise, easy-to-understand statement. During our brainstorming session, three words consistently kept coming up:

- **Fast** - Eliminating haggling over price would save customers time.
- **Simple** - A non-commission sales structure simplifies the buying process and shifts the focus to customer satisfaction.
- **Smart** - The money-back guarantee gives customers peace of mind that choosing to buy from Checkered Flag is a wise choice.

fast • simple • smart

Spreading The Word

Once the messaging was defined and refined, it was time to introduce it to the public. Because it was such a dramatic shift in their sales model, Checkered Flag chose to introduce Fast • Simple • Smart at just their Volkswagen location. The task was to clearly and creatively communicate the message... and since it was for just one dealership, it had to be done on a budget.



Click to play

Concurrently, ads, training and support materials and point-of-purchase items were prepared.



Product Specialists Begin To Sell More Than Cars

Once the one-price selling platform was introduced to all of Checkered Flag's core dealerships, the challenge was to cohesively deliver the Fast • Simple • Smart message to all the participating locations. The solution was to let Checkered Flag's Product Specialists tell the story, using the various dealerships as the backdrop.

We realized the challenge of putting non-actors in front of the camera. The concept and scripts were developed in a way that the Product Specialists were given very succinct points. Each line was fed to them individually by the director. The Product Specialists simply mimicked the pace and inflection.



Fast - 30 second TV spot



Simple - 30 second TV spot



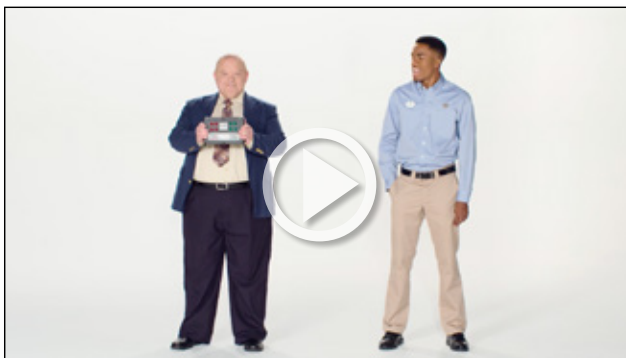
Smart - 30 second TV spot

Making The Brand Memorable And Entertaining

As Checkered Flag's Fast • Simple • Smart program began to gain traction, we looked for ways to make it even clearer that Checkered Flag was selling cars in a truly different way. Apple faced a very similar challenge several years ago and launched their MAC versus PC campaign. We used that as our inspiration to create a very successful campaign that contrasted Checkered Flag's young, friendly Product Specialists against a character that represented everything people associate with a traditional car salesman. Their humorous exchanges clearly defined the benefits of Fast • Simple • Smart and dramatically increased Checkered Flag's brand awareness in the Hampton Roads market.



Fine Print - 30 second TV spot



Lie Detector- 30 second TV spot



Good vs. Evil - 30 second TV spot

What Do You Do When A Sale Doesn't Fit Your Brand?

You stick to your story! When your brand is one price, you can't deviate from that... even during times when traditional retailers have sales. Instead of trying to invent a sale for Checkered Flag, we tailored the message to let customers know vehicle prices weren't being manipulated. It reinforced Checkered Flag's core message that their customers get a low, haggle-free price every day... holidays, weekends and weekdays.



Santa Cars - 30 second TV spot



Holiday SALE man- 30 second TV spot

Taking Fast • Simple • Smart To The Super Bowl!

Checkered Flag wanted to make a splash during one of the most-watched events of the year... The Super Bowl. The challenge was to make Checkered Flag's message more memorable than the spots that their competitors aired during the Super Bowl. We developed two fast moving, humorous spots that delivered the Fast • Simple • Smart message in an engaging and entertaining way.



Science- 30 second TV spot



Must Haves - 30 second TV spot

Let's Get Digital

As part of a comprehensive, multi-media marketing plan, we also created animated and static banner ads. The advantage that SPI Productions has over most agencies is that we also have our own programmatic trading program and a long-time relationship with The Trade Desk, one of the world's leaders in programmatic trading. With creative and programmatic capabilities in-house, we're able to identify people in the market for a car, create ads that speak to those people and serve them directly to each person. The unifying element across all brands and all ads is Fast • Simple • Smart.

Evergreen Ads

To ensure a consistent online presence, we developed animated ads that convey the Fast • Simple • Smart story. One was developed for each of the core brands.



CLICK TO PLAY

Special Evergreen Ads

In some cases you have to be creative to get your message to your customers. In this case, we were dealing with the fact that Toyota doesn't allow a dealer to show prices online that are lower than the MSRP.

The solution? Banner ads that send you to a microsite where the customer completes an information request, "initiates" the buying process and unlocks access to a separate site where they can see Checkered Flag Toyota's haggle-free low price.

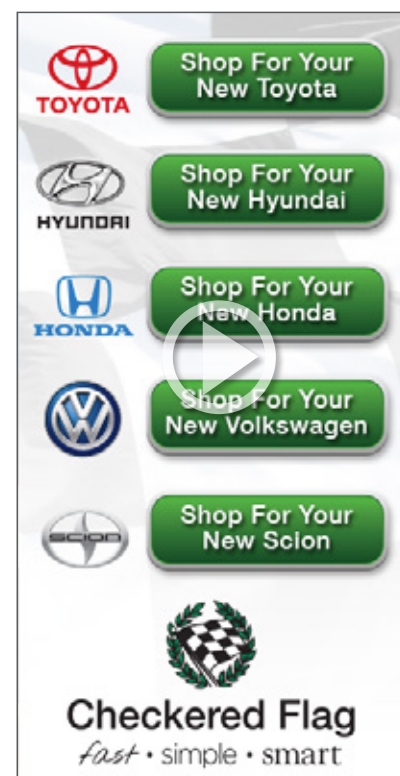


CLICK TO PLAY

Special Event Ads

Yes! You can still promote special events and stay true to your brand. In this case, we wanted customers to know that the same year-end incentives that others dealerships were hyping were also available at Checkered Flag and had already been calculated into the haggle-free low price.

This series of banner ads included links to all of Checkered Flag's Fast • Simple • Smart dealerships.



CLICK TO PLAY

Holiday Ads

Traditional retail holidays are another opportunity to tell Checkered Flag's unique Fast • Simple • Smart story while sharing the special offers that the manufacturers are making available. These ads often include graphic elements that the manufacturers require in their ads.



Honda ★★★★★
MEMORIAL DAY
★★★★★ **SALES EVENT**

Right Now,
Our Hagggle-Free
Price Includes:

**\$500 Military
Appreciation
Offer**


HONDA

Find Your Honda


Checkered Flag Honda
fast • simple • smart

CLICK TO PLAY



MEMORIAL
★ ★ ★ DAY ★ ★ ★
=====

Right Now,
Our Hagggle-Free
Price Includes:

**All Factory
Incentives
and Discounts**

 **ToyotaTime
Sales Event**

Find Your Toyota


Checkered Flag Toyota
fast • simple • smart

CLICK TO PLAY

Promotional Ads

At the beginning of every month, manufacturers provide their supported promotional offers. Some include mandatory graphic elements that must be included. Even though we have to work within several manufacturer's compliance guidelines, we are still able to maintain a look that is distinctly Checkered Flag.



NEW 2017 HYUNDAI SONATA SE



Our Haggle-Free Low Price
\$18,212

Make It Yours!



Checkered Flag Hyundai
fast • simple • smart






Take Advantage Of Limited-Time Savings On The New Toyota You Want!

FLASH SAVE NOW




Checkered Flag Toyota
fast • simple • smart

New 2017 Volkswagen Passat S 1.8T

\$197
/month for 36 months

Passat Mel



Checkered Flag Volkswagen
fast • simple • smart

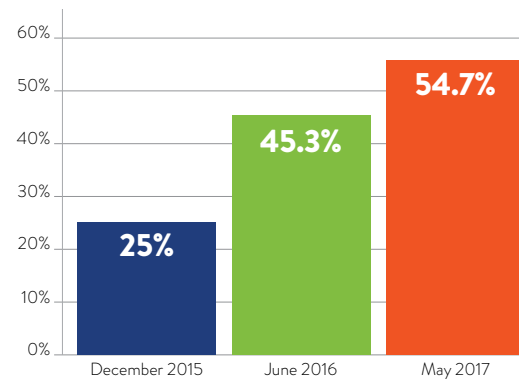
Is Fast • Simple • Smart Resonating With Car Buyers?

Yes, it is! Between December 2015 and May 2017, an independent company, Cranium Tap, conducted surveys within the Hampton Roads market. They measured growth in brand awareness of Fast • Simple • Smart amongst consumers who planned on purchasing a new vehicle within 12 months. Since its introduction, Fast • Simple • Smart, and the awareness of the program's key messaging points, have demonstrated continued growth and market dominance.

Fast • Simple • Smart Familiarity

Respondents were asked if they were familiar with the tagline Fast • Simple • Smart.

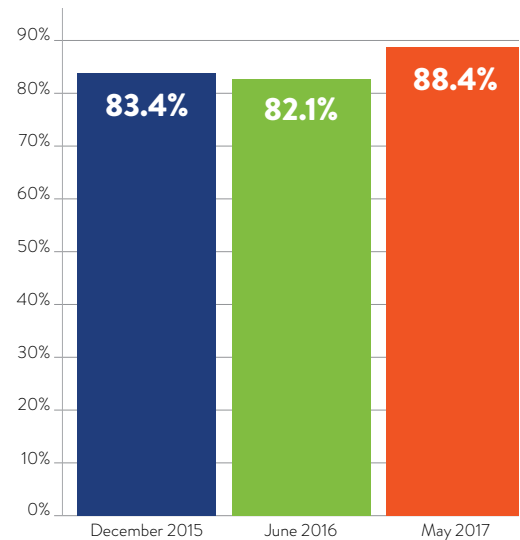
Since its introduction, awareness of Fast • Simple • Smart has more than doubled!



Fast • Simple • Smart's Association With Checkered Flag

Respondents were asked which dealership they associated with the tagline Fast • Simple • Smart.

Since its introduction, Checkered Flag's association with Fast • Simple • Smart has consistently been over 82%!



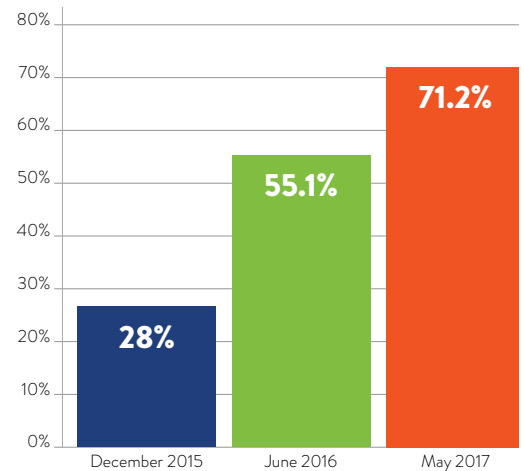
Are The Benefits Of Fast • Simple • Smart Resonating With Car Shoppers?

Again, the answer is yes. Even though several concepts have been developed to deliver the Fast • Simple • Smart message, Checkered Flag's core customer benefits have remained constant.

Haggle-Free, Upfront Pricing

Respondents were asked which dealerships in Hampton Roads offer a negotiation-free buying environment.

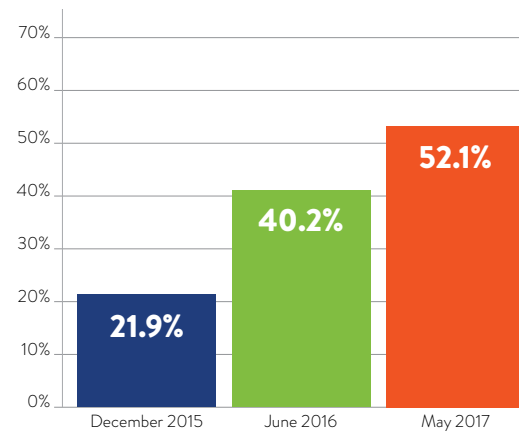
Since Fast • Simple • Smart was introduced, awareness for Checkered Flag's one-price selling platform has grown 254%!



Non-Commission Sales

Respondents were asked which dealership in Hampton Roads had a non-commission sales staff.

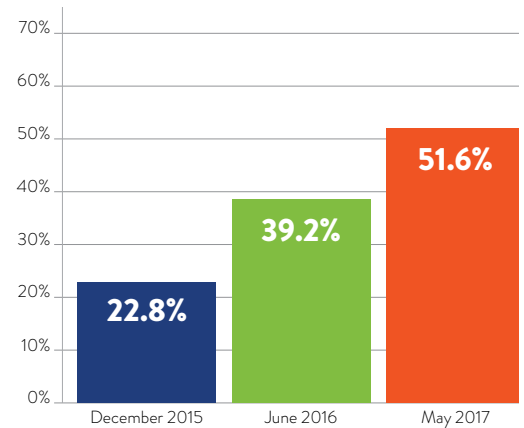
Since Fast • Simple • Smart was introduced, awareness for Checkered Flag's non-commission sales staff has increased 237%!



3-Day, No Questions Asked, Money-Back Guarantee

Respondents were asked which dealership in Hampton Roads had a 3-day, no questions asked, money-back guarantee

Since Fast • Simple • Smart was introduced, awareness for Checkered Flag's 3-day no questions asked policy has increased 226%!



Yes... You Can Reinvent Yourself!

Checkered Flag's metamorphosis from the traditional car sales model to a one-price sales platform is proof. Through creative packaging, consistent messaging and effective, multi-media planning, SPI Productions was able to help Checkered Flag not only reinvent themselves, but continue to see growth in market awareness and vehicle sales.

Would You Like These Kinds Of Results?

If the answer is a resounding, "Yeah baby," let's talk about what SPI Productions can do for you. Call Rick Mytych at 757-610-1298 or email him at rmytych@spi-collective.com.