

AutoNation + Reputation:

How AutoNation leverages reviews to build customer trust and drive platform adoption



Key Stats

- **1 Million 5 Star reviews** achieved in June 2023
- **122,800** reviews were received through Reputation in 2020
- **>6,300** AutoNation staff man-hours saved since partnering with Reputation
- **120+** Locations have improved their RepScore or have become more engaged since partnering with Reputation
- **148%** AutoNation's return on investment since partnering with Reputation

The Client

Headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, [AutoNation](#) is America's most admired automotive retailer. With more than 300 locations spread across 18 states (and growing!), AutoNation has sold or serviced vehicles to more than 13 million customers. The company calls its more than 22,000 associates its "greatest assets" and notes that "What drives you, drives Us," placing prime emphasis on the customer experience and the person-to-person interactions that drive every part of the business forward.

Hitting Review Milestones

As a top brand connecting stores, facilities, and associates from coast to coast, AutoNation is a very online-centric business. They rely on digital channels to reach current and potential customers as well as help manage the day-to-day operations of its locations. As

such, the company is very cognizant of the value of online reviews, particularly in attracting new customers and business.

AutoNation launched its partnership with Reputation in 2012 when it first adopted the company's [Reviews](#) product. Reviews enabled AutoNation to continue to utilize the word-of-mouth advertising and marketing it had been getting from happy customers. But now they were able to share this positive customer sentiment online at a much bigger scale, helping the company win over anxious customers who may not have had experience with the brand.

As a result, AutoNation's review volume exploded — to the point that it deepened its partnership with Reputation to have Reputation automate and manage responding to each review the company receives, which has freed up time for AutoNation to dive deeper into its processes.

98% of reviews (122,800)

AutoNation reviews responded to by Reputation

More recently, AutoNation placed focus on educating their dealerships on the ease of use of the Reputation app for maintaining their online reputation. They attribute the success they've seen this year so far to the following 3 initiatives:

- **They launched a company-wide contest** called the Race to Elevate. Their General Managers had daily activities to do inside the Reputation platform to earn points. The goal of the contest was to get the stores more involved and bring awareness to the success they can attain by using the Reputation platform. The winners got a free trip to the Formula 1 Race in May!
- **Ashley Dias, AutoNation's Customer Engagement Marketing Director**, spoke at the company's annual conference about the Reputation partnership. She shared tips and tricks for using the Reputation platform which helped to educate General Managers to use the platform to their advantage.
- **AutoNation's Customer Engagement team also created a monthly newsletter** called "Reputation Hacks". The newsletter shares best practices, as well as case studies of dealerships who have seen success with the Reputation platform. This newsletter helps to keep GMs up-to-date on the latest ORM trends.

As a result of these initiatives, in June 2023, AutoNation was able to achieve a major milestone: **1 Million 5-Star Reviews**. This is a testament to the company's commitment to providing excellent customer service and to its use of the Reputation platform!

1 Million 5-Star Reviews

AutoNation achieved 1M 5 star reviews in June 2023.



Leveraging Insights

Along with garnering more reviews, the Reviews product also gave the company an opportunity to audit how it was doing as a business. The locations that consistently received good reviews could share best practices with other locations, such as sending car service diagnosis videos to customers so they could see what needs to be done for themselves.

"If someone comes in for service, the person leaves their car and they feel they do not know what's really happening with it," says Ashley Dias, Customer Engagement Marketing Director at AutoNation. "We'll have one of our technicians take a video of what's happening with the customer's car and send it to them, and people love it! We've gotten a lot of great reviews from it, so we've taken steps to implement this process across our locations."

See what customers are saying on DealerRater:

July 08, 2022
★★★★★
SERVICE VISIT

Wow is the word that comes to mind regarding the service

I received at Porsche Irvine. From beginning to end the experience was superb! I made my appointment ahead of time and was provided a loaner. My service advisor, Natasha was so professional, friendly and knowledgeable. She communicated with me throughout the day via text, even sending a video from Alejandro which showed the details of the condition of and service needed on my car. I have visited a lot of car dealerships and have never experienced anything as completely delightful as this. HIGHLY recommend Porsche Irvine. **LESS**

On the other hand, through Reviews, AutoNation was able to more readily identify locations that weren't performing up to expectations and offer recommendations. While these suggestions for performance improvement may be more basic and general at other companies, AutoNation takes a much more detailed, hands-on approach.

"For locations with a lower review sentiment, I have implemented a process where our team will have one on one deep dive sessions with tips on how to improve the customer experience and provide additional support should a location need it," says Dias. "For each component of their score, our teams will break it down so the location's leadership understands each component of their calculated score, how they compare to their market and peer groups, and how they can improve specific metrics. Over 120 locations have improved their scores or have increased their engagement with the Reputation tool."

>6,300

AutoNation staff man-hours saved since partnering with Reputation

Fostering Adoption

Education and adoption are key elements for AutoNation's team as they continue to strive to deliver a peerless customer experience. All of AutoNation's retail locations use Reputation and are supported in doing so from the top of the organization down. In fact, each location's use of the Reputation platform is entirely paid for by AutoNation's corporate arm and evangelized by the company's C-suite, so there are no barriers to adoption or utilization.

The scorecards Dias sends out have helped, too. Since launching her scorecard program, which adds gamification and competitions to Reputation score management, Dias estimates AutoNation has added more than 600 users to the Reputation platform — from the CEO and general managers to sales staff and service providers.

"We hosted two sessions educating everyone at the company about what Reputation is and what it can do. Afterward, dealerships started reaching out, they wanted to learn more on how to improve their Reputation score, and now through our info sessions and 1:1 on sessions in several locations have and continue to increase their scores. In the past three years, the amount of requests has skyrocketed!"

Ashley Dias,
Senior Manager of Customer Marketing
at AutoNation

148% AutoNation's return on investment since partnering with Reputation

"I recommend to any customer-facing employee that they become a user," says Dias. "It's at the point now where we've repurposed our sales leaderboard to reflect individual locations' Reputation score. People will email me on the weekends saying that their score isn't accurate. Gamifying it has made a big difference."

To help cement this ongoing participation and utilization, Dias created the 900 Award to recognize AutoNation locations that have reached a milestone Reputation score of 900 on a scale of 0 to 1,000, which can be considered "best in class" in a given industry. If a dealership hits 900 for two consecutive months, they're sent a trophy and the first piece of a magnet to display; if the dealership maintains its 900 score for another four months, they're sent another magnet piece, and if they hit another six at 900, they're sent the final magnet piece which completes the award.

"I made the 900 Award to congratulate teams not only for hitting 900, but for maintaining a score of 900," says Dias. "The point of the award is that it grows for a year. Our teams have been working really hard — they deserve the recognition and all of the praise."

What's Next?

Thanks to its positive partnership with Reputation, AutoNation has since added on many of the Reputation platform's products, including [Surveys](#), [Inbox](#), and [Competitive Intelligence](#) (CI). CI, in particular, will be an area of focus for AutoNation and excitement for Dias within the highly competitive automotive industry.

"Since we started using SMS Review Requests, the amount of negative reviews we've gotten have remained flat — you're always going to have that. But the positive reviews increased tremendously and it's getting to the point that the reviews are mentioning specific team members at certain locations, which is really rewarding."

Ashley Dias,
Senior Manager of Customer Marketing
at AutoNation

The strategy is already paying dividends. After becoming and maintaining its presence as the leading public auto group in the United States for many years, AutoNation lost that title and was displaced to third place in 2021. The company set goals to get to second place by mid-2022, but thanks to its partnership with Reputation and the innovative strategies AutoNation has put in place, the company is already back in first place.

To learn more, contact us at [reputation.com](mailto:info@reputation.com)

About Reputation

Reputation is the only platform that manages consumer feedback from acquisition to loyalty. Reputation analyzes vast amounts of public and private feedback data to uncover predictive insights for companies to act on and improve the customer experience. Reputation turns feedback into the fuel to grow businesses around the world. Visit reputation.com to learn more.