

How to Manage DMS Change Within Your Dealership

Three best practices
to help create a smooth
transition for your team.



You're thinking about making a DMS switch, but how do you manage the impact this technology change will have on your dealership? Dealertrack DMS has successfully guided thousands of dealers through this process, and we've narrowed it down to **three best practices** that will help minimize the impact of change.

Best Practice #1:

Develop a Clear and Compelling Vision for DMS Change

Best Practice #2:

Communicate the Vision to your Dealership Team

Best Practice #3:

Take Advantage of the Tools and Technology that Assist with DMS Change

Best Practice #1:

Develop a Clear and Compelling Vision for DMS Change

Getting buy-in from your team upfront is essential. Develop a vision or message that clearly articulates the need for change and lists the benefits associated with being on the Dealertrack DMS platform.

Vision Checklist

- Demonstrate to employees how this will help the dealership gain a competitive advantage (e.g., using the latest technology to better serve customers, etc.).
- Communicate the overall benefits to employees, such as an easy to use interface, real-time reporting, and streamlined workflows.
- Communicate benefits to employees specific to their dealership department, including:
 - Controllers can now close the month in as little as two days from anywhere.
 - Parts Managers can get an up-to-the-minute snapshot of their parts inventory to help them plan ahead.
 - Service Managers can easily integrate the third-party vendors of their choice into the DMS to help make the service lane more efficient.
 - General Managers have real-time reporting so they can identify problems and opportunities more easily.

“Real-time data allows us to react immediately.”

—Dean Collins,
Operating Partner,
Gerald Nissan

Pro Tip

Even in the earliest stages, it's critical to involve key stakeholders who will be directly responsible for the rollout. If you wait too long, you run the risk of employee resistance, which could potentially halt the DMS change and damage company culture. Key dealership stakeholders should include the Controller or CFO, Parts and Service Managers, and the General Manager. We also recommend involving employees who are “master users” of your current DMS technology.

Best Practice #2:

Communicate the Vision to your Dealership Team

Now that you've developed and compiled the necessary components of your vision, it's time to roll it out to your employees. Communication is absolutely key here. We suggest leveraging your team's marketing experts to develop an internal communication campaign. They can help with messaging, timing, and frequency.

Communication Plan Checklist

- Leverage all of your internal channels to communicate your vision (monthly newsletter, message boards, etc.).
- Establish frequency or cadence of messaging.
 - Be in front of your employees at least once a month and begin weekly communications 45 days before installation.
 - Hold a company-wide meeting for the Dealer Principle or Operating Partner to share the vision, then have each department's key stakeholders share the importance of this change.
- Invite your team to ask questions, raise concerns, and let their voices be heard. Don't force a consensus in this meeting.
- Encourage one-on-one discussions after the company-wide meeting. If people don't feel like their concerns were heard, they will fight the change.
- Follow up with an email one day after the company-wide meeting, re-emphasizing the need to make a switch and recapping the overall benefits to employees and customers.

Pro Tip

In any organizational change, you'll have detractors and promoters. Know which team members are in your court and pull them in to help advance your DMS change management process. If your dealership does not have a dedicated marketing team, your promoters will help this change be successful.

Best Practice #3:

Take Advantage of the Tools and Technology that Assist with DMS Change

Identify the right tools to help ensure that you can successfully execute on your vision. Change management is a two-way street between dealership and DMS provider. Working together, your team can prepare for the next step in the DMS change process: installation.

Change Management Tools and Technology Checklist

- Become familiar with your provider's project management tool. This collaborative tool allows dealerships to access their DMS install projects online, without downloading any software. You will have full visibility into your custom installation plan, so you'll always know the status of the project and what to prepare for next.
- Take the required training courses offered through the Learning Management System. This is a critical step that will make the transition smoother for your team. Training is catered to each area of the dealership, so your team can be up to speed on the new DMS technology.
- Participate in the communication cadence call you will have with your DMS project manager. On this call you will work to determine how often you would like to communicate and how you prefer to connect.

Pro Tip

Choose a tech-savvy 'project champion' within your dealership to help encourage the use of the change management tools and technology. This person will keep the dealership on track with the pre-install requirements and be the point of contact for your DMS provider. They can be a critical part of identifying and mitigating risks upfront. If changes to the install plan are necessary, the project champion can ensure those changes are implemented well in advance.

“Doing the online training prior to the install for the staff was really key because it eased their fears about the switchover before we went live.”

— Kelly Webb Roberts,
President, Webb Automotive

To learn more about switching to Dealertrack DMS, please visit [Dealertrack.com/switch](https://dealertrack.com/switch).