

THE ROAD TO CONSENSUS

How to get your entire dealership
on board with a DMS switch



Dealertrack DMS 

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**Congratulations! You've
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A DMS SWITCH IMPACTS EVERYONE

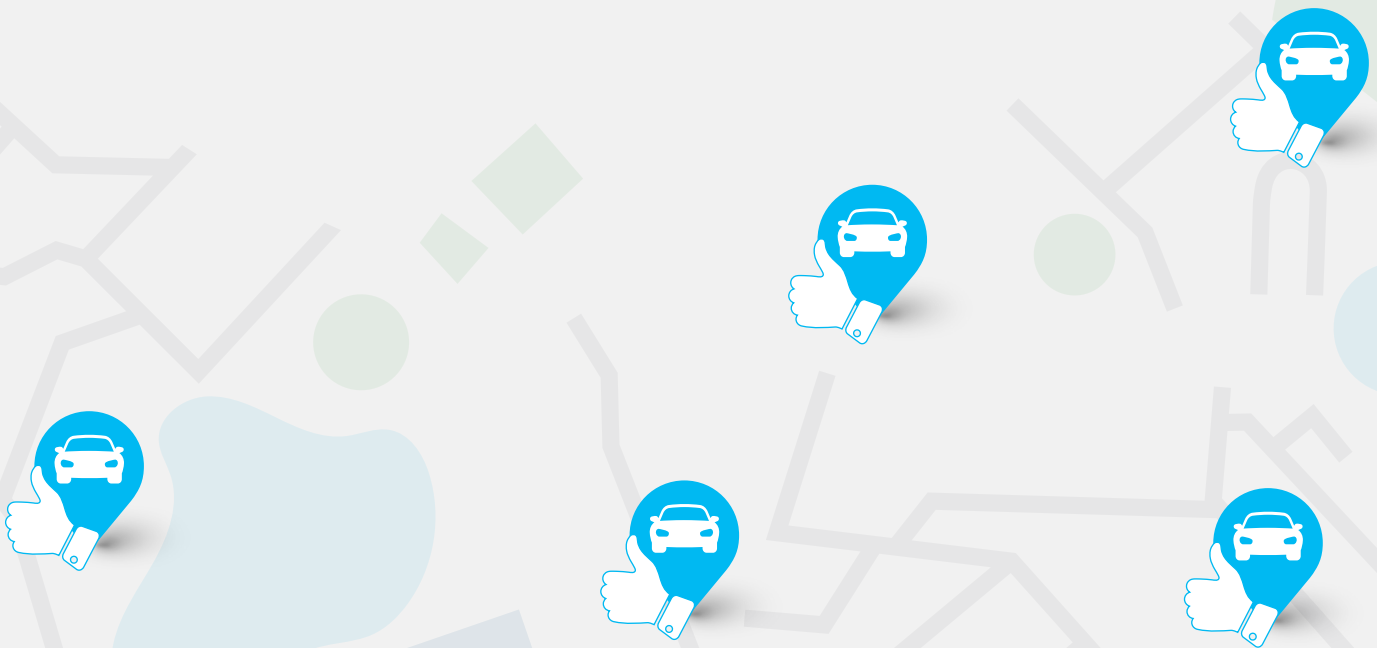
Admit it — whether your contract is up or you're simply fed up, **you know it's time to make a DMS switch.**

But you also know changing your DMS is a large undertaking that will affect everyone in your dealership.

So how do you make this process more manageable? **Get your team on board immediately.** We call this **stakeholder consensus creation.** It's a critical step based on a simple principle: **Everyone wins when everyone buys in.**

“The more you empower people to help, the more they're going to own the new DMS.”

— Jennica Krebsbach
Controller
Van Horn Automotive Group



TIPS FOR BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

While every dealership's situation is unique, the formula for building stakeholder consensus is the same. Here are some tips for getting full buy-in:

- **Get department heads involved early**

It's recommended that you start the process of making a switch 18 months in advance. Giving your department leaders a role from the very start will help them buy into your final decision.

- **Say “so long” to the tried and true**

The phrase “this is how we’ve always done it” will hold you back through the whole process. Remove it from your dealership’s vocabulary from the start.

- **Demonstrate overcommunication**

Let your team know a change is happening before it happens to them. Tell them why you’re making this change, when it’s happening, and how they can help. Keep everyone in the loop with frequent updates.

- **Make decisions a team effort**

Teamwork makes your DMS switch work. Don’t isolate decision-making to just a few high-level people, or else some key stakeholders will feel left out. Especially for multi-store groups, collaborate on decisions.

- **Remember the reward**

When the going gets tough, remind your stakeholders of how much better everything will be by making this switch.



The switch ... enabled us to really organize the way we thought about [our] business. Switching over was kind of like cleaning out the garage, taking everything out, blowing out the cobwebs, and putting it back the way [we] wanted to put it back.”

— Sean Flanagan, Vice President
Smythe Volvo

ROAD MAP TO STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS

Step 1: Choose Your Stakeholders

Step 2: Determine Your Wants and Needs

Step 3: Identify Conflicts; Prioritize Demands

Step 4: Test Capabilities and Take a Vote

Step 5: Announce the Decision and Plan

1 CHOOSE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

The first step is to identify **WHO** should be involved in this DMS evaluation process.

For single-point stores:

- The GM or DP, whoever is in the store every day
- Accounting
- The general sales manager

For groups:

- The management team
- A rep from each department that uses the DMS
- Department leads representing every rooftop



You've got the people. Here's how you can get them involved and give them a voice.

- **Messengers** — Let your stakeholders communicate to their teams that a DMS change is happening.
- **Advisors** — Ask your stakeholders to provide input on what they need from a new DMS.
- **Testers** — Have your stakeholders take part in vendor demos. Make sure they're prepared in advance to accurately assess a system's capabilities.
- **Decision-makers** — Give your stakeholders a say in the final decision based on their evaluations.



Recent research shows that CEOs who put stakeholders' interests ahead of profits generate greater workforce engagement — and thus deliver the superior financial results that they have made a secondary goal.”

— Nathan Washburn in “Harvard Business Review”

2 DETERMINE YOUR WANTS AND NEEDS

Now that you have your stakeholders assembled, it's time to talk about the **PROBLEMS** they're currently facing and their needs for a new DMS.

To do this, conduct 1-on-1 interviews or team meetings to discuss the following:

- **Frustrations** — What makes life harder for your stakeholders on a day-to-day basis?
- **Must-haves** — What do your stakeholders absolutely need in a new DMS?
- **Wish lists** — In an ideal world, what would your stakeholders like to see in a new DMS?

When having these conversations, [use this worksheet](#) to record responses from stakeholders. Make sure there's no stone left unturned when determining needs.

Keep track of your team's needs

[Download our Discovery Session Worksheet.](#)

3 IDENTIFY CONFLICTS; PRIORITIZE DEMANDS

The next step is to **CONSOLIDATE** your worksheet and create a needs document that's sorted by department.

Once you've compiled your team's needs, identify any conflicts and conduct a breakout session to:

- **Understand motivations and intent** — Hash out the differences and find out why there are conflicting interests.
- **Work toward consensus** — Compromise on a solution that everyone can agree on.
- **Serve the greater good** — Do what's best for your entire dealership. That might result in some disagreements and sacrifices, but they'll all be worth it.

Once you've resolved any disagreements, get your stakeholders together to find out which needs are most important to them. Gauge their priorities by asking them how much they'd invest in their needs if they only had \$100 to spend.



4 TEST CAPABILITIES AND TAKE A VOTE

It's time to demo potential systems with your stakeholders to see how their capabilities address your biggest needs.

Before the demo: If there are more than three options, initial vetting should be done by the project champion to narrow the list of candidates.

During the demo: Make sure each department lead is thoroughly assessing the system to see how it meets their requirements. This [Decision-making Tool](#) will make it easy to rate and compare different systems.

The best way to make the best choice

[Download our intuitive Decision-making Tool right now.](#)

After the demo: The demo shouldn't end after the vendor leaves. Ask vendor sales reps for dealerships you can visit with your full stakeholder team. Vet it before you buy it.

Take a Vote: The demos are done, and you're almost at the finish line! Now get your stakeholders together to vote. If you're struggling to reach a consensus, get a second opinion from an outside consultant.



5 ANNOUNCE THE DECISION AND PLAN

You did it. You've found a new DMS, and you've made a great decision for your dealership.

The final step toward building consensus is to make a company-wide announcement of this exciting news. But a quick email blast won't do. Make your announcement in person, if possible, and come with a comprehensive transition plan that will ease some of the anxiety over making this switch.

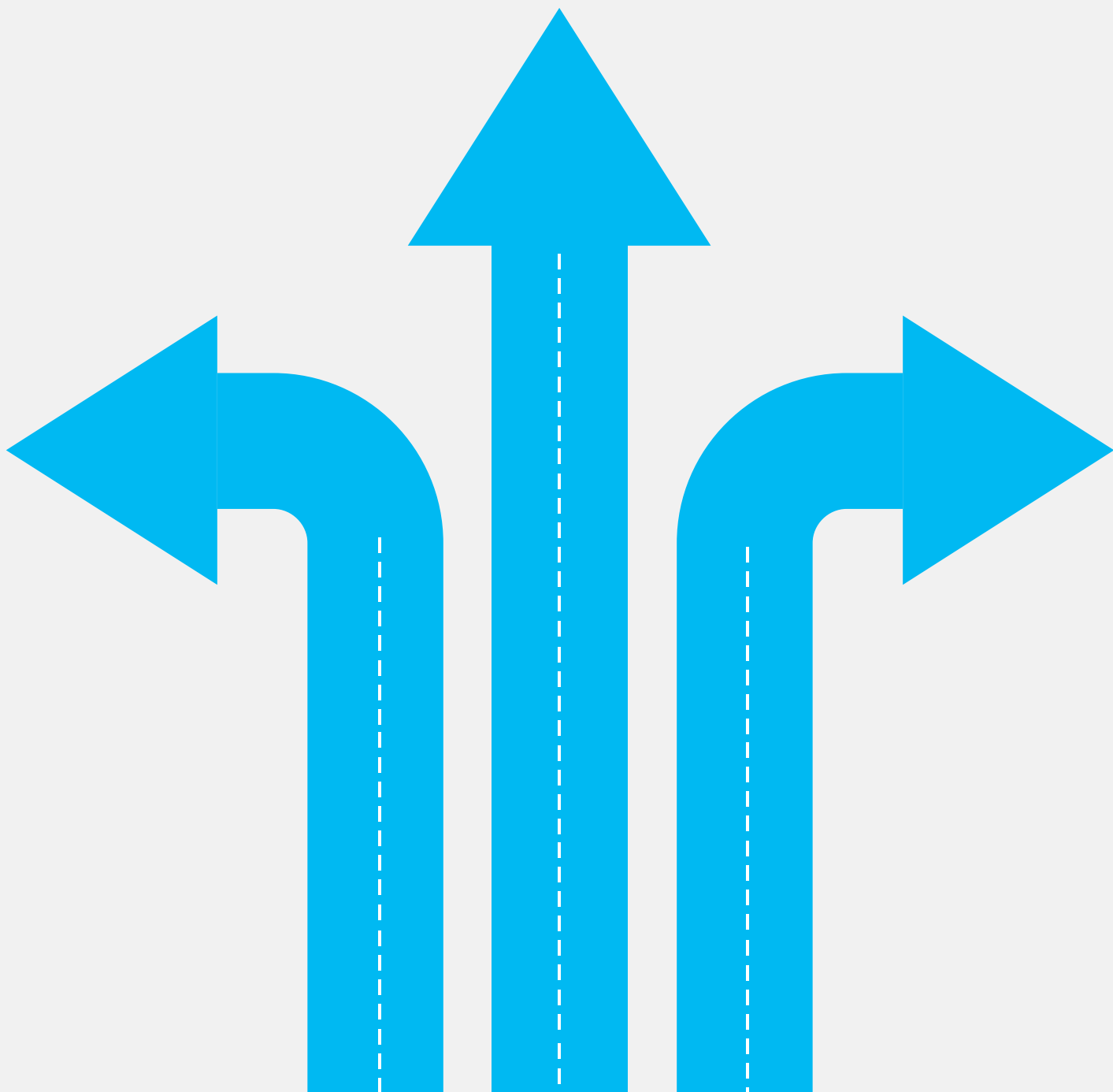
This [Agenda-setting Guide](#) can help you create a plan that starts 90 days before launch and takes you all the way to launch day.

Make the best launch plan possible

[Download our Agenda-Setting Guide right now.](#)



OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS





The more you can get people ready for change, and get them to the point where they're open and ready to move on with life before you make that change, the more effective that's going to be."

— Bryan Baer, General Manager
Budd Baer Auto

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

People are resistant to change, even if it's beneficial. As you're building consensus, be prepared for pushback. Here are the common objections you might hear:

Objection: “What we have now works fine for me.”

How to respond: Reiterate the reasons you're switching. Emphasize that you're wasting more energy avoiding the problems as opposed to solving them.

Objection: “I don't want to teach my team a new system.”

How to respond: This person needs to be a leader in implementing this system, but they won't be a teacher. Your dealership will have a thorough training to get familiar with the new DMS before launch.

Objection: “I can't afford the downtime to make a switch.”

How to respond: There should be no business interruption when going live, aside from training. Your vendor should be onsite to ensure the launch is going smoothly.

Objection: “The transition is too big of an undertaking for us.”

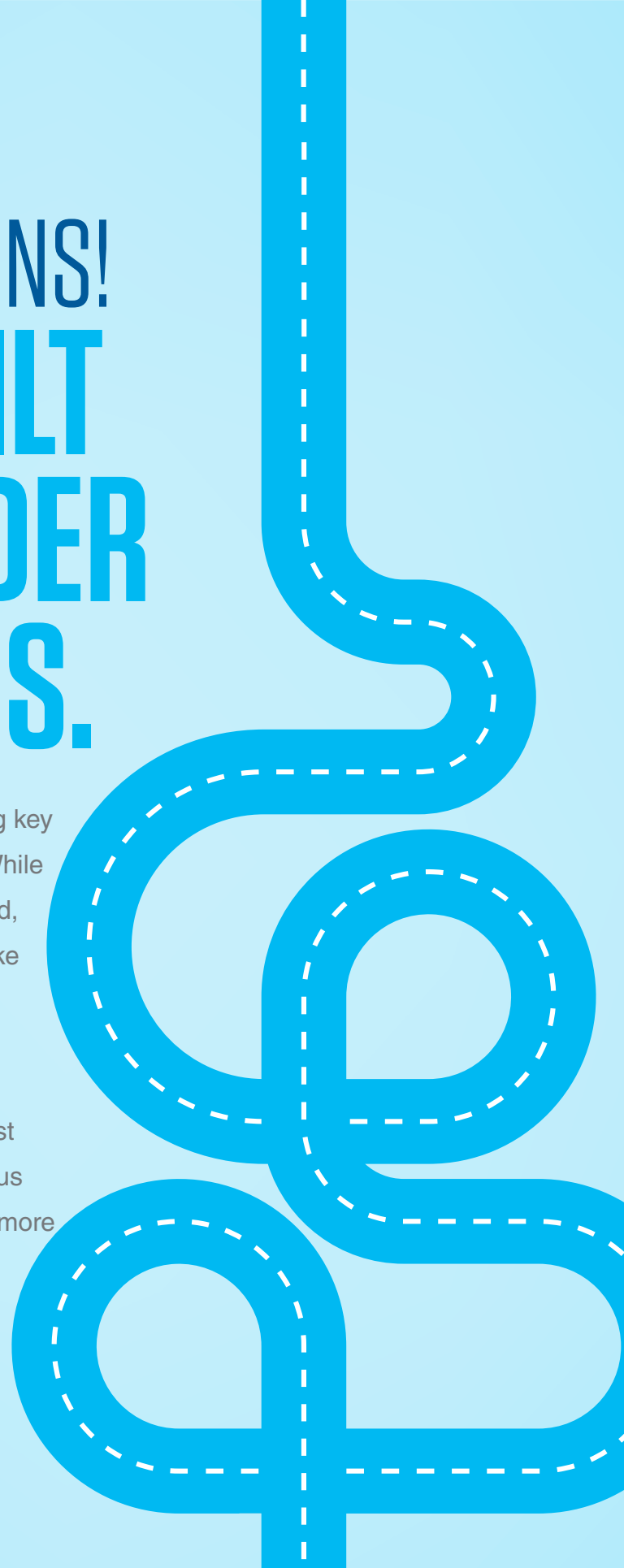
How to respond: The vendor will handle the heavy lifting during every step and will take the lead in implementation planning.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'VE BUILT STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS.

You now have a complete strategy for getting key stakeholders on board with a DMS switch. While there might be some difficult decisions ahead, having an invested team behind you will make the entire process easier.

[Click here to download the entire toolkit.](#)

Dealertrack is here to help you make the best switch possible for your dealership. Contact us anytime and visit **[Dealertrack.com](#)** to learn more about the benefits of switching your DMS.



Dealertrack DMS

TECHNOLOGY THAT DRIVES YOU.

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