AutoTrader.com Enhances Connections Solution With New Chat Dashboard and Sitelink Pro

New features enable dealers to create a more seamless online experience for in-market shoppers.

ATLANTA, Feb. 8, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- AutoTrader.com is making it easier for dealers to provide a better shopping experience online with enhanced features included in the new Connections Expert solution. New for 2012 are the comprehensive Chat Dashboard and Sitelink Pro feature.

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In 2011, AutoTrader.com introduced the original Connections solution, which gave dealers advanced functionality to create deeper connections with their shoppers online by connecting their listings on AutoTrader.com to their dealership website, third-party online review sites, Facebook and Twitter pages and by enabling shoppers to connect directly with the dealership through real-time chat. The enhancements for 2012, which will be available in the Connections Expert solution, take those connections one step further.

- **Chat Dashboard** – This new dashboard gives dealers everything they need to have seamless, productive chats with in-market shoppers. With this feature, dealers will be able to dynamically share links to relevant content, such as offers, incentives, similar vehicles, model information and ratings and reviews with consumers from within the chat window.
- **Sitelink Pro** – When a shopper is ready to take the leap from the vehicle details page (VDP) on AutoTrader.com to the dealer's own website, the new Sitelink Pro feature will enable them to save a few clicks by linking deep into the dealer's site, directly to the car they were viewing. Previously, the link directed shoppers to the main page of the dealer's website. The Sitelink Pro feature is available to dealers who utilize VinSolutions services.

"We are always looking for ways to provide more value to our dealers and continue to improve the online experience for the millions of consumers who use AutoTrader.com to shop for their next vehicle," said Chip Perry, president and CEO of AutoTrader.com. "By creating a deeper connection point into the dealer's website with Sitelink Pro, we are removing a few extra clicks in the shopping process, and the new Chat Dashboard gives dealers the power to easily share a richer set of information with shoppers."

Consumers are hungry for information when they're shopping online, as evident in the behavior revealed in the 2011 Automotive Buyer Influence Study, conducted with over 4,000 recent vehicle purchasers. According to that study, consumers conduct more than 18 hours of research before purchasing a vehicle. For the 71% of buyers who used the Internet during the shopping process, 60% of their time was spent online, and the majority of that time was spent on third-party sites like AutoTrader.com.

Throughout the shopping process, they are seeking content and being exposed to multiple brand impressions, and the Connections Expert solution helps dealers create multiple touch points for consumers, streamlining that process. Effectively engaging consumers at each point in their shopping process can dramatically improve the chances of turning a shopper into an actual buyer.

"Today's consumers are looking to learn as much as possible before visiting the dealership, and the Connections Expert solution gives dealers multiple ways to create those necessary connections and make it easy for consumers to find the information they're looking for," Perry continued.

About AutoTrader.com

Atlanta-based AutoTrader.com, created in 1997, is the Internet's ultimate automotive marketplace and consumer information website. AutoTrader.com aggregates in a single location millions of new cars, used cars and certified pre-owned cars from thousands of auto dealers and private sellers and is a leading online resource for auto dealers, individuals and manufacturers to advertise and market their vehicles to in-market shoppers. The company also provides a robust suite of software tools for dealers and manufacturers to help them manage and market their vehicle inventory and display advertising on the Internet. AutoTrader.com continues to grow key business metrics, including revenue, profitability and site traffic. Today, AutoTrader.com attracts millions of unique monthly visitors who utilize the site to review descriptions, photos and videos of vehicles for sale; research and compare vehicles; review pricing and specials; and read auto-related content like buying and selling tips and editorial coverage of major auto shows and automotive trends. AutoTrader.com operates one other auto marketing brand, AutoTraderClassics.com. AutoTrader.com also owns used vehicle management software company vAuto, Kelley Blue Book (Kbb.com), HomeNet Automotive, a leading provider of online inventory management and merchandising solutions for the automotive retail industry and VinSolutions, a leading provider of end-to-end solution platforms for dealers. AutoTrader.com is a majority-owned subsidiary of Cox Enterprises. Providence Equity Partners is a 25 percent owner of the company and Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers is also an investor. For more information, please visit www.autotrader.com.

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