

AUTOMOTIVE

## Cadillac brings live showroom experience to digital devices

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*Cadillac Live is one part personal shopper, one part live interactive digital showroom. Image courtesy of Cadillac*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

U.S. automaker Cadillac is looking to change the car-buying experience with a live digital showroom that facilitates one-on-one interactions between consumers and agents.

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As affluents grow more accustomed to online research and ecommerce, automakers continue to experiment with ways to add more digital communications into the shopping journey. Claiming to be the first of its kind, Cadillac Live attempts to bridge the gap between analog and digital, as in-person experiences remain essential for affluent drivers.

"Cadillac Live is a first-of-its-kind experience in North America, building on the brand's reputation as an innovator and a leader in luxury," said Hoss Hassani, managing director of **Cadillac Canada**. "For us, this isn't about doing an industry first, this is about delivering an unmatched retail experience, in any category, full stop.

"It was conceived as we were figuring out how to apply the insights of shopper research we had and the increasing challenge of getting more people into our stores whom we don't typically see," he said. "We wanted to create an unmatched and nearly frictionless experience that allows customers to learn and shop more about our line-up from anywhere."

Cadillac Live

Currently available only in Canada, Cadillac Live allows prospects to speak to live agents one-on-one on any digital device, including smartphones.

Cadillac adapted a 10,000-square-foot film studio in Toronto for the project's showroom. Cadillac Live features 10 vehicles from the 2019 lineup on display and is accessible at [Cadillac.Live](http://Cadillac.Live).



*Customers can speak live to agents via Cadillac Live. Image credit: Cadillac*

Through a one-way video conversation, users can speak to an agent directly and ask any questions about Cadillac and the car-buying process. Agents will use iPhone X smartphones and Bluetooth headsets, as well as a mobile application that allows them to share different vehicle configurations with customers.

Users will be able to see dynamic views of vehicles in the showroom for a closer look. Virtual tours are also available on Cadillac Live.

In addition to live sessions, shoppers can schedule a session for a later date or view a pre-recorded chat. Live Cadillac Live chats are available Sunday through Thursday from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. ET.

Cadillac recognizes that not all dealership experiences can be replicated online, however.

After a consumer completes his or her session, they have the option of booking a test drive at a local Cadillac dealership.



*The Cadillac Live showroom. Image credit: Cadillac*

"Given [Cadillac Live] was conceived in Canada, we're piloting it and iterating it here to start," Mr. Hassani said. "Expansion to other Cadillac markets is a strong possibility."

This is Cadillac's first major move since General Motor's restructuring plan was announced in late 2018. The automaker's restructure plan is said to save GM \$6 billion a year by 2020, and saw the cancelation of Cadillac's subscription service ([see story](#)).

#### Showroom changes

While Cadillac is bringing the showroom experience to consumers virtually, other automakers are bringing more interactive features to physical locations.

German automaker Porsche is rolling out a new approach to dealerships as more carmakers are focusing on brand experiences in the physical retail space.

Porsche Centres will be viewed as a community gathering place for new and current customers, with an added emphasis on digital media that can individualize communication. A virtual reality experience will allow drivers to see their own car configurations, while touchscreens will let customers learn more about Porsche products and services ([see story](#)).

U.S. automaker Tesla briefly toyed with the idea of closing the majority of its physical locations. The electric vehicle manufacturer is now rerouting its plans back to bricks-and-mortar retail and raising prices instead ([see story](#)).

Ultimately, these dealership and showroom changes keep the buying experience consumer-centric.

"It's not about what we want to say, it's about what the customer wants to hear," Cadillac's Mr. Hassani said.

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