



**BUCKEYE**  
Honda

# How Buckeye Honda is approving more borrowers with Upstart



Source: [www.buckeyehonda.com](http://www.buckeyehonda.com)

## Products

Online Retail, In-store Digital Retail, AI-Powered Financing

## Market

Lancaster, OH

## Challenge

Buckeye Honda realized that consumers' shopping behaviors were shifting rapidly in 2020 with a primary focus on starting the car-buying process online. To accommodate this shift and meet consumers' new expectations, Buckeye Honda was looking for a solution that could quickly and easily synchronize their online to in-store process to create a seamless car-buying experience.

## Solution

Buckeye Honda selected Upstart Auto Retail to create a streamlined and user-friendly experience for both their customers and sales teams. They wanted a simple and intuitive way to align and connect what customers were doing online to their in-store experience.

"What I love the most about Upstart Auto Retail is that it's a combination of a high-quality digital retail tool with an in-store app that streamlines the process for both customers and sales—making it a game changer. **It's a customer experience tool, a retention tool, and a profit generator all wrapped up into one solution.**"

— Scott Thomas, Vice President

## Results

### Faster training and onboarding

After initial implementation, Buckeye Honda was able to get their sales teams to fully adopt the tool within a week, and they were up and running within a month.

Thomas said, "Our sales team felt comfortable with the tool almost instantly, and they were confident with the "ins and outs" within a month of applying it to their sales process. This is critically important because when people are new, it helps them feel confident that they can close deals without missing any steps."



**Upstart is the lowest rate 71% of the time**

when Upstart offers are presented alongside other offers, enabling customers to access more affordable credit.<sup>1</sup>



**533%**

Increase in front-end gross.<sup>2</sup>



**76%**

higher lead to close

Increase in vehicles sold from online leads from 83 to 146.<sup>2</sup>

With Upstart Auto Retail, Thomas added, “Sales people get up to speed on the sales process much quicker than before. The entire sales process is laid out in the tool and doesn’t require them to go through the CRM system to figure out the next steps manually. Every part of the tool is very intuitive and straightforward, allowing sales to focus on doing what they do best—helping customers find the car that fits their needs.”

Buckeye Honda has been extremely happy with the implementation process and ongoing support they’ve received from Upstart Auto Retail.

Thomas said, “It has been the easiest implementation process of technology I’ve ever experienced. The tool was built in a way to make it easy for people to pick it up and use it intuitively, and the support team is absolutely stellar. Not only do they work to fix issues quickly, but I like that we’re able to work with one person directly on the support side rather than being shuffled around to different people.”

### Approving more applicants with AI-Powered Financing

With Upstart’s AI-Powered Financing, Buckeye Honda is also able to extend an Upstart-powered loan directly from their online or in-store experience.

In fact, when Upstart offers are presented alongside other offers, Upstart is the lowest rate 71 percent of the time, enabling customers to access more affordable credit.

### More efficiency and higher close rates

Not only was the traditional way of selling cars, from searching for vehicles manually to printing documents, time-consuming and lengthy, but keeping track of all the steps and inputs was creating friction in the sales process. Buckeye Honda was seeing that when customers would come into the showroom, they often had to restart the process, which greatly reduced efficiency.

Thomas stated, “We realized that we were often duplicating efforts and leads. What made things even more time-consuming was manually re-entering data and transferring information from online leads into our CRM system. With Upstart Auto Retail, things are faster on both sides—sales can focus on more opportunities and customers don’t have to spend too much time on the lot. We can complete the entire process in one place—data input, desking, offer, acceptance, and more. Now when customers complete certain

steps online, we have everything visible, and we can instantly pull up their information when they show up at the store.”

Perhaps one of the biggest benefits, says Thomas, is that “Upstart Auto Retail helps us identify and create higher quality leads. Now when customers come into our showroom, they’re a lot further down the process than before. It changes the conversation and makes it more specific and direct in terms of decision making.” As a result, Buckeye has generated a 76 percent higher lead-to-close ratio, increasing vehicles sold from online leads from 83 to 146 post-Upstart Auto Retail.<sup>2</sup>

### Higher customer engagement

By having complete customer information in one place, Buckeye Honda was able to create a consistent experience that built confidence and trust in their customers. Thomas stated, “The process customers see online is the same thing they see on the iPad when they come to the showroom. Having desking built into one tool makes it easy for a salesperson to request and generate an offer for a customer, which greatly streamlines communication across our teams.

“In my experience,” Thomas added, “if you show a customer something on the computer, they believe it more than a piece of paper. The fact that everything is laid out in a digital format and that the salesperson can change the terms to show customers different options makes it a more interactive experience than just presenting something to them.”

When it comes to promoting their products, Jack Young, Marketing and Content Manager stated, “With Upstart Auto Retail, we’re able to include our Buckeye protection package right in the tool, showing videos and direct examples of what’s featured in the brochure in an iPad-friendly format. Having the protection plan be part of the iPad experience makes everything feel connected for the customer.”

### Full transparency leads to higher profits

Displaying customers’ offers upfront has allowed Buckeye Honda to fulfill their mission for transparency: “One of our value statements is trust. We want to be transparent with our customers, and Upstart Auto Retail helps us stay true to this core value.”

This transparency and greater customer trust have led to higher profits. With Upstart’s Online and In-store Digital Retailing, Buckeye has boosted front-end gross by 533 percent.<sup>2</sup>

1. Findings are based on information collected by Upstart between 4/1/23-6/14/23. Findings are based on offers provided through Upstart’s dealer software and does not account for deals done through other systems.

2. The findings reported in this case study are based on information collected by Buckeye Honda and reported to Upstart Auto Retail. These findings illustrate a comparison of data from December 2019 - June 2020 to December 2022 - June 2023.\*

<https://www.buckeyehonda.com/inventory/new-2023-honda-cr-v-1-5t-awd-ex-l-bd-awd-4d-sport-utility-5j6rs4h79pl010894/>

### About Upstart Auto Retail

Upstart Auto Retail is a leader in modern automotive retail solutions, providing the most seamless and flexible connected retailing platform for dealers to increase sales efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Visit us today at [upstart.com/dealers](https://upstart.com/dealers)

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