

# SIGNAL PATH

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*"Vision is the art of seeing the invisible. Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality."*

## AFTERMARKET CAR AUDIO DEAD . . . AGAIN ?

I suppose I should start by remembering that in 1983 some people from CASA (Car Audio Specialists Association?), smarter than me, informed me that aftermarket car audio would be dead by 1987... Well if I have been dead or at least participating full time in an industry that has been dead for some twenty-seven years now, it ain't so bad...

I'll tell you what I think is bad. Another guy, Richard Noel claiming authority on the subject because of his time as an installer at Best Buy, wrote an article called "*5 Things That Killed Aftermarket Car Audio*". <http://m.web2carz.com/article/article.php?articleId=3919&w2caf=298c9c9f53282a30> He is a staff writer at Web2Carz. He claims we are dead because of the recession, Bose, corporate installers, the iPod and the OEMs identifying Rockford, Pioneer and Infinity as defectors. He then went on to claim that OE interfaces are so expensive because of the need to maintain RDS. If the article's claim was, *we have taken some hard shots from these points*, I'd be less disappointed in him. If his assertion was, *there are a significant number of excellent brick & mortar installing specialty retailers who are thriving despite such hits*, I wouldn't feel so disappointed in this guy. That said, I contend this is what you should be concerned about...

Consumers who read this stuff might believe that because of the points he made which are at least partially correct, brick & mortar installing specialty retailers are dead and gone. Consumers who don't have the opportunity to hear your side of the story might think this guy knows what he is talking about and simply become "deaf" (pun intended) to aftermarket car audio.


Here is what you might consider to counter this nonsense, if you are not already doing it, reach out to consumers via your data base. Yes, yes, yes, these consumers who have visited your store know you are not dead. BUT you can and should remind them to tell all of their friends about the wonderful experience they had in your store. Yell about how incredible the aftermarket sound and listening experience is compared to the standard OE system. The good part about such an effort on your part is, outside of the energy you put into collecting the e-mail address of your consumers, generating some content and then hitting the send button, **IT IS FREE** of cost to you. If you are already doing this, BRAVO to you. Remember to instruct your readers to tell their friends and forward your e-mail. If you are not yet doing this free marketing of your brand and your expertise, **DO IT NOW**.

Need savvy industry help? Check with Solomon Daniels' TruTarget e-mail marketing management. He is writer and promoter extraordinaire; 213-291-1528, <http://www.sdgrouppla.com/toolbox.solomon@sdgrouppla.com>. Gary Woodward from Hurley's AutoRadio in McLean VA offers pick-up and delivery services along with concierge services for smog check and oil changes. He even charges a premium for this added value service. Call Gary 703-790-8744.

Look at Mike Van Horn's 12voltBites from the 12 Volt News; [mike@12voltnews.com](mailto:mike@12voltnews.com). These guys can help you get the word out for very little cost.

My point is, there are lotsa ways to spread the word. No cost and low cost. BUT you are required to extend a little initiative and energy. Try it. You'll like it. I promise.

At your service,

  
Ray Windsor