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Honda program targets service prospects

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LOS ANGELES -- American Honda Motor Co. is offering dealers a new way to reach potential service customers.

Through Service Smarts Online, Honda dealers can track the 12 million Hondas in operation nationally and focus on those nearest the dealership.

The software, developed by Urban Science Inc. in Detroit, allows dealers to overlay a map of their market area with the location of Honda vehicle owners, configured by type, age or mileage of vehicle. It also includes demographic information about the vehicle owners.

In addition, Service Smarts Online maps independent repair shops and oil change shops in the area, said Simon Bradley, an Urban Science account executive in Long Beach, Calif.

The software can be used with any Internet browser and does not require special hardware.

Service Smarts Online also is a reporting tool that enables dealers to gauge their performance in attracting service business against national averages.

"We want them to target areas where there may be high quantities of units in operation but low service penetration," Bradley said. "Customers tend to travel to the closest service center, all things being equal, so dealers need to focus on that."

Honda currently has a paper-based report on service penetration that is updated twice yearly. The Service Smarts Online report, which will be unveiled to dealers by year end, will be updated monthly, said Julie Murakami, Honda manager of service marketing. Murakami declined to say what Honda would charge dealers for the service.

She said Honda was impressed that the software can categorize customers by behavioral patterns, such as the last time they had service work performed.

Said Murakami: "It allows a dealer to create the right direct marketing offer to the right customer at the right time."



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