

## Case Study:

# How WPP leverages location insights when shopper signals fade

### Overview

The automotive industry is undergoing consequential changes, driven by the rise of online car sales, increased adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), and fluctuating economic conditions. These trends are reshaping customer expectations and intensifying competition among dealerships. To stay competitive, manufacturers and dealerships must embrace location intelligence as a key strategy.

WPP, a global leader in advertising with operations in 110 countries, partnered with Precisely's PlacelQ to address these challenges, enhance customer experience, and attract more dealership interest. By leveraging physical-world insights, WPP gained a deep understanding of regional customer patterns, which led to increased dealership visits.

The collaboration between PlacelQ and WPP resulted in a 30% improvement in qualified dealership visits and a 43% boost in in-store visit productivity.

### The Challenge

Amid market disruptions, WPP's automotive client faced a sharp decline in dealership foot traffic. Traditional shopper signals, such as digital footprints and surveys, became unreliable, often providing overly optimistic or biased results. Without clear cues, dealerships struggled to connect with customers, risking significant revenue losses and weakening customer engagement.

To counter these challenges, WPP developed an innovative omnichannel approach, integrating digital and offline shopper patterns using statistically significant location intelligence.

### The Solution

A key element of this approach was foot traffic analysis, which enabled WPP's automotive client to evaluate dealership performance and develop a strategy. The goal was to understand visitation patterns, peak times, and regional preferences, allowing successful tactics to be replicated across the client's network for consistent results and improved customer satisfaction.

Rigorous testing led WPP to select PlacelQ as their partner for location intelligence. A regionally focused correlation test confirmed PlacelQ's clear and consistent insights across dealerships. PlacelQ's accuracy, reliability, and commitment to data integrity also aligned with the client's values, solidifying the alliance.

### Client

WPP on behalf of large automotive client

### Industry

Automotive

### Challenges

- Weakened signals causing low dealership traffic
- Challenges reaching in-market customers
- Increased competition from online sales and EVs
- Optimizing ad spend for better ROI and visits

### Results

- 22% increase in qualified visits directly from video ad placements
- 30% improvement in overall qualified dealership visits
- 43% boost in in-store visit productivity
- Compliance and operational excellence

"In the rapidly evolving automotive landscape, understanding and anticipating customer patterns is more crucial than ever."

- Erick Maks, Group Dir. at WPP

## Building a Data-Driven Strategic Framework

To address unclear customer signals, WPP used historical location intelligence to forecast dealership sales potential in regional markets. This involved analyzing long-term trends, identifying low-frequency visits, and applying automated normalization techniques. Through its collaboration with PlacelQ, WPP integrated these insights into the automotive client's marketing and sales strategies, focusing on two key pillars:

### Decoding Shopper Patterns

WPP required a deep understanding of shopper patterns across adjacent industries to navigate a rapidly changing market. By leveraging PlacelQ's Firehose dataset to track shifts in customer visits—particularly in fast food and grocery sectors, which often indicate broader trends—WPP contextualized foot traffic changes and adapted these insights to the automotive sector.

### Foot Traffic as an Optimization Metric

The integration of PlacelQ Pixel with proprietary digital metrics enabled WPP to enhance conversion efficiency. A strategic blend of foot traffic data and digital insights gave WPP a real-time view of pre-conversion patterns, allowing them to continuously analyze dealership visits and refine customer engagement.

For example, in the initial campaign pilot, aligning foot traffic intelligence with media optimization metrics led to a considerable increase in dealership visits. The test resulted in a 22% increase in qualified visits from video ad placements and a 15% increase from display ad units. The successful experiment quickly became the foundation for the broader strategy.

## The Outcome

In the overall campaign, WPP's use of PlacelQ led to major improvements in performance metrics. Dealership visit effectiveness—tracking visits per million ad impressions—increased by 30%, indicating more high-quality foot traffic. Dealership visit productivity—measuring visits per marketing dollar spent—rose by 43%, reflecting a stronger ROI through optimized media strategies.



WPP's approach also provided notable value from dealers to in-market auto buyers by delivering marketing messages that were timed and geographically relevant, reaching customers at moments when they were most likely to visit a dealership. This strategy enhanced the shopping experience by presenting information at the right time and effectively connecting ready-to-buy customers with the ideal purchasing opportunities.

“By leveraging location intelligence with PlacelQ, we significantly enhanced dealership foot traffic, optimizing our marketing strategies to drive not just clicks, but real-world visits. It allowed us to deliver value to our clients, ensuring every marketing dollar is strategically invested to maximize returns.”

- Erick Maks, Group Dir. at WPP

## Next Steps

As WPP continues to collaborate with PlacelQ, they are exploring new opportunities to enhance their data-driven strategies. Future initiatives include:

1. New Demand Creation Contexts: Developing analyses that compare foot traffic against competitors at a geo level to better understand market positioning and competitive dynamics.
2. Electric Vehicle Market Insights: Studying the unique shopping and decision-making processes of EV buyers to tailor marketing strategies more effectively.
3. Enhanced Customer Journey Mapping: Gaining deeper insights into the roles of OEMs, dealers, and digital channels throughout the customer purchase journey.

The teamwork between WPP and PlacelQ generated meaningful intelligence that reshaped the automotive client's success. By transforming real-world insights into strategic initiatives, the collaboration navigated market disruptions, driving growth and deeper customer engagement. This collaboration highlights that data's true value extends beyond acquisition, enabling transformative change and redefining industry norms.

## About WPP

WPP is a global leader in creative transformation, offering a wide range of services including advertising, public relations, and digital innovation. Headquartered in London, WPP's agencies operate in over 110 countries, working with clients including 303 of the Fortune Global 500. With top-tier agencies like Ogilvy and GroupM, WPP helps brands drive business results through creative and data-driven strategies.