

## TITLE: The Real Cost of a Weak Dealer Onboarding Process



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### About the Author:

Russ Ziegler is the Founder of Connect Sales, Coaching and Consulting. He helps international manufacturers enter and succeed in the U.S. dealer market through education, operational alignment, and measurable accountability. With more than fifteen years in the dealer distribution industry, Russ has trained hundreds of professionals and supported manufacturers in building stronger networks and healthier dealers.

When international OEMs enter the U.S. market, one of the most overlooked steps is dealer onboarding. Too often, the excitement of signing a new partner overshadows the reality that the dealer is now representing your brand to the customer. Without a structured onboarding process, you risk slow starts, uneven customer experiences, and lost momentum before the relationship even begins.

Most dealers will not ask for what they actually need. In those first conversations, they will be eager and focused on immediate, tactical questions: When can I get product? How do I order? Do you have brochures? While these requests are valid, they are not enough to set the foundation for long-term success. If you only respond to what is asked, you are skipping the critical steps that ensure the dealer is prepared to represent your brand with consistency and professionalism.

An effective onboarding program goes further. It establishes expectations, introduces systems, sets measurable goals, and provides training that gives the dealer confidence from day one. It equips them with the tools, resources, and knowledge to run with your brand, not just sell your product. The best OEMs build this as a repeatable process—educating, equipping, and motivating every new dealer with the same consistent standard.



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Yes, onboarding takes time and might feel like it slows things down at the beginning. But it is far faster and more efficient than having a dealer stumble—or worse, fail—because of preventable issues. Dealer failure not only hurts revenue and brand reputation, it also consumes more resources to fix than it would have taken to set them up properly in the first place. Onboarding ensures success. Let us do that.

This is what we know and this is what we do at Connect. You do not have to do it alone—we are here to help.

**Accelerate your entry into the U.S. market with clarity, alignment, and measurable performance. Explore additional America Ready insights, dealer development tools, and U.S. market strategies at [www.Connect-CSCC.com](http://www.Connect-CSCC.com).**

