



**TITLE:** Do You Know Your Ideal Dealer Persona?

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#### About the Author:

Russ Ziegler is the Founder of Connect Sales, Coaching and Consulting, focused on helping OEMs and dealers strengthen performance through education, operational alignment, and measurable accountability. With more than fifteen years in the dealer distribution space, he has trained hundreds of professionals and supported dealerships across the United States in improving sales, profitability, and whole-dealer health.

Most OEMs come to us saying, **“We need to add dealers!!!”**

And they are not wrong — but they are often early.

Before you can build out a high-performing network, you have to answer a more important question: **“What kind of dealer are we actually looking for?”**

At Connect, we call that your **IDP — Ideal Dealer Persona**. It is the profile of a dealer who is already equipped to succeed with your product. And if you want to build a strong, scalable U.S. dealer network, knowing your IDP is not optional — it is the first step.

#### What Makes a Dealer Ideal?

It is not just about territory coverage or revenue potential. Your ideal dealer is likely already selling to the type of customer you want to reach. That means:

- They understand the application.
- They have existing relationships.
- Their team speaks the right “language” in the field.
- Their service and support model aligns with your product’s demands.
- When the fit is right, onboarding is smoother, ramp-up is faster, and long-term performance is stronger.



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## The Cost of Getting It Wrong

Signing a bunch of dealers may feel like progress — it looks good on a map and checks short-term boxes. But without an IDP guiding the strategy, you may be setting yourself up for long-term problems. We have seen it take two to three years before the consequences become clear:

- Terminations and broken relationships
- Rescue missions to save poorly performing territories
- Gaps in coverage that drag down your brand
- Dealers who hold your contract but never move the needle

Cleaning that up is expensive — in time, resources, and reputation. Knowing your IDP and designing your expansion around it is not just smart. It is **paramount**.

## How We Help OEMs Find Their IDP

At Connect, we help manufacturers identify and validate their Ideal Dealer Persona using:

- **Historic sales data:** Which dealers or regions have performed best, and why?
- **Market research:** Where are your customers already buying similar solutions?
- **Channel analysis:** Which traits show up consistently in your top performers?

Sometimes the answer is already in the numbers. Sometimes it takes a structured discovery process. Either way, guessing is not a strategy.

## Build Smarter, Not Just Bigger

If you are expanding your dealer network — or refining it — start by getting crystal clear on who you are looking for. Because until you know what “ideal” looks like, every dealer looks like a maybe.

Let us help you define your IDP and build a network that sells more, ramps faster, and stays aligned.



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**Build stronger OEM–Dealer results through clarity, alignment, and measurable performance.**  
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