

PROTECTING ENTERPRISE VALUE IN THE FTC ERA



Two deadlines. Same fix.

The rules changed twice in 2026. Both changes require your marketing to show the real price from the first click — and your agency is almost certainly not doing that.

RUNNING RIGHT NOW

FTC Section 5

The FTC deployed AI scraping to scan your ads, social posts, and listings at industrial scale. 97 dealer groups received warning letters in a single morning in March 2026 — no phone call, no warning, just a letter.

- A screenshot of your ad is enough to trigger an investigation
- Your agency's content is your liability — no exceptions
- \$53,088 per individual violation

OCTOBER 1, 2026

California CARS Act

SB 766 mandates all-in pricing in the first written response to every internet lead. Your CRM auto-reply that quotes a payment without an out-the-door price is a violation from day one — and because California buyers are in every market, this is effectively a national standard.

- Total price required in every first CRM communication
- 3-day right to cancel on used vehicles under \$50K
- State AGs in NY, TX, NJ enforcing independently

The fix for both is identical.

Marketing that shows the real price from the first click — across every channel, every ad, every auto-response. That's what Force Marketing, WeDrive, and GSM are built to deliver.



Where your marketing is bleeding right now.

The AI scans for all five. Continuously. On every dealer in every market.

01	Social Media A handwritten special or outdated payment post goes live. That's a binding commercial representation — and an FTC violation.	FORCE CLOSES THIS Templated content built from live DMS pricing. Every post compliant before it publishes.
02	Google Business Profile A stale price or offer on GBP versus your VDP is the same Section 5 gap the FTC scans for in paid ads.	FORCE CLOSES THIS Weekly GBP updates, offer posts from live inventory, Q&A monitoring.
03	Paid Media Conditional rebates, payment packing, "for qualified buyers" copy — standard ad language that reads as a Section 5 violation.	FORCE CLOSES THIS All-in pricing as the lead. OEM co-op compliant. Every ad built to withstand a screenshot.
04	AI Chatbot Every chatbot message is a dealer statement. A hallucinated price is a live violation — intent doesn't matter.	FORCE CLOSES THIS Chatbot governance: inventory-grounded, audited, with escalation on pricing questions.
05	Third-Party Listings Cars.com, AutoTrader showing a different price than your VDP — the AI flags the gap automatically.	WEDRIVE CLOSES THIS DMS-connected Audience IQ feeds. Same price, everywhere, same day.

70%

of shoppers abandon a deal over a **\$20/month pricing discrepancy**. The gap that triggers the FTC is the same gap that loses the customer. *Fix one, fix both.*

Q3 closes twice.

Labor Day is the selling season peak. October 1 is the compliance deadline. Both require the same preparation. Dealers who start now close both windows.

SEPTEMBER 1

Labor Day

Highest-traffic selling weekend of H2

- Dealers who started 10 weeks out are dominating the weekend
- Compliant, all-in pricing removes the friction that kills floor traffic
- The shopper who saw your honest VDP price doesn't negotiate from suspicion

OCTOBER 1

California CARS Act

National baseline for pricing transparency

- All-in price required in your first CRM response to every lead
- Your current auto-reply is almost certainly in violation
- You can't have different systems for CA vs. non-CA buyers — it's all or nothing

THE COST OF WAITING

Now

FTC AI scanning your live ads. Every day you run non-compliant copy is a day of exposure.

+4 wks

Competitors with clean campaigns are already capturing your in-market buyers.

Sept 1

Labor Day. The dealers who prepared close the weekend. Everyone else chases it.

Oct 1

California CARS Act live. Your CRM auto-reply needs to be rebuilt before this date.



One ecosystem. Every gap closed.

Force Marketing, WeDrive, and GSM each address different layers of the compliance and leads problem — unified by the Audience IQ data platform.

OEM APPROVED DIGITAL

Force Marketing

CLOSES GAPS 01 • 02 • 03 • 04

Paid Media

Google, Meta, Streaming — all-in pricing, OEM co-op compliant, FTC-clean by design.

Social Profiles

Templated content from DMS pricing — no ad hoc posts, no coordinator guessing.

Google Business Profile

Weekly updates, offer posts, Q&A monitoring — live inventory pricing, no gaps.

AEO + Schema

Surface correctly in ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity — where 2026 buyers start.

DIRECT RESPONSE & NON-OEM

WeDrive

CLOSES GAP 05 • CONQUEST

Audience IQ Platform

30+ data partners. 160M opt-in prospects. Same-day DMS-connected pricing.

Conquest Marketing

\$150–\$250 cost per new car acquisition.
\$26 per service customer.

Direct Mail + Email + SMS

Acquire, Reanimate, Nurture — targeted to ready-to-buy audiences.

Event Marketing

High-urgency sales events: custom audiences, social, retargeting — tracked in real time.

FIXED OPS FULL SERVICE

GSM

RETAIN • REACTIVATE • REPURCHASE

Service Lane Marketing

Omnichannel fixed-ops campaigns — email, direct mail, digital, social. 30+ years of expertise.

Lapsed Customer Recovery

Win back customers who haven't been in for 12+ months before the competitor does.

Lifecycle Retention

Keep customers coming back through every stage — service, trade cycle, repurchase.

Parts & Service Offers

Fixed-ops content and offers — aligned to the correct audience, not the sales floor.

All three share Audience IQ — the same customer data platform — and the same 4A strategy: Audience, Attention, Automation, Attribution. One coordinated ecosystem, not three disconnected vendors.

10 weeks. Here's the play.

Not a discovery phase. Not a 90-day onboarding. A gap report in week one, campaigns live by week four.

1-2

Audit + Align

We pull every consumer-facing channel and map every pricing gap between your DMS and what a buyer sees. Deliverable: a gap report and a go-live plan.

CHANNEL AUDIT

PRICING GAP MAP

CRM REVIEW

3-4

Paid + GBP Live

Force's paid campaigns go live with all-in pricing baked in. GBP updated with current offers. WeDrive audiences queued for Labor Day push.

GOOGLE + META

GBP REFRESH

AUDIENCE BUILD

5-6

Social + AEO + CRM Fix

Social templates running. Schema live. CRM auto-responses rebuilt with all-in pricing ahead of California Oct 1 deadline.

SOCIAL CALENDAR

SCHEMA MARKUP

CRM REWRITE

7-10

Labor Day Push → Oct 1 Ready

Full campaign intensity into Labor Day. WeDrive direct response running alongside Force digital. GSM service lane primed. October 1 California compliance confirmed.

CAMPAIGN PUSH

CA COMPLIANCE

Q4 PLAN

10

Weeks until Labor Day. Every week without a compliant, optimized campaign is a week of leads your competitors are closing instead.



Two deadlines. One call.

We'll pull up your live ads, GBP, and social on the call and show you exactly where your pricing gaps are running right now — and what they're costing you per month. Then a straight answer on whether Force, WeDrive, GSM, or a combination is the right fit.



WHAT THE CALL COVERS

- A live audit of your ads, GBP, and social — we show you every pricing gap running right now
- Your FTC exposure count and what each gap is costing you in lost conversions
- Whether your CRM auto-reply will be in violation on October 1 — and how to fix it before then
- A concrete 10-week plan: what gets fixed, launched, and measured before Labor Day

SOURCE NOTE

This brief synthesizes research from the 2026 Dealer Compliance Conference and an independent analysis of mid-2026 regulatory developments including FTC Section 5 enforcement, California SB 766, and state AG actions. It is an operational summary — not legal advice. Consult qualified counsel for compliance determinations specific to your market.



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