

January 29, 2019

Hello from the 2019 Auto Summit at the NADA Convention

[AUTOMOBILE](#), [SCHNEIDER DOWNS](#)

BY [STEVEN BARBER](#)

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San Francisco was the happening place this past weekend for the National Automotive Dealership Association Convention. The West Coast had a feel of home to it as I saw familiar faces aboard the outgoing flight and bumped into some Western PA dealers at other events.

I attended one of the most anticipated events, which was the Auto Summit sponsored by J.D. Power. The topics ranged from the annual franchise assessment to the digital update to the future of electrification. This was my second trip to the Auto Summit, and like my last summit, I did not leave disappointed.

The franchise assessment session enabled dealers to compare how their franchise stands against their competition. The group discussed loyalty, conquest, quality, appeal, service, image, residual value, retail share change and sales per model. Each category was rated excellent, good, fair or poor. I have some thoughts regarding more than 30 franchises that were discussed which ranged from high volume, mid/low volume to luxury. Let me know if you want to discuss your franchise(s).

Ford's President of Global Ford Customer Service Division, Frederiek Toney, and Cadillac's Chief Marketing Officer, Deborah Wahl, were the two keynote speakers who discussed a common theme, which was future and innovation. Mr. Toney discussed electric vehicles and the service impact. Where does one of the most profitable departments go from here? Ms. Wahl discussed when electric will be the primary engine and automatous driving is all we know.

Lastly, digital considerations and dealership reputation cannot be overlooked any longer. The summit presenters noted that dealerships get their customers to look at vehicles digitally, but they still visited the dealership to complete the sale. We need to make sure the process is seamless from beginning digitally and ending at the dealerships. This includes the model, color, credit application and price. Also, everywhere we go on the internet, we are being rated. The question is how is your dealership responding to these ratings, positive or negative?

Overall, the trip was worth it. The automotive industry is still strong. We need to be nimble as we move into a future with many alternatives. I look forward to next year's events in Las Vegas for Valentine's Day weekend. If you want to discuss any of these topics, please reach out to [Steve Barber](#).

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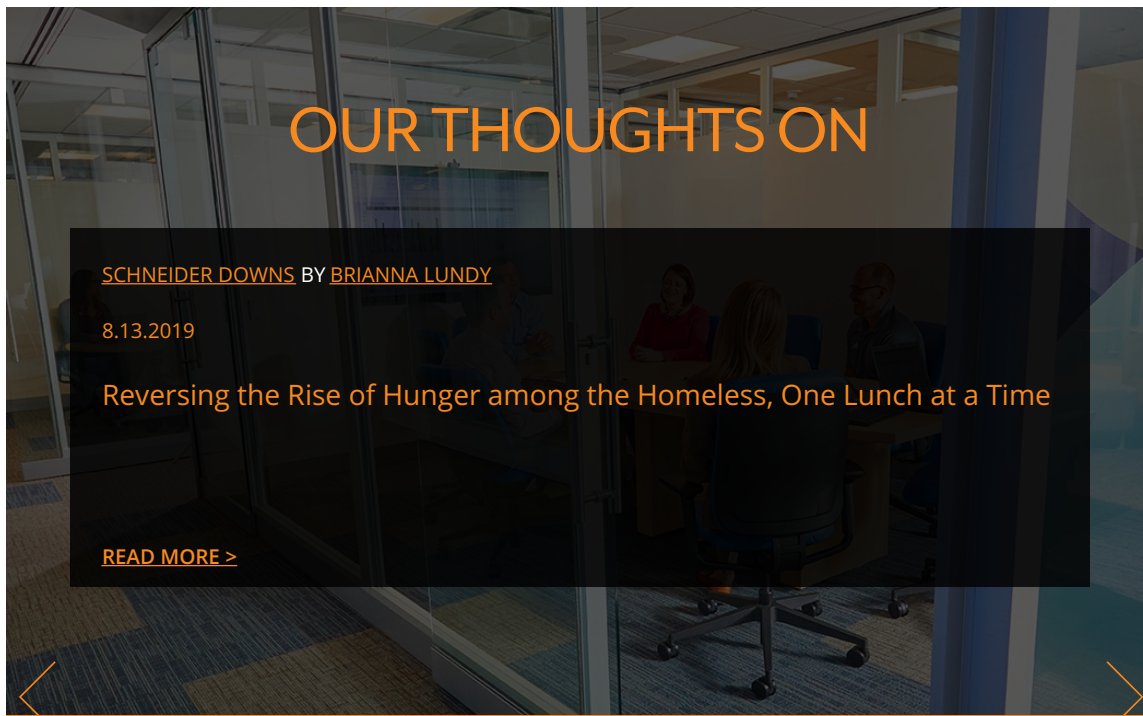


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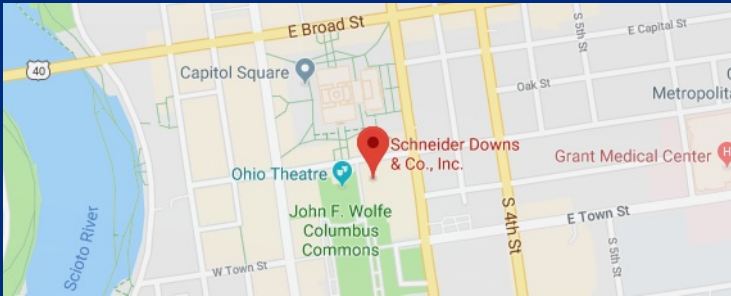
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