

Performance

BROKERAGE SERVICES

TEXAS & MIDWEST MARKET INSIGHTS

Q3 2026



I Sold My Own Dealerships.

Here’s What I’d Do Differently Today.

Before becoming a dealership buy-sell advisor, Paul Kechnie sold his own stores. Today, he sees that experience very differently.



Paul Kechnie spent 18 years working toward becoming a car dealer. He started washing cars after high school, spent time in parts and service, moved into sales, and eventually achieved the goal he had been working toward for nearly two decades. He ultimately owned both a Chevrolet and a Ford dealership in the same community.

Sales was the part of the business Paul loved most, and he was confident in his ability to negotiate. So, when the time came to sell his own dealerships, hiring someone to represent him didn’t seem necessary.

“I thought, why would I hire a broker who’s probably not as good at selling as I am?” Paul recalls. “I’ll sell my own stores.”

Today, after over a decade representing dealers through buy-sell transactions, Paul sees that decision through a new lens.

His experience since then has shown him just how much changes when the dealership you’re negotiating over is your own.

The Buyer Across Town

Paul had spent years as a dealer, building and operating two dealerships in the same community. So, when he began to realize that dealership ownership wasn’t what he wanted to do for the rest of his career, it surprised a lot of people closest to him. Around that time, a local dealer approached him about buying his Chevrolet store, and Paul was willing to listen.

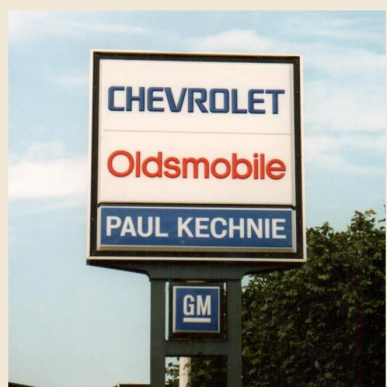
Eventually, the buyer asked what it would take to sell. Paul gave him a number. Looking back, he acknowledges there wasn’t much science behind it. Transaction data was far less readily available at the time, so he primarily looked at the dealership’s profitability and developed what he now describes as a gut feeling about its value.

Today, the contradiction is obvious.

“For most of us, it’s our biggest asset,” he says. “And I was going with my gut, not with any real data.”

The buyer told Paul his number was too high. Paul asked what the buyer thought the dealership was worth. The buyer gave him a lower number, and Paul indicated it might work.

Then the buyer went quiet.



The original dealership sign from Paul Kechnie’s store.

When the Negotiation Flipped

While Paul waited, he began making calls to other potential buyers. There was no organized marketing process, no confidentiality agreements, no offering materials, and little data supporting his valuation. It was simply Paul calling people he knew and telling them he was considering selling.

The calls didn’t generate much interest, and the original buyer remained quiet. Meanwhile, something had changed for Paul: he had made the mental decision that he wanted to sell.

This time, Paul was the one reaching back out to the original buyer.

The buyer told him that the number he himself had previously proposed was now too high. Paul could have held firm or walked away, but by then his desire to complete the transaction had grown. The negotiation continued downward.

“We ended up settling at his number, not at mine, which was nowhere close to my original number,” Paul says. “It was all me negotiating against myself because I didn’t have any competition.”

Paul believes today that a competitive process would have produced a better financial outcome. But perhaps the more interesting lesson is how an experienced dealer and salesperson found himself in that position in the first place.



“It was all me negotiating against myself because I didn’t have any competition.”

Paul Kechnie, reflecting on his own sale

When “Ready to Sell” Becomes “Ready to Be Done”

READY TO SELL

Paul doesn’t describe himself as desperate to sell. What happened was more subtle.

Once he had mentally committed to leaving dealership ownership behind, the everyday responsibilities of the business began to feel different. Factory requirements, employee issues, customer problems and the constant demands of ownership were things he was increasingly ready to leave behind.

THE WEIGHT OF OWNERSHIP SHIFTS

Once a dealer truly turns that corner mentally, Paul says, the weight of ownership can begin to feel “like a boat anchor.”

Today, he recognizes that same transition in sellers he represents. A dealer can be successful, financially secure, and highly experienced at negotiating, but **once that dealer has mentally moved toward the next chapter, completing the transaction begins to have value of its own.**

READY TO BE DONE

It can become difficult to separate the desire to get the right deal from the growing desire to simply get the deal done.

Paul felt that tension himself. When the transaction closed, he didn’t believe he had gotten the best possible deal, but he was relieved it was behind him. His experience later representing other dealers gave him greater insight into what had been missing from his own process.

The Perspective He Didn’t Have

Years later, Paul came to appreciate something that had been part of his dealership all along. On the showroom floor, a salesperson rarely negotiates on his own. There is a sales manager behind him, providing another layer between the customer and the final deal.

Yet when Paul sold one of his largest assets, he had eliminated that layer. He was the owner, the seller, and the negotiator.

He didn’t have the information he now relies on every day as a broker: recent comparable transactions, a defensible valuation, and an organized process for creating competition. He didn’t have someone who could push back on a buyer’s number with data or tell him when it made sense to wait.

“If I would have hired a broker and they would have raised some competition, I absolutely believe I would have gotten more money,” Paul says.

For Paul, the difference isn’t that a broker is necessarily a better salesperson than the dealer.

It’s having market information, transaction experience, and enough distance from the outcome to negotiate without the seller’s emotions becoming part of the negotiation.

NEXT: What He Would Tell Himself Today
Continued on the inside back cover

TEXAS & MIDWEST TRANSACTIONS



**CARVER TOYOTA
OF COLUMBUS**
Taylorsville, Indiana
Acquired by
Carlock Automotive Group from
Roy J. Carver, Jr. and Ashley Jannie



**SARCHIONE
AUTO GROUP**
6 Locations, Ohio
Acquired by
Ken Ganley Auto Group
from John & Joe Sarchione



**MANSFIELD
MOTOR GROUP**
Mansfield, Ohio
Acquired by
Clement Auto Group
from Mansfield Motor Group



**DALE WILLEY
CHEVROLET**
Lawrence, Kansas
Acquired by
Cable Dahmer Automotive Group
from Greg Maurer



**ZEIGLER NISSAN
OF GURNEE**
Gurnee, Illinois
Acquired by
Jason Prado
from Zeigler Auto Group



**VALLEY
GMC**
Hastings, Minnesota
Acquired by
Kunes Auto Group
from Valley Automotive Group



**FORD OF
GALESBURG**
Galesburg, Illinois
Acquired by
Jason Prado & Rik & Ray Fregia
from Dan Kuna & Tony Lozich



**PREMIER
TOYOTA**
Amherst, Ohio
Acquired by
Kevin Wuepper
from Robert Fisher



**GREGG YOUNG
CDJR**
Plattsmouth, Nebraska
Acquired by
Janssen Auto Group
from Gregg Young Automotive Group



**LAKESIDE
CHEVROLET**
Rockwall, Texas
Acquired by
Hiley Automotive Group from
Bob Holliman & Carl & Michael Grady



**MARTIN
KIA**
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Acquired by
Don Franklin Auto Group
from Martin Management Group



**KARL
FORD**
Story City, Iowa
Acquired by
Casey, Nick & Matt Johnson
from Karl Auto Group



**GMC OF
DODGE CITY**
Dodge City, Kansas
Acquired by
Lewis Automotive Group
from the G1 Group



**DICK MASHETER
FORD**
Columbus, Ohio
Acquired by
Oleg Kislyansky of Drive Choice
from Bob Masheter



**APPLE
CHEVROLET**
Northfield, Minnesota
Acquired by
Keffer Auto Group
from Apple Auto Group

TEXAS & MIDWEST TRANSACTIONS



**KOLOSSO
TOYOTA**
Appleton, Wisconsin
Acquired by
Kocourek Automotive
from Bill & Barb Kolosso



**GENESIS
OF GLENVIEW**
Glenview, Illinois
Acquired by
Joe Ghaben



**GREGG YOUNG
CHEVROLET**
Plattsmouth, Nebraska
Acquired by
Janssen Auto Group
from Gregg Young Automotive Group



**MCGRATH
NISSAN**
Elgin, Illinois
Acquired by
Coleman Automotive Group
from Scott McGrath



**MARTIN
CDJR**
Cleveland, Texas
Acquired by
Kedge Cook
from Brian Bounds



**COLUMBIANA
FORD**
Columbiana, Ohio
Acquired by
Prestige Auto Group
from Pillar Automotive



**HYUNDAI OF
DODGE CITY**
Dodge City, Kansas
Acquired by
Legacy Auto Center
from The G1 Group



**EICH MAZDA &
EICH VOLKSWAGEN**
Saint Cloud, Minnesota
Acquired by
Luther Automotive Group
from Linda Eich-Desjardins



**COAD CHEVROLET &
COAD FORD**
Anna, Illinois
Acquired by
JP Sides Automotive Group from
Rick Kennard and Tim & Mike Coad



**APPLE VALLEY
BUICK GMC**
Apple Valley, Minnesota
Acquired by
Kunes Auto Group from
Jim Paul of Valley Automotive Group



**ZUMBROTA
FORD**
Zumbrota, Minnesota
Acquired by
Mosaic Auto Group
from Steve Johnson Family



**GRIEGER'S
CDJR**
Valparaiso, Indiana
Acquired by
Garber Automotive Group
from Grieger's Motor Sales, Inc.



**DUTCH MILLER
GMC**
El Dorado, Kansas
Acquired by
Wilson Auto Family
from Dutch Miller Auto Group



**NORSEMAN
MOTORS, INC.**
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota
Acquired by
Muscatelli Automotive
from Daniel Sauvageau



**TEAM CHEVROLET
GMC**
Alice, Texas
Acquired by
Payne Auto Group
from Mike Terry Auto Group

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CONTINUATION FROM FEATURED ARTICLE: I SOLD MY OWN DEALERSHIPS

What He Would Tell Himself Today

Looking back, Paul knows what he would tell the dealer he was then:

*“You’ve bought two car dealerships, Paul.
You’ve never sold one.”*

Know the Value

Rather than relying on profitability and instinct, Paul would want to understand the dealership’s current and historical performance, its potential, and the return a buyer could reasonably expect on the investment. He would want data behind the number and a defensible reason for what the dealership was worth.

Look Beyond One Buyer

He would also tell himself not to assume the obvious buyer was the only buyer, or even the best one. “You may think your buyer is the guy across the street,” Paul says. “He may be. But he may *not* be.”

In Paul’s case, the dealer across town ultimately was the buyer. But today, he has seen the right buyer come from well outside a seller’s immediate market. **Reaching a broader group of qualified buyers also creates something Paul never had in his own sale: alternatives.**

Protect Confidentiality

Paul would approach confidentiality differently, too. When he began calling other dealers, there were no confidentiality agreements or structured process for determining who should receive information. Today, he understands the importance of creating a market without unnecessarily exposing the seller, employees, or business.

Don’t Negotiate Alone

And Paul would tell his younger self not to underestimate the value of having an intermediary.

“The piece that I missed, and that I recognize now, was having someone in the middle,” Paul says. “If we’re negotiating directly with our buyer as a seller, we’re in defensive mode. **You’re going to end up negotiating against yourself.**”

Interest Isn’t Enough

Finally, Paul would tell himself not to confuse an interested buyer with one who can actually close. His buyer ultimately received manufacturer approval and completed the transaction, but Paul admits he never asked about sales effectiveness, CSI, or even where the capital was coming from. Because the buyer was already an established dealer, he assumed the approval process would take care of itself.

It worked out. But looking back, Paul recognizes how much he left to assumption.

Today, he would want to understand a buyer’s financial capacity, existing dealership performance and path to manufacturer approval before allowing a transaction to get too far down the road. He also recognizes how difficult those questions can be for a seller to ask another dealer directly. Having someone else handle them as part of the process makes them less personal.

Selling his own dealerships didn’t change Paul’s confidence in his abilities. It changed his understanding of how different the dynamics can be when you’re negotiating the sale of your own business, balancing the value of what you spent years building with the desire to move on to what comes next.



Performance

B R O K E R A G E S E R V I C E S

We pledge to do it right, every time, one client at a time.

Performance Brokerage Services is North America's highest volume dealership brokerage firm, specializing in buy-sell activity for automotive, RV, marine, powersports, commercial truck, and equipment dealerships.

With over 30 years of experience, 900 dealerships sold, and a 90% closing rate, our family-owned company is governed by an unwavering commitment to integrity and ethical conduct. We simply operate differently.

- We understand the decision to sell is often emotional and we take a no-pressure approach.
- With no upfront fees, retainers, nor reimbursement of costs, we are paid a success fee only, after you are paid.
- Our engagement agreements are fair, straight-forward, flexible, and with no fine print.
- We are so confident you will be satisfied with our service, we even allow for a termination clause.
- We do not hoard listings to build an inventory. We work hard to accomplish our clients' goals.

Headquartered in California and supported by 12 regional offices across the United States and Canada, clients benefit from national exposure to the largest and most qualified dealers across all dealership industries. We pledge to do it right, every time, one client at a time.

Contact our offices for a confidential consultation and a complimentary opinion of value on your business.

Value Statement

1. Befriend your client
2. Lead your client with your expertise
3. Put your client's interests ahead of your own
4. Under all circumstances, do the right thing
5. The success will follow

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of our business. All communications will be held in the strictest of confidence. No exceptions.



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