



Trust Family Auto Sales Puts the Trust – and the Family! – In Auto Sales

by Lizzy Shake
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Godfrey, IL, May 30, 2014 – Remember bowling at Riverboat Lanes with your family, or hosting a birthday party for your child there?

The happy vibes from years of families and leagues bowling together hang around in the offices of Trust Family Auto Sales, warming the space. But if you can hear the giggles of children, it may not be an echo from the past; any of Brian Trust's six children may be on the premises. When his wife, co-owner Lisa, or the younger five kids want to see their dad, the car lot is usually where he's located, six days a week; eldest son Joshua works as a buyer for the car lot, Brian's mother Merle is the office manager, and his brother Jonathan works in advertising and IT for Trust, making this truly a family



business.

It's such a friendly, casual atmosphere. The former bowling alley has a lived-in vibe and is certainly not a "museum-style" atmosphere. It's filled with the Trust kids, happy customers, and happy employees. Adding to the warmth is the prevalence of nicknames; Trust's mother Merle is affectionately known as "Mama Guido," Huddleston is "the Bike Commander" due to his fondness for Duck Dynasty, and Brian refers to his brother Jonathan as the "JoséOquendo" of the business, due to his ability to do just about anything that needs doing.

Trust opened his first, smaller lot in 2005, just down the road; the old spot held 25 cars, but Trust joked that they would usually squeeze 30 on the lot. In comparison, the new space, located at 3044 Godfrey Road, former site of Riverboat Lanes, is breathtakingly enormous; row upon row of cars, trucks, SUVs and RVs shine in the noonday sun.



Trust purchased the new space on his birthday last October; in just sixty days, he and his team had converted the run-down bowling alley into a functional office space, and they opened to the public in December 2013. The desks reside where the pool tables once were, and the bar once sat near the current location of the motorcycle showroom. Trust credits Liberty Bank with inspiring him to make the move to the new lot.

Other than a large lot once occupied by local bowlers, what makes Trust Family Auto Sales different from its competitors? For starters, every car on the lot is marked with its price and details. This means that not only can shoppers browse and choose without the assistance of a salesperson, but also that everyone who steps onto the Trust lot is getting the same offer as everyone else, regardless of gender, age, income, or any other mitigating factor. “Putting the price on the car shows that everyone starts on a level playing field,” Trust explained. “I take a lot of pride in that.”

Another difference Trust highlighted is the high quality of every car on the lot. He prides himself on the fact that most cars on his lot have had only one previous owner. Every car on the lot has a warranty, and every car receives two inspections, one of which is done by a third party, along with an oil change that’s included in the purchase price. “No matter how old it is or how many miles are on it, it’s right,” Trust commented, sounding like a proud papa. On the other hand, nobody works on commission.



Yet another detail that makes Trust Family Auto Sales & Cycles different, Trust emphasized, is financing for everyone. Almost anyone who wants to buy a car at Trust can find a financing option that works for them among the variety of financing programs Trust has made available. Trust insisted, “I base my success on the community.” He clarified that in this area, where everyone needs a car to get around, “The cars sell themselves; our job is to obtain the best financing.” General sales manager Mark Lemons, who has over 25 years in the auto sales business, was new to secondary

financing when he began working for Trust a little over a year ago, but he promptly mastered it, broadening his knowledge of financing options as a result.

But Trust emphasized that the most important thing to him, the concept to which he credits his success, and the thing that truly makes him stand out from other used car dealers, is that he knows how to listen to the general public. “Fair for the car lot, fair for the customer,” Trust explained matter-of-factly. It just doesn’t work for Brian Trust unless everyone ends up happy. He also likes the hunt, and would rather find a customer the exact car he or she wants than try to sell the customer a car already on his lot. “We offer options. We don’t tell people what to take.”



Earlier this month, Trust expanded his lot to include a motorcycle showroom, headed up by John Huddleston, a local with a long history – over ten years – in the motorcycle business. John focuses on selling clean bikes with low miles, but he also has a few really

special bikes that can't be found just anywhere; among them are a silver 2009 Harley Screamin' Eagle Road Glide, one



of only 1000 painted that color, a bright yellow 2004 Screamin' Eagle Deuce, also one of 1000, and a brown 2008 105th Anniversary Harley Davidson, #257 out of only 1,050 made. "We're a mom and pop shop, real people dealing with real people," Huddleston remarked, adding a few moments later, "There's more than one choice in the area for bike sales. People like choices, and that's what we're gonna give them." Like the car guys on the other side of the building, Huddleston insists on the availability of financing through several different lenders.

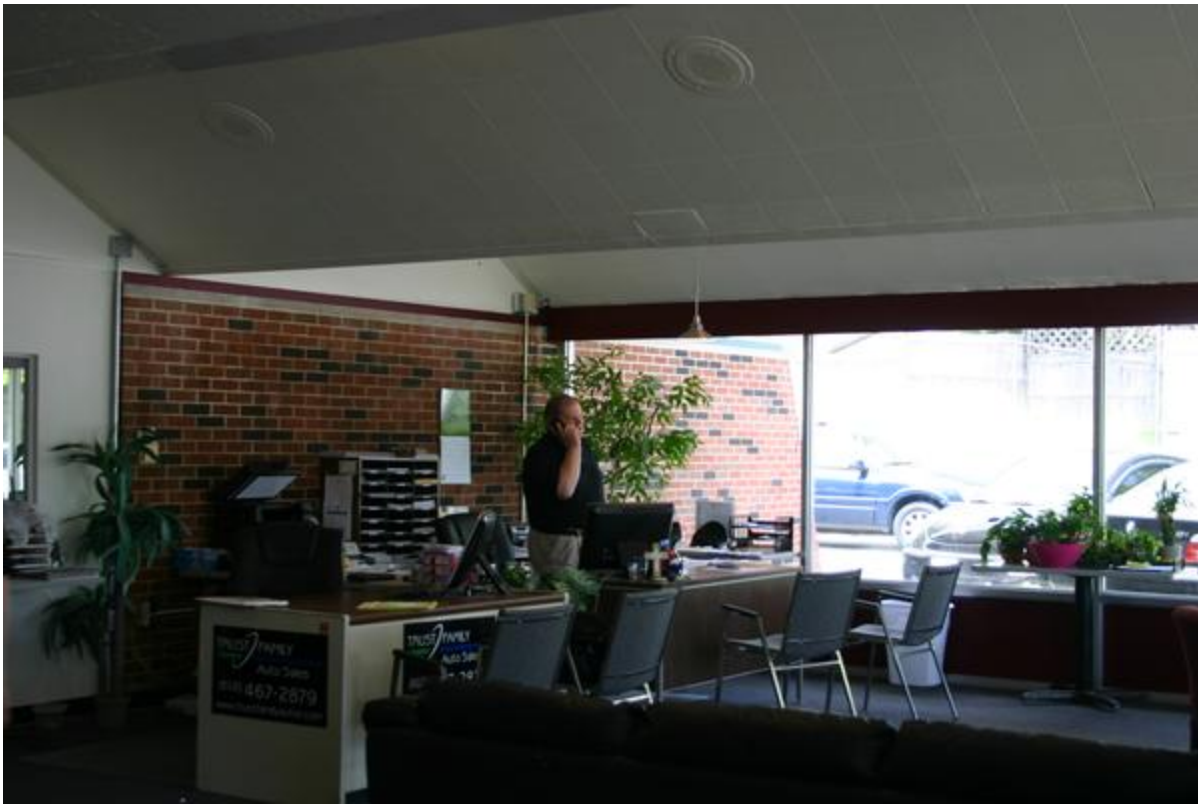
Mark Lemons exclaimed, "I just love the philosophy Brian has here. It's a family place." As if to illustrate the point, Trust chimed in that his sixth child and his first grandchild were born within 24 hours of each other, making his life seem eerily like a scene from a Steve Martin movie. Trust's youth spent in New York has him longing for an authentic bagel shop, but other than that, he's as much a Riverbender as anyone who was born and raised here. In the office, there's no trace of the stress that buying a car usually puts on a customer; in contrast, the customers appeared to feel just as much at home as the large family of employees that makes this bowling alley turned car dealership such a striking success.

Trust Family Auto Sales & Cycles is located at 3044 Godfrey Rd., Godfrey, and is open six days a week, Monday through Friday from 9:30am-7pm, and from 9:30am-4pm on

Saturday. You can reach them by phone at (618) 467-2879 or view their complete inventory on the web at www.trustfamilyautos.com.



Before: the bar space held darts and shuffleboard (above).
After: the office space holds desks and employees (below).



Below: another view of the bar area at Riverboat Lanes, courtesy of Tom White, and a similar view of the office space as it is today.





Below: a remnant of the building's years as a bowling alley remains on the door to the ladies' restroom.



