

The Transformation of Karl Chevrolet

# CASE STUDY



## Case Study: The Transformation of Karl Chevrolet

Carl Moyer was always a car guy. His deep passion for automobiles, combined with an unwavering commitment to honesty and customer satisfaction, allowed him to turn a small dealership into one of the largest and most successful in the nation. Moyer's remarkable foresight, leadership, and dedication to community were key to Karl Chevrolet's extraordinary growth and enduring legacy.

This past September, Carl Moyer passed away at the age of 83, leaving behind a profound legacy. He built Karl Chevrolet from humble beginnings into one of the largest automobile dealerships in the nation, expanding to multiple locations throughout Iowa, including Webster City, Stuart, Story City, Marshalltown, and Glidden. But beyond his business success, Moyer also left behind a legacy of donations and contributions to the Ankeny community, where his flagship dealership sat at the intersection of Southeast Oralabor Road and Southeast Delaware Avenue. His philanthropic efforts helped shape the local community, and his impact will be felt for generations to come.



in 2008, General Motors executives and the city of Ankeny honored Karl Chevrolet for being the #1 GM-certified dealer in the nation.

### The Early Years and Visionary Growth

In 1978, Carl Moyer founded Karl Chevrolet in Ankeny, Iowa, with a small dealership and a big dream. Despite only having a 10th-grade education, Moyer had an incredible instinct for business. He not only understood cars but also recognized the importance of customer relationships and the evolving landscape of the auto industry. Over the years, he saw opportunities where others saw challenges, and his ability to stay ahead of the curve was a hallmark of his success.

His strategic vision allowed him to expand Karl Chevrolet rapidly, anticipating market trends and customer preferences. Moyer was always a step ahead, whether he was adapting to changes in vehicle demand, such as the rise of SUVs, or embracing digital retailing in the early stages of the internet era. "He always knew what was coming next and what was coming after that," said Bruce Anderson, president of the Iowa Automobile Dealers Association. "He was never just a step ahead. He was always a whole block ahead in what was changing in automotive retailing."

### Building Trust and a Loyal Customer Base

Moyer's ability to build trust with customers was central to Karl Chevrolet's success. Ron Sampson, retired editor and publisher of the *Ankeny Press-Citizen*, shared a personal anecdote that highlights Moyer's integrity and dedication to customer service. Sampson and his wife bought their first car from Moyer in 1974, and every car they've owned since then has been from Karl Chevrolet.

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When Sampson's father passed away in 2019, several people called about buying his late father's Chevrolet Malibu. Moyer, however, took the extra step of reaching out to Sampson personally. "He just called me and said, 'Ron, you know, you're probably getting some people who want to buy your dad's Malibu. What do you want for it?' And I said, 'Well, here's what I've been offered,' and he goes, 'Yeah, but what do you want for it?'" Sampson recalled. "And he said, 'You know what? Pick that check up as soon as you can get over here and leave me the car, will you?'"

This gesture encapsulated Moyer's business philosophy: never haggle, always be fair, and ensure the customer was treated with respect. "He never bargained. Never asked me, 'Well, would you consider taking this?' He's just that kind of guy," Sampson said. It was this level of honesty and commitment that helped Karl Chevrolet earn the loyalty of generations of customers.



### Leadership and Adaptability

Moyer's leadership was also key to Karl Chevrolet's success. He was not only a visionary but a hands-on leader who empowered his team to uphold the dealership's high standards of service. His ability to navigate the ups and downs of the automobile industry with flexibility and foresight was extraordinary. From the economic shifts of the 1980s to the digital transformation of the 2000s, Moyer's quick thinking and willingness to innovate ensured Karl Chevrolet's longevity.

*"Moyer's uncanny knack for predicting industry changes, whether it was the rise of trucks and SUVs or the integration of digital technology into car sales, allowed Karl Chevrolet to remain a market leader throughout his tenure."*

"He was truly, truly iconic," said Anderson. "What he did at Karl Chevrolet in a lot of ways mirrors what Ankeny did in the half-century that he was in the business. He just grew, grew, and grew." Moyer's uncanny ability to predict industry changes, whether it was the rise of trucks and SUVs or the integration of digital technology into car sales, allowed Karl Chevrolet to remain a market leader throughout his tenure.

### Community Engagement

While Moyer's business acumen made him successful in the automotive world, his generosity and dedication to Ankeny's growth made him a beloved figure in the community. Moyer's philanthropic efforts benefited numerous local initiatives, from

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schools to charities to civic projects. His commitment to giving back to the community helped strengthen Karl Chevrolet's bond with the people of Ankeny, and it was clear that his success was intertwined with the city's prosperity.



### Five Keys to Karl Chevrolet's Success

#### 1. Customer-Centric Approach

Carl Moyer's unwavering commitment to honesty, fairness, and transparency helped build deep trust with customers. By never engaging in hard bargaining or deceptive sales tactics, Moyer earned the loyalty of generations. His focus on customer satisfaction led to repeat business and word-of-mouth referrals, laying the foundation for long-term success.

#### 2. Adaptability and Vision

Moyer's ability to anticipate and respond to industry changes was crucial. Whether it was the rise of trucks and SUVs or the early adoption of digital technology in car sales, Moyer's foresight allowed Karl Chevrolet to stay ahead of competitors. His knack for predicting and acting on what was coming next ensured the dealership's continued growth.

#### 3. Community Engagement

Moyer understood that a successful business is built not just on profits but on relationships. His philanthropy and involvement in local causes solidified his place as an integral part of the Ankeny community. His efforts to give back created strong ties between Karl Chevrolet and the people it served.

#### 4. Strong Leadership

Moyer's leadership style was hands-on, yet empowering. He encouraged his team to uphold the high service standards central to the dealership's success. By fostering a culture of respect, accountability, and excellence, Moyer built a loyal, motivated team that mirrored his commitment to quality.

#### 5. Consistency and Integrity

Throughout the decades, Moyer remained consistent in his values. His dedication to providing excellent service and maintaining integrity in all business dealings ensured that Karl Chevrolet remained a trusted name in the industry. This commitment to doing the right thing, no matter the situation, was a key pillar of the dealership's success.



### A Lasting Legacy

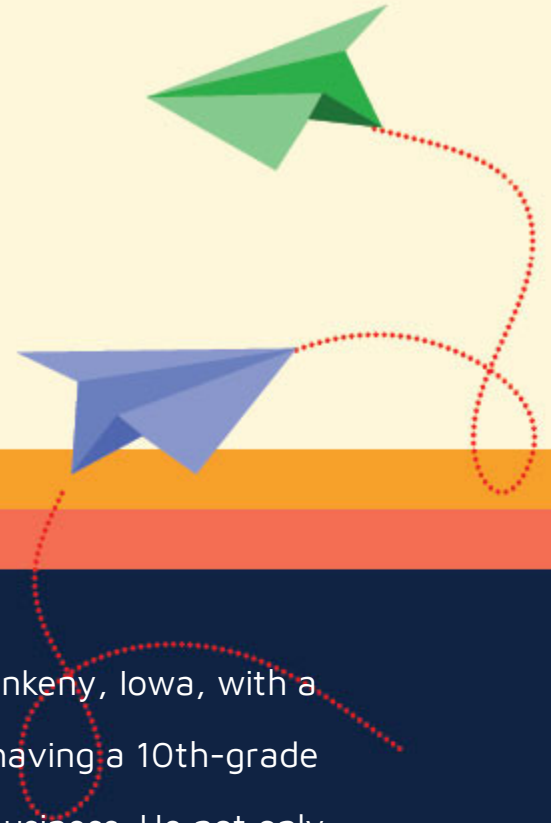
When Carl Moyer passed away in September, he left behind not just a thriving dealership but a legacy of community spirit, innovation, and ethical business practices. His story is one of resilience, vision, and integrity. Karl Chevrolet's success is a testament to the power of customer loyalty, the ability to adapt to changing times, and the importance of leadership that prioritizes both business success and community well-being.

Today, Karl Chevrolet stands as a symbol of Moyer's enduring influence. His values live on in the dealership's continued success, and his contributions to Ankeny ensure that his impact will never be forgotten. Carl Moyer may be gone, but his legacy of honesty, innovation, and service to others will continue to inspire the next generation of automotive leaders. May we go and do likewise.





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