

Required Items In Advertisement

Oregon law has strict guidelines on advertising automobiles for sale. Required in all Auto Emporium advertisements are the following:

- Year, make, Model
- Last 6 Digits of VIN
- Party contact information

Writing the Description

No matter where you're publishing your classified ad, you'll need to hook buyers in with the best details about your car. A well-written ad will include valuable specifics. It's best to think like a buyer when creating your ad.

- Highlight the Positives

While your car ad should always include the basics such as year, make, model, and total mileage, you should include any details that will set your car and increase the value of your vehicle.

- These can include but are not limited to:

If you are a non-smoker.

If the vehicle has never been in an accident.

If you are the original owner.

Any upgrades you've made to the car (wheels, sound system, paint, headlights, roof racks, floor mats, etc.).

Any repairs you've done recently.

A potential buyer can do their own research on gas mileage and other benefits specific to your make and model, but it doesn't hurt to call those items out as well.

Be Honest About Your Vehicle

In addition to the good, you should always include the bad. The big details might show up in a vehicle history report anyway, but you should always include whether your vehicle has had:

A salvaged title.

Flood damage.

Any major accidents.

Mechanical problems.

Exterior or cosmetic issues.

- Be up front in your ad.

Not only will this paint you as an honest seller, but you're also more likely to reduce back and forth haggling.

Don't forget to include language like "Or Best Offer" or "Price Negotiable" in your ad to allow some wiggle room in your sale.

Advertisement

Taking Quality Photos

No matter what you say in your car ad, the photos are really going to sell your car for you. This is your chance to make a strong first impression, so first and foremost, clean your car inside and out before you take any photos.

Other things to keep in mind when shooting photos of your car:

- Time of day: Shoot your photos either early in the morning just after sunrise or late in the afternoon about an hour before sunset.

The soft light during these times of day will enhance your car's colors and make the chrome and glass sparkle.

Equipment: If you have access to a good digital camera, use that instead of your smart phone.

You have more photography options with the angles and lighting, plus you'll get richer, higher quality images.

Location: Consider your surroundings. Shooting in your own driveway may seem convenient, but your neighbor's overgrown lawn or your kid's tricycle might hinder the quality of your image.

Try taking your car to an empty parking lot or somewhere that will minimize distraction from the focus of your photo—your car.

Editor's note: Whenever I sell a car, I park it in front of the nicest house in my neighborhood to take the photos. It's never failed!

Variety: The more angles you offer a potential buyer the better chance they'll like what they see.

Shoot different points of view, like from the back seat looking through to the front. Open the trunk or hatchback; consider shooting the floor mats and close-ups of the dashboard. Anything that will show the full spectrum of your car's appeal will prove helpful to your car ad.

Damage: If your car has a dent, a rust spot, or serious scratch, include it in your images so there are no surprises.

Putting The Buyer In The Driver's Seat

The bottom line is you want your vehicle ad to make a potential buyer really want your car. This means telling them a story about why you love it and how it's served you and your family over the years. Give them a glimpse at what you think really make this a special car to drive.

Examples might include:

"This was the first car I bought after college and it was like a reliable friend to me for years."

"I chose this car for its safety rating and felt comfortable driving my two kids around from the day they were born."

"Our family has outgrown this car, but if we could keep it, we definitely would."

Editor's note: I name all my vehicles and include the name and an introduction in each listing. It adds a personal touch and seems to encourage people to respond to my listings.

Follow Through

Once your ad is up, it's worth researching what paperwork you'll need in your state to legally sell your vehicle, so as to make the process go more smoothly for you and your buyer.

By creating an effective car ad that hits the key points your buyer is interested in, and doing your own due diligence on the back end to make things easy for both of you, you'll find yourself with a quick and easy sale in no time.