

# It's all in the details at Trillium Ford Lincoln



**PHOTOS BY WENDY GABREK**

**GIVING BACK IS EVERYTHING** – Dealer Principal of Trillium Ford Lincoln Ltd., Jack Vant Spyker (front-centre), presents members of the Stevenson Memorial Hospital Board of Directors and Foundation with a cheque for \$12,500 on February 18th, 2016. This is the second installment of a four year pledge totaling \$50,000 for the local health care centre. Mr. Vant Spyker is pictured here with General Manager (Alliston) Eric Vant Spyker (far right), Mayor Rick Milne (centre), of the Town of New Tecumseth, and councillors JJ Paul Whiteside and Fran Sainsbury (far left).

**BY WENDY GABREK**

Besides buying a house, and investing in your children’s education, buying a car is one of the most important financial decisions you’ll ever make.

How consumers buy their cars is changing – from what they expect in brand performance and affordability, to how the dealership delivers a quality car buying experience.

We know that the average consumer will spend a minimum of 18 hours online, investigating and “building” a vehicle that will suit their lifestyle, business, or family needs.

Once they have set a budget and selected a vehicle, that consumer will become a customer. Gone are the days of wandering the used or new vehicle lots, with the family in tow, over the weekend. Test driving multiple cars and making emotional decision are gone too.

Armed with information and easy comparisons, car buyers are arriving at dealerships to sign deals, and drive off with their new (or new to them) car or truck.

That said, do the days of amazing customer service at the dealership have to be over, even if consumers are more savvy than ever? The simple answer is – no.

We spoke to representatives at Trillium Ford Lincoln Ltd. in Alliston and Shelburne, asking, “What separates you from your competitors, both in the products you sell and in your customer service standards?” And the consensus was unanimous – “It’s all in the details”. From quality OEM parts, to going over and above within the community, Trillium Ford Lincoln knows the devil, and the delivery, is in the details.

General Manager at Alliston, Eric Vant Spyker, added, “It’s all about treating people with dignity and respect. Giving them the same level of care that you’d expect for your grandmother, neighbour, or friend.”

The launch of Ford of Canada’s new ‘Blue Room’ series of commercials, intended at simplifying the car and truck buying experience, helps local dealerships with their marketing campaigns, attracting new consumers to the door with slogan’s like, “It’s Easy to Get into a Ford”, but it’s still up to the dealership to close the deal.

Vant Spyker says ‘closing’ is not always easy, especially with a number of competitors nipping at your heels, but by keeping the car buying experience honest, upfront and fully transparent, it’s entirely possible.

“We’ve made a move towards all-in pricing in our print, radio and television commercials,” said Vant Spyker. “Our customers, who we know come in educated and ready to make a deal, want to know what they’re getting into – besides getting into a Ford, that is. Ford Canada says ‘It’s Easy to Get Into a Ford’, and we really mean it.”

Vant Spyker adds that by simplifying the financial component of the experience, it leaves more time for customer care, and community engagement.

Len Rice, General Manager at Shelburne, agrees.

“It’s our duty as salespeople to be honest, after all, we want our customers to return, and tell their friends to come and see us too,” said Rice. “But as residents of the communities we serve, the positive way we treat our customers is just more than just the neighbourly thing to do. We know that the communities of New Tecumseth and Shelburne are filled with young families and seniors – people who work hard for their money, or living on fixed incomes. It is our privilege to ensure that everyone is treated fairly – with no magnifying glass required to read the small print – and walking away fully satisfied.”

Mr. Vant Spyker adds, “By simplifying the ‘business’ part of the sales experience, the potential for higher earnings comes from return customers – and that translates into helping the community in other ways.”

“Our dealerships are committed to serving the residents of the communities we sell into, in more ways than selling them an affordable and reliable vehicle,” said Vant Spyker. “For instance, we have pledged the local Alliston hospital (Stevenson Memorial) \$50,000 over the four years – a pledge we have fulfilled fifty per cent of already. We’ve also recently rebuilt both dealerships – reinvesting in our community by providing jobs and paying higher taxes.”

Trillium Ford Lincoln also hosts a series of community engagement activities annually, including:

- Free Family Easter Egg Hunt & Food Drive (Alliston location), March 28th, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.;

- Draws for free Professional Detailing Services (six certificates in total, worth \$169.99 plus HST each). Next draw date: March 28th. See rules, and enter online at: [www.facebook.com/trilliumford](http://www.facebook.com/trilliumford) (Shelburne) or [www.facebook.com/trilliumfordlincolnltd](http://www.facebook.com/trilliumfordlincolnltd) (Alliston);

- Participating in the Alliston & District Chamber of Commerce (ADCC) Home Show – with the largest booth at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre (Alliston), April 9–10, 2016

- Judging the ‘Grate Groan-Up Spelling Bee’ (no, that’s not a spelling error!) for the Literacy Council of South Simcoe on April 16th, 2016;

- Assuming the Diamond Sponsorship of the Tottenham–Beeton & District Chamber of Commerce Trade Show, April 23, 2016 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Tottenham Community & Fitness Centre and hosting the Children’s Activity Centre;

- Hosting multiple ‘Drive 4 UR Community & School events in Shelburne and Alliston, where local organizations benefit from their friends and family members test driving Ford vehicles, and earning \$20 (to a maximum of \$6000) for each test drive with no sales pressure;

- Hosting the annual Ford Model ‘A’ Day for the Huronia Wire Wheels Club – where 35–40 roadworthy Model A’s, from the 1920s and 1930s, come in to the Alliston dealership for a full inspection in preparation for the coast-to-coast touring season. This year the event takes place on May 29th, from 10:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. A charity barbecue will also be held that day, with proceeds to Stevenson Memorial Hospital. Cremahh of Beeton will be on hand with homemade Italian gelato and fresh-baked goodies and coffee, and the barbecue will be provided by a very famous restaurant...more details to follow!;

- Taking part in the Tottenham Foodland ‘Kid’s Club’ event, on June 28th from 5–7 p.m. This event allows children to celebrate the end of another school year, and receive goodies, and giveaways as they go. Trillium Ford Lincoln will be hosting an obstacle course, Ford inspired photo booth, and colouring contest at this event;

- Hosting ‘Mix @ 6’ events for the ADCC – this year on June 21st at the Alliston dealership from 6–8 p.m.

The dealership also plans to host a variety of information sessions this year, covering topics from: ‘First Time Car Buyers’, to ‘Get To Know Your Vehicle Night’. A Ladies-Only party is being planned, as is a Senior’s Night.

But Trillium Ford Lincoln isn’t stopping there...

“We know that Ford is making cars that last, as such, our customers need to buy a new vehicle less often,” said Vant Spyker. “We host, or participate in, a number of community events each year to stay in touch with our customers and maintain the relationships we work so hard to build, because we know it’s important to stay in touch.”

And customers are taking notice of Trillium’s community spirit. They are also returning on their own for scheduled service.

“We know our customers take pride in their Ford and Lincoln vehicles, so we can count on them to return for Ford Certified service,” said Mr. Rice. “Of course we treat them to a free shuttle ride door-to-door, to keep the service levels high.”

The back of the house at Trillium (Parts, Service & Detailing) is just as important to Vant Spyker and Rice as new and used car sales.

“The quality and affordability of Ford cars and trucks brings customers into our dealership, our sales team helps ease the paperwork process, but it’s truly our Parts and Service technicians that maintain constant contact with our customers – you could say that our Back of the House is really our Front Line, when it comes to maintaining customer loyalty” said Mr. Vant Spyker.

Operating over 20 service bays, and maintaining a staff of more than 30 local residents, the Ford Certified technicians and customer care representatives at Trillium really take their job seriously.

“We start recruiting our technicians when they’re 15 years old,” said Service Manager at Alliston, Jim Croft. “By registering with the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program in Grade 9, students become eligible to start working as co-op students here at Trillium Ford Lincoln by the time they’re in Grade 11. From there, Ford puts our technicians through a rigorous training program until technicians are certified in thirteen areas of service, or ‘Bubbles’ as Ford calls it.”

Croft went on to say that by learning directly from the manufacturer, while earning a diploma

from Centennial College, Trillium’s technicians are second to none.

“Whether you’re here for a basic oil change as part of your scheduled maintenance, or you need a complete engine overhaul, we can do it. As our slogan states, ‘We get it right – the first time’,” said Mr. Croft.

Trillium does such a good job servicing Ford, Lincoln, Mercury (and some other makes and models), in fact, their Service Department has earned top ratings in their dealer group – several times in a row.

“We’re extremely proud of that,” stated Croft.

Some members of the sales team at Trillium Ford also started out as co-op students as well.

“We currently have three co-op students from Georgian College working with us,” said Mr. Rice. “Plus, two of our full-time salespeople were former co-op students as well.”

These students, enrolled in the Automotive Business diploma program, get real world and hands-on experience working at Trillium Ford, and Trillium gets unbiased, eager young men and women – ready to take your car buying experience to the next level.

“I have to complete three co-op placements, of four months each, before I can graduate,” said Georgian College student, Bryce Morris. “I’m in my second placement, and I chose to stay at Trillium because I really enjoy the culture here. Our dealership is spacious and well-maintained, and I’m learning a lot about the sales process from top industry professionals.”

Mr. Morris, just 19 years of age, says he hopes to also complete his third co-op placement at Trillium, and then get hired on full-time.

“That’s the plan, anyway!” he said.

Trillium Ford Lincoln Ltd. is located at 4589 Industrial Parkway (next to the OPP station) in Alliston, and 506168 Highway 89 in Mono (just east of Shelburne).

For regular updates on their community events, ‘Like’ them on Facebook, follow them on Twitter, visit their YouTube Channel (Trillium Ford Lincoln Ltd), or check them out on Instagram (Trillium Ford). You can also visit them online at [www.trilliumford.com](http://www.trilliumford.com) (Note: look for Trillium’s new website launch on March 17th, 2016).

For service, or new or used car sales, call Trillium Ford Lincoln Ltd. at 705 435-7609 (Alliston) or 519 925-5101.



Eveline Bernier is a professional detailer at Trillium Ford Lincoln Ltd. in Alliston, and she loves a good ‘Before and After’. Call to book today at 705 435-7609 or online at [www.trilliumford.com](http://www.trilliumford.com)



Ford Certified Class ‘A’ Technician (and former St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School – Tottenham, co-op student), Josh Nagy, works on a F–150 Super Duty XLT inside the Alliston service bay.



Len Rice, General Manager at Trillium Ford, with Facebook contest winner, Wayne Hurst of Flesherton, at the Shelburne dealership.



1920s and 1930s Ford Model ‘A’ vehicles fill the front parking lot of Trillium Ford Lincoln Ltd. (Alliston) for ‘Model A Day’, benefitting Stevenson Memorial Hospital. On Model A Day, members of the Huronia Wire Wheels Club attend at the dealership, and a Ford certified technician looks-over each vehicle, to ensure it is road-worthy before the onset of the Canadian coast-to-coast touring season. This year, the event will be held on May 29th from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more details and a directional map, please visit [www.facebook.com/trilliumfordlincolnltd](http://www.facebook.com/trilliumfordlincolnltd) or [www.trilliumford.com](http://www.trilliumford.com)



Trillium Ford Lincoln supports the Alliston Community Christian School by sponsoring the candy bar at its recent ‘Denim & Diamonds’ gala fundraiser



Trillium also recently supported the Alliston Curling Club, by purchasing the sign above the score board. How Canadian!



Trillium Ford Lincoln’s new website launches March 17th, 2016 – [www.trilliumford.com](http://www.trilliumford.com)



Kara Percy was the winner of Trillium’s first ever, ‘Dirty Car Contest’. Mrs. Percy is pictured here with Trillium Ford Lincoln’s General Manager (Alliston), Eric Vant Spyker, and her son Barrett – who’s already a Trillium enthusiast!



Mr. Al Dresser (left), President of the Stevenson Memorial Hospital Board, takes possession of his new Ford F–150 Super Crew pickup truck earlier this month. He is pictured here with wife, Aileen, and Trillium Ford Lincoln sales representative, Adam Crowe.



The Easter Bunny, pictured here with Eric Vant Spyker, is coming to Trillium Ford Lincoln on Monday, March 28th from 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. for the first annual ‘Free Family Easter Egg Hunt & Community Food Drive’, sponsored in part by Tottenham Foodland. Details on their Facebook page.