Around the Coffee Table with Dale Jodoin

Could Everyday Products Require Monthly Subscriptions to Work?

By Dale Jodoin
Columnist

Over the past decade, monthly subscriptions have become part of everyday life. Many Canadians already pay monthly for internet service, mobile phones, streaming television, music, cloud storage, software, and other digital services. For many households, these payments have simply become another monthly expense.

Now there are signs that the same business model is expanding into products people have traditionally expected to own outright.

During my research, I found discussions on owner forums, Reddit, and consumer websites where customers were surprised to learn that some features in products they had already purchased required an ongoing subscription. Many believed they had bought the complete product. Instead, they later discovered that some features or services would continue only if they kept making monthly payments.

One of the best known examples involved BMW.

The company has faced a backlash after announcing subscription options for some vehicle features. Many drivers believed those features should have been included because they had already paid for the vehicle. The public response became so strong that BMW later changed course on one of its most criticized subscription programs.

The discussion has now spread well beyond one company. Consumer groups, technology writers, and financial experts are asking whether subscriptions will remain limited to a few products or gradually become part of everyday shopping.

That raises a larger question. Are subscriptions slowly becoming part of owning everyday products? The automobile industry appears to be leading the way. Several manufacturers now offer paid connected services, such as remote start through a phone app, live traffic information, advanced navigation, emergency assistance, and entertainment packages. While many of these services are optional, they demonstrate how companies can continue earning revenue long after a vehicle Although many of these services are optional, they showcase how companies can sustain revenue generation even after selling a vehicle..

The same business model Other industries are adopting the same business model. in other industries.

Some printer manufacturers offer ink subscription programs. Home security companies provide additional video storage and advanced features through monthly plans. Smart refrigerators, televisions, thermostats, washing machines, and other connected appliances are becoming more common in Canadian homes. And as those products become more connected to the internet, companies can add new digital services through software updates, some of which may require ongoing payments.

Modern farm equipment has also changed. Some advanced GPS guidance, mapping systems, and precision farming software are available through continuing service plans instead of a one-time purchase.

Supporters of subscriptions say the extra revenue helps pay for software updates, improved cybersecurity, customer support, and new features that can improve products over time.

Consumer advocates view the issue from a different perspective.

Many households already pay monthly bills for housing, utilities, insurance, internet service, mobile phones, and entertainment. If more everyday products begin adding subscriptions, even small monthly charges could quietly increase the cost of living. Five subscriptions costing only ten dollars each would add another six hundred dollars to a family's yearly expenses.

Think about your own monthly bills. Now imagine adding your vehicle, home appliances, security system, and other household products to that growing list.

There is another issue many people may not consider until it is time to sell a product.

If a vehicle, appliance, or smart device is connected to a subscription account, the owner may need to cancel the service, transfer the account, and remove personal information before selling it. Buyers of used products should also ask whether certain features require a new subscription. What appears to be a bargain today could include unexpected monthly costs tomorrow.

No one can predict exactly where this trend will end. However, if consumers remain vigilant, they can already discern the direction it is heading. More companies are finding ways to earn ongoing revenue from products that were once purchased with a single payment. Whether this trend becomes the normal way of doing business will depend on the choices made by both businesses and consumers.

The next time you shop, do not compare only the purchase price. Ask whether the product includes everything you are paying for today or whether some features could require another payment tomorrow. Spending a few extra minutes asking questions before you buy could save frustration and money in the future.

Around the coffee table tonight, ask your family one question.

How many monthly subscriptions are too many before we stop truly owning the things we buy?

You have been warned. You have been informed.

I Don't Believe in Networking
I believe in Getting to Know People

By Nick Kossovan

For most job seekers, job searching is a gruelling test of perseverance against their delusion that spending their time screaming into the digital void of applicant tracking systems, blasting out identical, AI-generated resumes like they're feeding a slot machine, and praying the next pull is 'the one' is a viable job search strategy. Most job seekers' job searches are prolonged because they approach employers like beggars, which is exactly what they are when they ask for a chance instead of offering a solution.

Employers don't hire out of charity, nor do they hire to fill seats. They hire because they're bleeding time, money, or efficiency, and therefore need a specific headache taken care of. The moment you stop treating yourself like a commodity looking for a boss and start operating like a service provider looking for a problem, the power dynamic flips. You stop chasing opportunity. You start attracting it.

If you want to shorten your job search, change your mindset. Follow these three steps to become an employer magnet.

Step 1: Select a Problem

Trying to be everything to everyone is one of the biggest mistakes job seekers make. In a desperate hope they'll expand their options, they craft generic resumes filled with vague corporate jargon, such as "results-oriented professional with a diverse background." They assume this versatility makes them attractive, but in reality, it makes them entirely forgettable.

When you try to appeal to everyone, you end up appealing to no one. You become a commodity, and commodities are bought at the lowest price. As the old idiom goes, "a jack of all trades is a master of none." Employers are looking for a scalpel, not a Swiss Army knife. They're looking for a specialist who can step in on day one and dissect a specific, painful operational bottleneck.

Becoming an employer magnet requires declaring a specialty by choosing a specific problem to solve. Start by identifying a high-stakes challenge in your industry that you're uniquely equipped to address. Is B2B sales volume declining, thereby affecting revenue? Is a chaotic, unoptimized supply chain affecting timely order fulfillment? Is high turnover in mid-management negatively affecting morale? Is a messy, insecure digital infrastructure a security risk? Narrow your lane. Pinpoint the specific organizational headache that keeps hiring managers up at night. By owning a distinct problem, you distinguish yourself from the majority of job seekers who are merely looking for a paycheque.

Step 2: Be the Solution to the Problem

Once you've chosen a problem, your professional setup (e.g., resume, LinkedIn profile, digital footprint, cover letters) should reflect your expertise in solving it. This is where most job seekers fall short. They treat their resume and LinkedIn profile as historical records of past activities rather than as evidence of forward-looking capabilities. Employers don't care what you did; they care what you can do for them.

The key is to restructure your professional narrative from a list of duties into a repeatable blueprint for success that demonstrates a predictable methodology for achieving measurable outcomes.

Today, credentials are less important than tangible execution. According to Liz Ryan, author and former Fortune 500 HR executive who pioneered the pain letter concept, employers don't hire people because they have impressive resumes; they hire them because their business pain(s) needs to be solved.

Being "the solution" means speaking the language of metrics. If the problem you solve is inefficient digital processes, and you state on your resume and LinkedIn profile that you've "managed software migration," the reader will inevitably say to themselves, "So what?" Instead, state: Streamlined legacy workflows, reducing project delivery timelines by 22% and eliminating $95,000 in software redundancies.

Quantify your value. Frame your past achievements as evidence that you've successfully slain the dragon the employer you're targeting is currently fighting.

Step 3: Market Yourself to Employers as a Solution

Your ability to solve an employer's headache is worthless if you keep it secret. You can't sit back and wait for employers and recruiters to discover you by accident. Humility doesn't pay the bills, and hoping to be noticed is an inefficient strategy.

"Without promotion, something terrible happens… nothing!" – P.T. Barnum's promotion philosophy.

Attracting employers magnetic-like requires aggressively and strategically marketing your capabilities directly to the decision-makers who are losing sleep over the problem you solve. This means abandoning the lazy "Apply Now" button mentality.

First, curate your digital real estate. Use social media platforms, especially LinkedIn, to publish insight-driven commentary on industry trends and problem-solving strategies. Consistently sharing sharp, practical solutions establishes you as an authority.

Second, build a proactive outreach strategy. Identify the hiring managers at your target employer who own the problem you solve (there's no need to contact HR). Reach out directly with a concise value proposition. Don't ask for a job. Instead, point out a common challenge their department faces and briefly showcase your proven track record of solving it. This is how you become not just another job seeker but a viable solution worth hiring.

Stop looking for a job. Start looking for problems to solve. Position yourself as a solution, then activate the employer magnet by putting yourself in front of employers.