

Consumer Corner

Survey Shows Car Buyers Use Internet For Information

(NAPS)—The atmosphere for car buyers has taken a turn for the better. Savvy car buyers have taken to the Internet. Almost half of all new car and truck buyers use the Internet first to do their homework. But they still view dealers as the best source of information for making smart decisions, according to a new survey conducted by the Gallup Organization on behalf of Automotive Retailing Today.

As a result, new vehicle buyers are more informed than ever before. By the time they set foot on the showroom floor, they have a very good idea of what they want and how much they are prepared to pay. "That's good news for everybody," says John Peterson, Chairman of Automotive Retailing Today.

The survey found that Internet use in the car-buying experience has nearly doubled in the past two years. Forty-four percent of consumers who purchased a vehicle in the past 18 months went online to help guide their purchase decision, compared with 26 percent who used the source during previous purchases. Still, the survey found that 62 percent said the visit to the dealership was the most useful source of information in the purchase decision.

While the Internet is playing an increasingly important role in the transaction, it doesn't replace the need for the hands-on experience at the dealership. Information most sought on the Internet by consumers included price (88 percent), options and color (86 percent), and comparisons among different makes and models (68 percent). The survey showed that



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only eight percent of all consumers used the Internet to agree on a vehicle price, three percent to fill out the necessary paperwork, and two percent arranged for pick-up or delivery.

Other results of the survey include:

- 85 percent reported a positive experience in buying a vehicle;
 - 44 percent indicated they were very or extremely positive about the experience;
 - 94 percent were satisfied with the dealership they purchased or leased from; and
 - 75 percent said they were extremely satisfied.
- Surprisingly, women are more satisfied than men with their auto purchasing experience.

Automotive Retailing Today is a coalition that includes all major automobile manufacturers and dealer organizations. It works to promote a better understanding of the industry and build stronger customer relationships.

** Survey conducted by The Gallup Organization, July, 2000*