

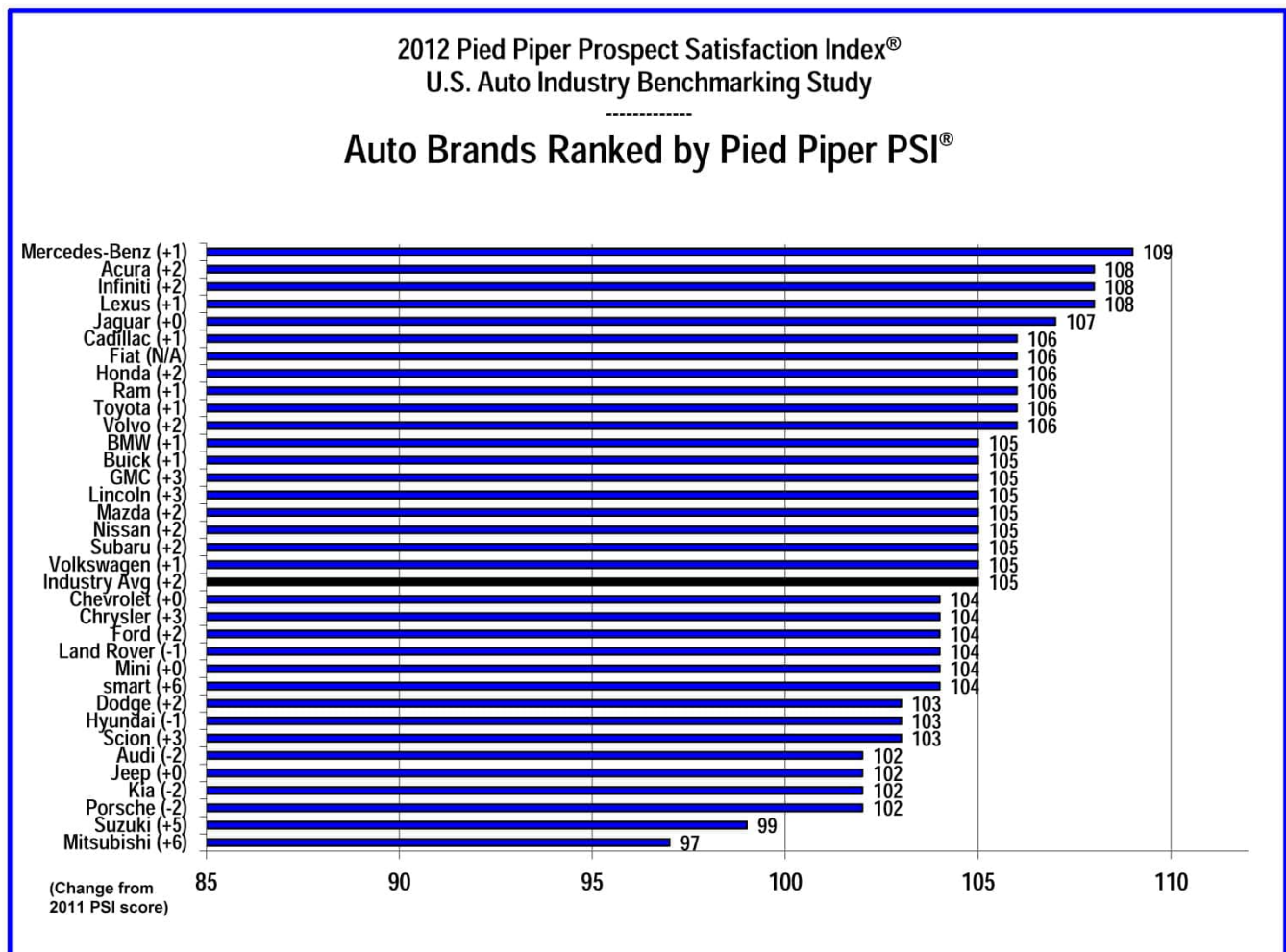


## MERCEDES-BENZ DEALERS TOP RANKED BY 2012 PIED PIPER PROSPECT SATISFACTION INDEX®

Treatment of car shoppers improves industry-wide; Highest industry average PSI score

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA – July 9, 2012** –Mercedes-Benz dealerships ranked highest in the newly released 2012 Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index® (PSI®) U.S. Auto Industry Benchmarking Study, which measured dealership treatment of car-shoppers. Study rankings by brand were determined by the patent-pending Pied Piper PSI process, which ties “mystery shopping” measurement and scoring to industry sales success.

Acura, Infiniti and Lexus dealerships, the luxury brands from Honda, Nissan and Toyota respectively, finished in a tie for second. Overall auto industry performance improvement was widespread, with twenty-four of thirty-four auto brands improving PSI performance from 2011 to 2012. Industry-wide improvement led to a new highest recorded industry average PSI score of 105.



Mercedes-Benz dealerships led all brands in ten of the 60 different sales activities measured by PSI, such as the salesperson introducing him or herself, providing a thorough test drive and focusing attention on three to five memorable features or benefits. Twenty-two different brands led at least one sales process category. For example, Cadillac salespeople were the most likely to mention the availability of different financing options, Nissan salespeople were most likely to ask for the sale, and Toyota dealerships were most likely to give compelling reasons to buy from their specific dealership.

Industry improvement was widespread, with 78% of the individual sales process factors improving on average. For example, compared to the previous year's results, the 2012 study showed that auto salespeople were 11% more likely to address specific features or benefits relevant to the shopper, 8% more likely to mention the availability of different financing options and 7% more likely to provide a walk-around demonstration.

However, despite the industry improvement, performance by individual brands and individual dealerships still varied considerably. For example, on average salespeople at Subaru, Buick and Volkswagen dealerships were 50% more likely to offer a brochure to a shopper than were salespeople at Hyundai, Jeep or BMW dealerships. Jaguar, Volvo and Infiniti salespeople were almost twice as likely to point out features unique from competitive vehicles when compared to Chrysler, Mitsubishi and Jeep salespeople.

“This year’s record high PSI results show that today’s dealership employees work harder than ever to be helpful to car shoppers,” said Fran O’Hagan, President and CEO of Pied Piper Management Company LLC. “A dealership’s success depends upon many factors that are very difficult for dealerships to change. In contrast, dealership sales effectiveness is simple to measure and simple to change.” On average the top performing auto brands as measured by PSI tend to be brands with higher average sales per dealership. Similarly, individual dealership improvement of sales effectiveness as measured by PSI on average also accompanies gains in market share.

The 2012 Pied Piper PSI U.S. Auto Industry Study was conducted between July 2011 and June 2012 using 4,419 hired anonymous “mystery shoppers” at dealerships located throughout the U.S. Examples of other recent Pied Piper PSI studies are the 2012 Pied Piper PSI U.S. Motorcycle Industry Benchmarking Study, in which Harley-Davidson dealerships were ranked first, and the 2012 Pied Piper PSI Internet Lead Effectiveness™ Benchmarking Study (U.S. Auto Industry), in which Lexus and Infiniti auto dealer networks were ranked first in a tie. Complete Pied Piper PSI industry study results are provided to vehicle manufacturers and national dealer groups. Manufacturers, national dealer groups and individual dealerships also order PSI evaluations as a tool to improve the sales effectiveness of their dealerships. For more information about the Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index, and the patent-pending PSI process, go to [www.piedpiperpsi.com](http://www.piedpiperpsi.com).

### **About Pied Piper Management Company, LLC**

Pied Piper Management Company, LLC is a nine year old Monterey, California company that develops and runs sales and marketing programs to maximize the performance of dealer networks. Go to [www.piedpipermc.com](http://www.piedpipermc.com).

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