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## The Best Brands -- And The Worst -- For Shopping Experience

By  [Richard Read](#) | 42 views | Jul 9, 2012

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Dealer

There are a lot of ways to measure customer satisfaction. J.D. Power [talks to recent buyers](#). Polk looks at [sales stats and customer retention](#). But the folks at [Pied Piper](#) do it the old-fashioned way: with secret shoppers.

Between July 2011 and June 2012, Pied Piper hired 4,419 secret shoppers to visit dealerships across the U.S. The shoppers scored each sales pitch on 60 different criteria: were they offered a brochure? Were they given a walkaround demo of the vehicle? Did the salesperson discuss financing options? And so on.

Now, Pied Piper's data has been tallied, and the



firm has released its 2012 Prospect Satisfaction Index (aka the "PSI"). Overall scores soared, proving that dealers and their teams have taken previous critiques to heart. Fran O'Hagan, Pied Piper's President and CEO, said that "This year's record high PSI results show that today's dealership employees work harder than ever to be helpful to car shoppers".

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### The winners

Not surprisingly, luxury automakers sit at the top of Pied Piper's PSI list. Mercedes-Benz took top honors, with an average dealership score of 109. It was followed closely by [Acura](#), Infiniti, and Lexus at 108, and Jaguar at 107.

[Cadillac](#) showed up at a respectable 106, followed by mass-market manufacturers like Fiat, Honda, [Ram](#), Toyota, and Volvo.

And landing at the industry average of 105 were BMW, Buick, GMC, Lincoln, Mazda, Nissan, [Subaru](#), and Volkswagen.

Nearly all of the aforementioned automakers received higher scores this year, with the exception of Jaguar, which was flat.

### The rest

Just below the industry average, we find [Chevrolet](#), Chrysler, Ford, Land Rover, MINI, and Smart at 104. [Dodge](#), Hyundai, and Scion landed at 103, and Audi, Jeep, Kia, and Porsche came in at 102.

Bringing up the rear: [Suzuki](#) at 99 and [Mitsubishi](#) at 97. However, both made marked improvements over 2011, with Suzuki up five points and Mitsubishi up six. Smart was also up six.

Very few brands slid in the PSI scores. [Land Rover](#) fell one point, as did Hyundai. And Audi, Kia, and Porsche each shaved two points off their total score.

### Caveat

Keep in mind that these scores are averages taken from dealerships across the country, so your local dealer may be better (or worse) than these rankings suggest.

What keeps you going back to your favorite dealer? Did you have a particularly good experience there? Or did you simply have a particularly bad experience somewhere else? Feel free to drop us a line, or leave a note in the comments below.