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High Marks for H-D

Mar 1, 2007

Dealernews

Harley-Davidson salespeople are more likely to fully engage a customer, a virtue that earned the OEM's dealerships high marks in a recent consumer survey.

H-D's sales folk asked shopper's names, tried to determine their price range and, if anything was preventing a purchase, pushed sales forward and gathered customers' contact information, according to the 2007 Pied Piper Satisfaction Index Motorcycle Industry Study. The survey evaluated experiences at 375 dealerships across the country to determine how shoppers were treated.

"Focusing only on yesterday's sales and customers is short-sighted, yet it's prevalent in many industries," says Fran O'Hagan, president of Pied Piper Management Co. "As many as 75 percent to 90 percent of motor-vehicle shoppers don't buy the same day they visit a retail location, so maximizing prospect satisfaction is an important key for turning those shoppers into tomorrow's buyers."

Dealerships can see immediate improvements with minor tweaks to their sales processes, O'Hagan says.

Buell, Big Dog, Victory, Ducati, Suzuki and BMW were next up on the list, all ranking above the industry average. Many of these OEMs topped out on the study in specific areas.

Victory dealerships ranked high for offering demo rides, Ducati got kudos for promoting accessories, Kawasaki shops promoted financing, Honda got high marks for visible signage, and Suzuki impressed consumers by focusing and narrowing a shopper's choices.

The results of the study were based on calibrated prospect evaluation of the shopping experience and by measurement of salesmanship effectiveness. Consumers were surveyed between November 2006 and January 2007.