

WHEN SALES DROPS THE BALL

Dealer personnel ask for the sale less than half the time, say secret shoppers dispatched by research firm

Motorcycle dealer salespeople ask for the sale only 45 percent of the time. What's even worse is that they ask for a customer's contact information only 38 percent of the time and encourage shoppers to return only 44 percent of the time. And salespeople provide a compelling reason for customers to buy from their dealership in only 34 percent of cases.

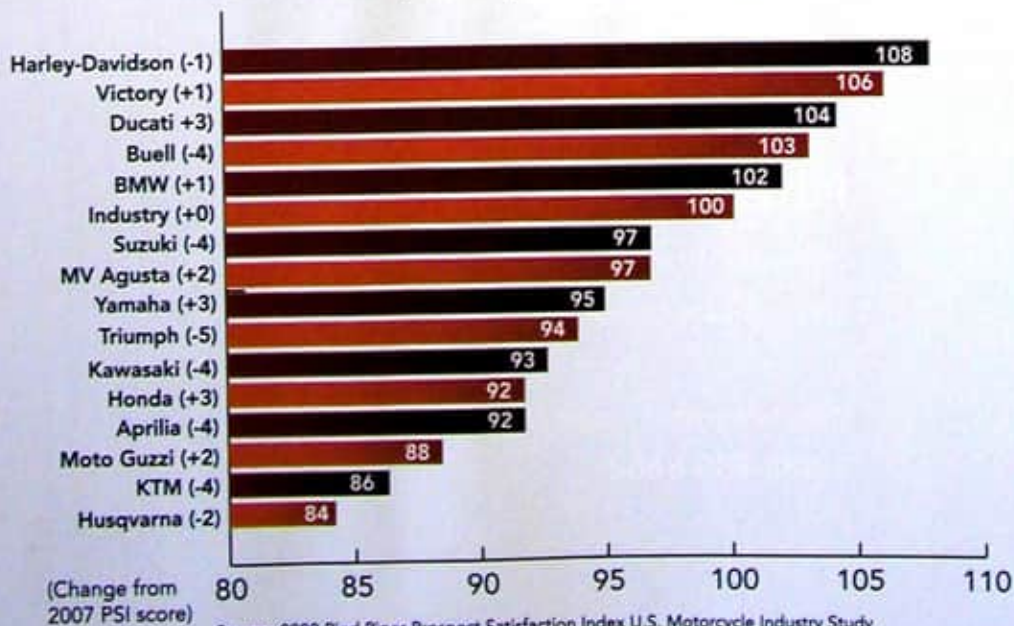
So say the results of a second annual study by Pied Piper Management Company, a California-based sales and marketing firm. Researchers between July 2007 and March 2008 hired people to "secret shop" at 830 dealerships (all major brands) around the country. The secret shoppers answered more than 50 questions and contributed comments. Results from this survey were compared with the previous year's data (see chart).

Secret shoppers also contacted dealerships by telephone and via the Internet or e-mail,

but a staggering 70 percent of dealers did not respond to the shoppers' requests within 24 hours. Of the dealers who managed to respond by e-mail, only 32 percent of them offered reasons to buy from their store, and encouraged the customer to visit the dealership only 58 percent of the time.

Pied Piper Management then combined all results, calculated an industry average, set it to 100 and then ranked all brands in relation to the average. Harley-Davidson dealers led other dealerships when it came to asking for contact information, mentioning the availability of financing, asking for the sale and giving compelling reasons to buy immediately. Victory Motorcycles dealers were tops for mentioning features unique from the competition and for focusing the customer's attention on memorable product features. Ducati dealers reigned for addressing features and benefits relevant to the customer and for offering test rides.

2008 Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index



The Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index compares vehicle brands for the most recent study with results from the previous study, in which 375 stores were studied.