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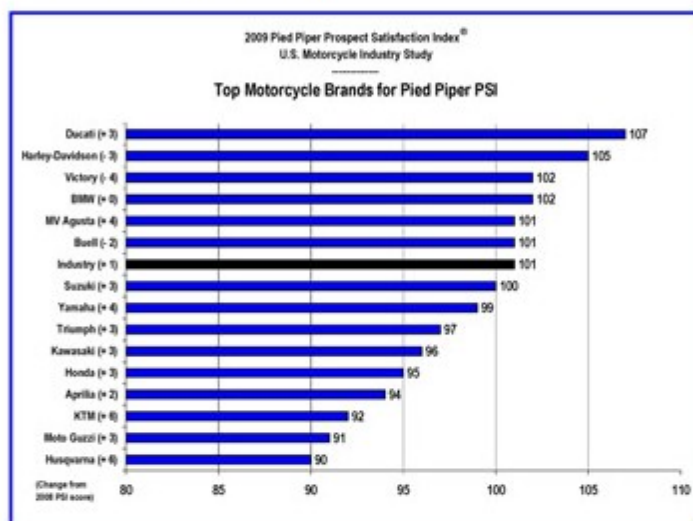
INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

Latest News

Pied Piper Releases Customer Satisfaction Study

Ducati dealerships ranked highest in the newly released 2009 Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index U.S. Motorcycle Industry Study, which measures how consumers are treated when shopping for a new motorcycle.

The independent study sent 2,100 mystery shoppers into motorcycle dealerships nationwide, and then used the patent-pending PSI process to compile the results into a measurement of how each brand's dealerships treat motorcycle shoppers.



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Following Ducati was Harley-Davidson whose dealers were ranked first in 2007 and 2008. BMW, Victory, Buell and MV Augusta round out the top spots. Overall motorcycle industry performance improved from 2008 to 2009, with eleven of the fifteen major motorcycle brands achieving higher PSI scores.

Harley-Davidson dealers still performed substantially above the motorcycle industry average, but 2009 marked the first time in three years that dealers from another motorcycle brand were ranked higher. Consistent improvement beginning in 2007 propelled the Ducati dealers to their first place ranking in 2009, where they led all brands in 30 percent of the sales process factors evaluated by the study. Harley-Davidson dealers held onto the highest ranking for 20 percent of the sales process factors. Buell, BMW, MV Augusta and Victory each led multiple sales process areas too.

Examples of sales process factors dominated by Ducati salespeople include the ability to answer product questions, offering test rides, offering brochures and asking for the sale. Harley-Davidson salespeople led all brands for taking time to determine how a motorcycle would be used, and for addressing features and benefits specific to the prospect's wants and needs. BMW salespeople ranked first for greeting prospects promptly, for making the special order process easy and for mentioning the availability of accessories.

"For the motorcycle industry as a whole, the 2009 PSI results show substantial and widespread improvement in the way salespeople interact with motorcycle buyers," said Fran O'Hagan, president of Pied Piper Management Co. For example, comparing the 2009 study results with the previous year shows that motorcycle salespeople were 11 percent more likely to introduce themselves, 8 percent more likely to ask follow-up questions, and 13 percent more likely to encourage a prospect to go ahead and sit on a bike.

Although there is still plenty of room for improvement, facts released by PPMC show that the effort to improve the sales process is worthwhile for most dealerships. For example, dealers who improved their PSI score by 10 points or more from 2007 to 2008 on average saw their retail sales increase 9 percent during the same time period, while dealers for whom PSI dropped by 10 points or more on average saw their retail sales drop 6 percent over the same time period. The analysis of individual sales process factors is just as compelling: Dealerships where salespeople asked for contact information at least two-thirds of the time retailed 29 percent more motorcycles than those who did not, and dealerships where salespeople offered test rides at least three-quarters of the time retailed 43 percent more motorcycles than those who did not. The 2009 PSI results show that on average motorcycle salespeople asked for contact information only 45 percent of the time, and offered test rides only 23 percent of the time.

For more information about the Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index go to www.piedpiperpsi.com.