

## Survey Says Mercedes-Benz Has Winning Sales Ways

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If car buyers want to be treated well, they should head to a [Mercedes-Benz](#) dealer. So says a survey by automotive retailing consultants, Pied Piper Management. It named Mercedes-Benz as the brand that handles customers best, followed closely by [Lexus](#), [Land Rover](#), [Acura](#) and [Jaguar](#).

The survey was carried out by more than 3,600 "mystery shoppers" who visited dealerships across the United States and measured how they were treated by sales teams. They measured staff personalities in categories ranging from friendliness to high-pressure attitude, while also taking note of sales traits like discussions of financing options, introduction to sales managers and follow-up.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is that the stereotypical aggressive, pushy car salesman appears to be a dying breed. According to Pied Piper, this type cropped up just six percent of the time, far less than the opposite end of the spectrum – an inattentive, unhelpful salesperson – who made 18 percent of those under scrutiny. Pied Piper CEO, Fran O'Hagan, thinks the internet is behind the decline of such high-pressure selling.

"The internet has shifted the balance of power to customers who now know a lot about products and prices because of their online research," said O'Hagan. "Smart salespeople have figured out that there's still a lot for them to do that involves being helpful, but not leading customers down a road determined by the salesperson."

Although nine of the top 10 automakers appearing on the list were luxury brands, non-premium automakers are improving as well. According to industry analysts, Ward's Auto, Ford dealership sales staff showed significant gains since 2007, introducing themselves 29 percent more often and mentioning financing options 65 percent more frequently.

The list also provided interesting insight into selling methodology by brand, with [Land Rover](#), [Smart](#) and [Mini](#) salesmen rarely introducing sales managers, while [Infiniti](#), [Nissan](#), [Suzuki](#), [Toyota](#) and [Volkswagen](#) staff did so nearly half the time. At many Land Rover, Smart and Mini stores – often smaller than traditional dealerships – a sales manager is also an active salesperson, which could account for the difference.

Bringing up the bottom of the list were several automakers struggling in sales. [Suzuki](#), [Scion](#) and [Saab](#) took second-, third-, and fourth-lowest spots respectively, with [Mitsubishi](#) languishing last.



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