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Harley dealers top Pied Piper mystery-shopper study

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MONTEREY, Calif. - Among motorcycle retailers, Harley-Davidson dealers treat shoppers the best — although Suzuki dealers excel when it comes to following up online leads.

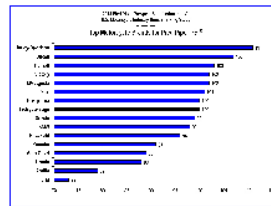
These were two of the findings of a pair of new studies: the annual 2013 Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index (PSI) and a separate study by the same firm that, for the first time since 2008, measured how well motorcycle dealerships responded to customer inquiries received online through dealer websites.

Dealer service provider **Pied Piper** conducted its PSI study between July 2012 and April 2013 using 2,503 hired anonymous mystery shoppers at dealerships representing all major brands, located throughout the U.S. After each visit, the shoppers answered yes-or-no questions.

Using data collected from its clients, Pied Piper claims to have found a link between the mystery shopping scores and dealership sales.

(Click on the bar chart to enlarge.)

Harley-Davidson dealerships led all brands in 18 different sales activities, such as encouraging shoppers to sit on a motorcycle, asking for contact information and helping the shopper overcome obstacles to the purchase.



Eleven different brands led at least one sales process category, and brand performance varied considerably from brand to brand. For example, Ducati salespeople offered a brochure to about 9 shoppers out of 10, while less than half of Suzuki, Honda or Kawasaki salespeople offered a brochure. BMW, Triumph and Harley-Davidson salespeople were more than twice as likely to offer a demo ride as the salespeople at Ducati, Suzuki, Honda and Yamaha dealerships, the study found. Victory salespeople were most likely to suggest arranging a demo ride in the future.

Industry average dealership performance was mixed compared with the 2012 PSI study.

Salesperson behaviors more likely in 2013 than 2012 include the following:

- More of them are offering demo rides (now 19 percent of the time),
- More of them discuss features unique from competitors (now 49 percent of the time), and
- More of them encourage going through the numbers or writing up a deal (now 33 percent of the time).

Salesperson behaviors less likely in 2013 than 2012 include the following:

- Fewer salespeople do a walk-around demonstration (now 70 percent of the time),
- Not as many are adept at overcoming shopper objections (now 74 percent of the time), and
- Fewer salespeople provide compelling reasons to buy now (now 39 percent of the time)

This year marks the seventh consecutive **Pied Piper has found that on average, when motorcycle dealerships are ranked by their PSI score, dealerships in the top quarter sell 22 percent more motorcycles than dealerships in the bottom quarter.** Pied Piper PSI study. With seven years of data gathered from tens of thousands of motorcycle PSI evaluations nationwide, Pied Piper said it was able to fine-tune the study questions, weightings and scoring for 2013. As a result, Pied Piper reset the 2013 motorcycle industry average PSI score to "100." The resulting "second generation" PSI scoring is now more closely correlated to motorcycle dealership sales success, the company said.

Pied Piper has found that on average, when motorcycle dealerships are ranked by their PSI score, dealerships in the top quarter sell 22 percent more motorcycles than dealerships in the bottom quarter.

"Any motorcycle dealership faces plenty of challenges that are difficult, if not impossible, to change," said Fran O'Hagan, president and CEO of Pied Piper Management Co. "In contrast, how a sales team sells is something a dealership can improve immediately." (Continued.)



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COLUMNISTS



Mike Vaughan

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ONE OF THE SPECIAL joys of riding a motorcycle is finding a lonely road in the middle of nowhere. There's no traffic, the towns are miles apart, and it's squ



Rick Fairless

I am living MY dream

DEAR GRANDMA and Grandpa, I hope things are going good up there in Heaven. Spring is here, and that's always a good thing for us in the motorcycle industry.



Dave Kosholek

Three who defy the stereotype

IT'S MAY! Spring is in full swing and there are tons of motorcycles on the road with more females in the saddle than ever before.



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