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BY MPN STAFF WRITERS ON MAY 8, 2015

NEWS

Ducati dealerships repeated as the top ranked brand in the newly released 2015 Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index U.S. Motorcycle Industry Benchmarking Study. The study measured dealership treatment of motorcycle shoppers, with rankings by brand determined by the patent-pending Pied Piper PSI process, which ties "mystery shopping" measurement and scoring to industry sales success.

2015 marked the ninth consecutive year that Ducati and Harley-Davidson dealerships were ranked either first, second or third. Brands showing the greatest overall improvement from 2014 to 2015 were Aprilia, KTM and BMW. Brands with declines from 2014 to 2015 were Can-Am, Indian and Star. All of the five top-ranked brands for 2015 – Ducati, Harley-Davidson, Victory, Triumph and BMW – improved their performance compared to the previous year. In total, thirteen of the seventeen brands improved their performance, resulting in the highest industry average PSI score of the nine years Pied Piper has been benchmarking the U.S. motorcycle industry.

An example of industrywide improvement is the substantial increase in test rides offered. Five years ago an immediate test ride was offered only 15% of the time, while the possibility of a future test ride was mentioned 19% of the time, for a grand total of test rides of any type mentioned 34% of the time. The 2015 study showed that immediate test rides were offered 35% of the time and future test rides were mentioned 28% of the time, for a grand total of test rides of any type mentioned 63% of the time. Other examples of industrywide improvement include salespeople requesting customer contact information 57% of the time vs 46% of the time five years ago, salespeople asking about trade-ins 39% of the time vs 27% of the time five years ago, and salespeople encouraging customers to sit on a bike 81% of the time vs 70% of the time five years ago.

However, performance varied considerably from brand to brand, including the following examples:

- Suggesting writing up a deal: Dealers selling Triumph, Honda, Harley-Davidson, Suzuki and Aprilia

were most likely to suggest going through the numbers and writing up a deal, while dealers selling Indian, Husqvarna, Can-Am, Yamaha and Star were least likely. Industrywide, salespeople attempted to write-up a deal 41% of the time, compared to 33% of the time three years ago.

- Selling the dealership, not just the product: Dealers selling Ducati, Harley-Davidson, Indian, Star and Can-Am were most likely to provide compelling reasons for a customer to buy from their particular dealership, while dealers selling Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki, KTM, Moto Guzzi and Husqvarna were least likely. Industrywide, salespeople provided compelling reasons for a customer to buy from their particular dealership 45% of the time, compared to 41% of the time three years ago.

PSI mystery shoppers visit a dealership inquiring about a specific brand of motorcycle. One of the factors tracked by PSI is whether a salesperson attempts to sell the customer a *different* brand of motorcycle. For some brands, it is very uncommon for a customer to be encouraged to consider a different brand. Harley-Davidson, Victory and Can-Am salespeople stick to their brands more than 97% of the time. In contrast, one in four Kawasaki customers found that their salesperson encouraged them to buy a different brand, and the figure was one in five customers for dealerships selling Yamaha, Suzuki, MV Augusta, Indian, Husqvarna and Aprilia.

Pied Piper has found that on average, when motorcycle dealerships are ranked by their PSI score, dealerships in the top quarter sell 22% more motorcycles than dealerships in the bottom quarter. "So much about the motorcycle business is difficult for a dealership to control," said Fran O'Hagan, President and CEO of Pied Piper Management Co., LLC. "Are the products desirable? Is financing available? Is floor traffic slow? In contrast, dealerships can control the sales process used by their sales team, and the results are clearly worth the effort."