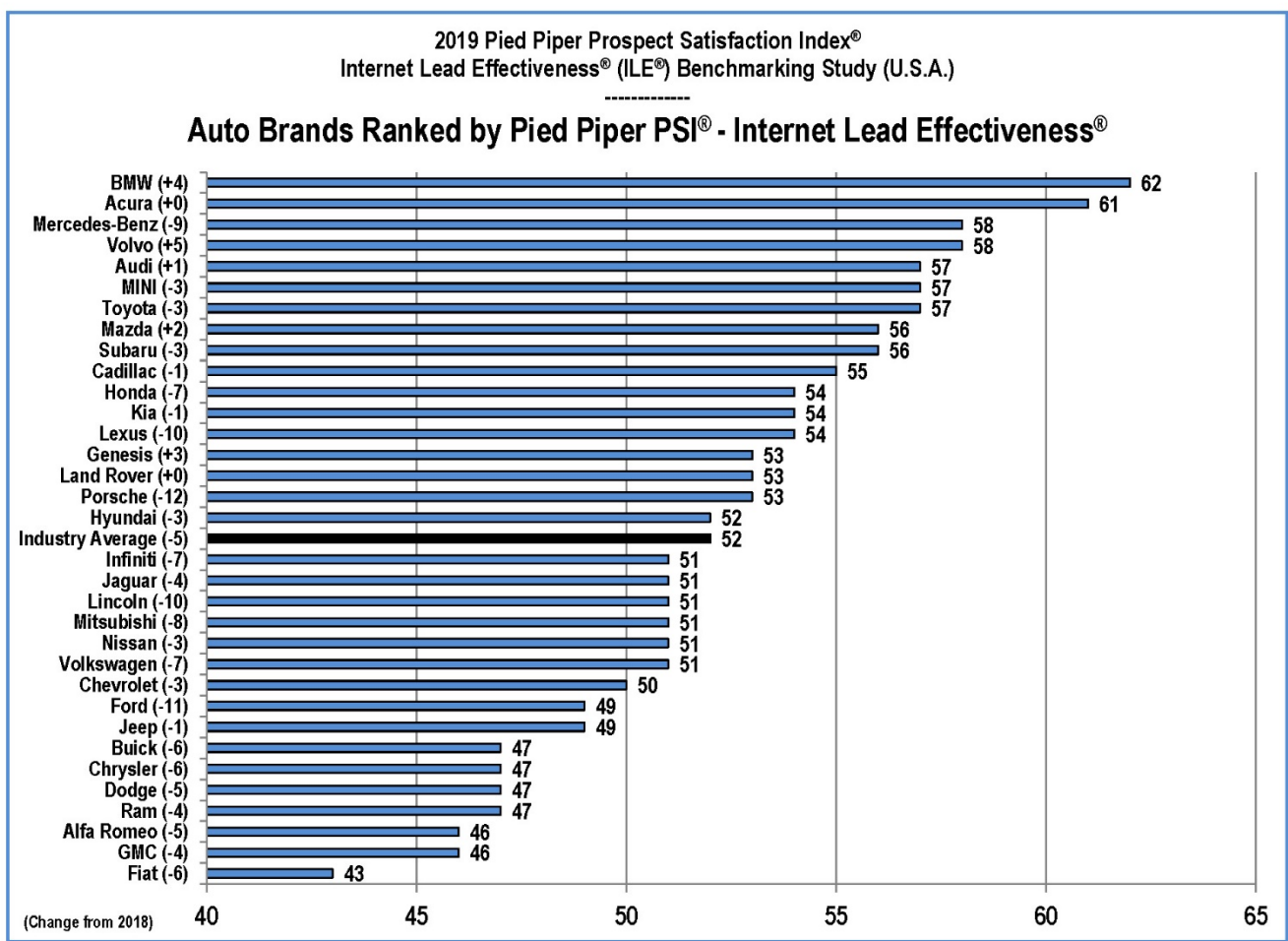




BMW AUTO DEALERS RANKED #1 FOR RESPONDING TO WEBSITE CUSTOMERS REPORTS PIED PIPER PSI®

- **Texting gains popularity among dealers—39% of website customers now receive dealer texts—but dealers often fail to obtain customer permission first**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA – July 8, 2019 – BMW auto dealerships ranked highest in the 2019 Pied Piper PSI® Internet Lead Effectiveness® Benchmarking Study, which answers the question, “What happens when customers visit a dealer website and inquire about a vehicle?” Dealerships selling Acura vehicles were ranked second, followed by dealerships selling Mercedes-Benz or Volvo.



Source: 2019 Pied Piper PSI® ILE® Benchmarking Study (USA)

www.piedpiperpsi.com

New for 2019 was an update to ILE scoring, which increased weighting for the content of a dealership response. As a result, the industry average ILE score declined five points from 57 to 52. ILE scores ranged from zero to 100, with 15% of dealerships nationwide scoring above 80, demonstrating an effective website-response process. However, 34% of dealerships scored below 40, struggling to respond effectively to today’s website customers.

Pied Piper submitted customer inquiries through the individual websites of 9,264 dealerships, asking a question about a vehicle in inventory, and providing a customer name, email address and local telephone number. Pied Piper then evaluated how the dealerships responded by email, telephone and text message over the next 24 hours. Twenty different measurements generated a dealership's PSI-ILE score.

The most basic measurement is whether a customer received an email response of any type—even an automated reply—within 24 hours. Industrywide, on average 8% of customers received no email reply of any type. A more meaningful measurement is whether the customer received an email answering their question within 24 hours. BMW, Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, Acura and MINI dealerships were the most likely to email an answer to the customer's question within 24 hours, more than 55% of the time on average. In contrast, dealerships selling Ford, Genesis, Buick, Hyundai, GMC and Lincoln answered the customer's question within 24 hours less than 30% of the time on average.

Response to customer web inquiries varies by brand and dealership, and the following are examples of performance variation by brand:

- How often did the brand's dealerships fail to respond by email in any way?
 - Failed to respond less than 5% of the time on average: Mazda, Infiniti, Dodge, Audi, Volvo
 - Failed to respond more than 15% of the time on average: Fiat, Alfa-Romeo, Mitsubishi
- How often did the brand's dealerships send a personal email response within 30 minutes?
 - More than 45% of the time on average: Acura, Genesis, Toyota, Lexus, BMW
 - Less than 25% of the time on average: Dodge, Chrysler, Alfa-Romeo, Ram, GMC
- How often did the brand's dealerships phone the customer within 1 hour?
 - More than 67% of the time on average: Dodge, Chrysler, Genesis, Ram, Jeep
 - Less than 45% of the time on average: Porsche, Lexus, Jaguar, Infiniti, GMC, Land Rover,
- How often did the brand's dealerships email a request to schedule an appointment?
 - More than 35% of the time on average: Audi, BMW, Alfa Romeo
 - Less than 15% of the time on average: Ford, Genesis, Porsche, Chrysler

As part of the 2019 study, Pied Piper reviewed dealership use of texting and website "chat" to interact with website customers. Pied Piper found that dealerships sent customers text messages in reply to a customer's website inquiry 39% of the time on average. However, dealerships first requested customer permission to send texts only 5% of the time on average. Automated texts sent without the customer's "express written consent" risk exposing dealerships to fines of \$500 to \$1,500 per unsolicited text sent, as part of the Telephone Consumers Protection Act (TCPA) of 1991. "Texting is just how we Americans communicate today," said Fran O'Hagan, President and CEO of Pied Piper Management Company, LLC. "Most customers are willing to text with dealerships too, but any business must be careful to get permission from customers before texting. Dealers must also watch for salespeople texting from personal cell phones, bypassing dealership CRM systems."

Use of website "chat" functions has become common, with 72% of dealer websites on average promising the ability for customers to immediately chat online with a dealership representative. However, 46% of the time on average those chat systems failed to provide a human response within 30 seconds. "Worse than not having chat capability on a website is promising chat but failing to quickly deliver," said O'Hagan.

The Pied Piper PSI[®] Internet Lead Effectiveness[®] (ILE) Benchmarking Study has been conducted annually since 2011. The 2019 Pied Piper PSI-ILE Benchmarking Study (U.S.A.) was conducted between July 2018 and May 2019 by submitting customer internet inquiries directly to a sample of 9,264 dealerships nationwide representing all major brands. Examples of other recent Pied Piper PSI studies are the 2019 "PSI for EVs" U.S. Auto Industry Study (Tesla brand was ranked first for selling in-person), and 2018 PSI-ILE U.S. Motorcycle/UTV Industry Study (Harley-Davidson brand was ranked first). Complete Pied Piper PSI industry study results are provided to vehicle manufacturers and national dealer groups. Manufacturers, national dealer groups and individual dealerships also order PSI evaluations—in-person, internet or telephone—as tools to measure and improve the sales effectiveness of their dealerships. For more information about the Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index, and the fact-based PSI process, go to www.piedpiperpsi.com.

About Pied Piper Management Company, LLC

Founded in 2003, Pied Piper Management Company, LLC is a Monterey, California, USA company that helps brands & manufacturers improve the performance of their retail networks. Go to www.piedpipermc.com.

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