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## DEALERS

# Cadillac Dealers First in Internet Lead Effectiveness

Cadillac scores first place on customer service survey.

Cadillac dealers collectively scored 72 out of 100, the highest in the Pied Piper ranking.

Steve Finlay | Mar 31, 2023



Cadillac ranks first in the 2023 Pied Piper Internet Lead Effectiveness Study that uses mystery shoppers to measure how well dealerships respond to website customer inquiries.

Following the General Motors luxury brand in the annual ranking are Infiniti, Volkswagen, Subaru, Toyota and Volvo.

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the study, and overall scores have improved over the years. That indicates a heightened level of how seriously dealers take the digital aspect of their retailing.

“Dealers have learned that they meet most of their customers online before anyone visits in person,” says Pied Piper CEO Fran O’Hagan. “And dealers who respond quickly, personally and completely to website customer inquiries simply sell more vehicles.”

With Cadillac dealerships, more than any other brand, “if you have questions online, someone will get back with you right away,” he tells Wards.

That reflects a marked improvement because Cadillac dealers had ranked below the study’s industry average until 2019. The brand’s dealers collectively scored 72 out of 100 in the latest study.

Industry average performance increased three points to a score of 58, an all-time high since the study began.

The consultancy submitted mystery-shopper customer inquiries through websites of 5,428 dealerships, asking a specific 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.

Brands with the greatest improvement since last year’s study were Polestar, Rivian, Ford, Mini, Volkswagen, Jaguar and Hyundai.

Only six brands failed to improve from 2022 to 2023: Lexus, Mazda, Kia, Lucid, Dodge and Mercedes-Benz.

How well a dealership handles a digital inquiry affects whether a customer will ultimately visit a store, says O’Hagan.

The typical customer does not want to buy a car in a digital self-service way, he says. “Most customers want someone holding their hand at some point in the process. Assisted digital retail is the right approach.”

Twenty different measurements generate dealership scores on a scale of 100.

In a traditional bell curve of performance, 30% of all auto dealerships nationwide scored above 80 (providing a quick and thorough personal response), while 29% of dealerships scored below 40 (failing to personally respond to website customers).

This year, more dealerships on average were likelier to respond with reasons for customers to act quickly and purchase from their dealership.

Dealers often were more likely to provide a price – a change from a time when customers were told to visit the store for pricing information.

Here are highlights of survey results:

**How often did the brand’s dealerships email or text an answer to a website customer’s question within 30 minutes?**

More than 50% of the time on average: Cadillac, Infiniti, Polestar, Volkswagen.

Less than 30% of the time on average: Lucid, Tesla, Rivian, Mini.

**How often did the brand’s dealerships use a text message to answer a website customer’s inquiry?**

More than 30% of the time on average: Mitsubishi, Ram, Jeep, Kia, Mazda, Volvo.

Less than 10% of the time on average: Lucid, Tesla, Rivian, Polestar.

**How often did the brand’s dealerships respond by phone to a website customer’s inquiry?**

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More than 70% of the time on average: Subaru, Acura.

Less than 35% of the time on average: Lucid, Tesla, Rivian, Land Rover, Fiat.

Although not part of the internet effectiveness scoring, Pied Piper also measured responsiveness of a dealer website’s chat function (if offered). More than 90% of the time on average, Volvo, Genesis and Mercedes-Benz dealerships responded to a customer chat question within 30 seconds.

Tesla, Rivian and Alfa Romeo on average did so less than 50% of the time.

Pied Piper does not distinguish whether a chat response is from a human or a system using a form of artificial intelligence.

“If you say you offer chat, then someone (or something) must be staffing it,” O’Hagan says. “Otherwise, it is worse than not having it at all.”