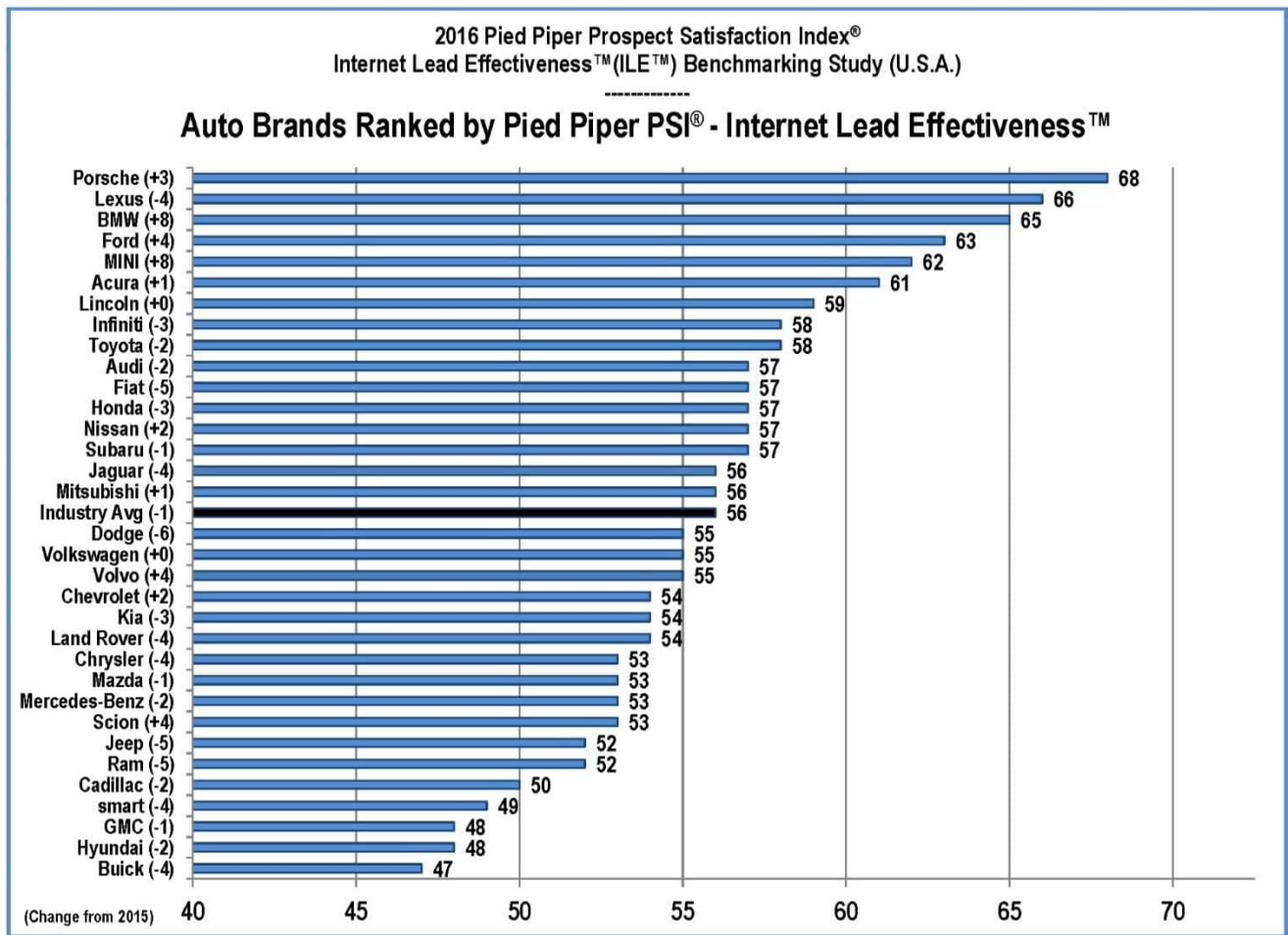




**PORSCHE TOP RANKED; BMW AND MINI MOST IMPROVED FOR RESPONSE TO CUSTOMER INTERNET INQUIRIES, REPORTS PIED PIPER PSI®**

- **Industry average performance shows no improvement over three years**
- **Half of customers received response within 30 minutes; but every 11<sup>th</sup> customer received no response within 24 hours**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA – March 7, 2016 – Porsche dealerships ranked highest in the 2016 Pied Piper PSI® Internet Lead Effectiveness™ (ILE™) Benchmarking Study, which measured how auto dealerships responded to customer inquiries received over the internet. BMW and MINI dealerships were the most improved brands compared to the previous year. Study rankings by brand were determined by the patent-pending Pied Piper PSI process, which ties “mystery shopping” measurement and scoring to dealership sales success.



Industry average performance has failed to improve over the past three years and dropped slightly from 2015 to 2016, with 21 of 33 brands declining. For 2016 dealers responded to half of the customer inquiries within 30 minutes, but one customer in eleven failed to receive a response of any type within 24 hours.

Pied Piper first measured dealership response to customer internet inquiries in 2008, and back then not every brand or dealership appreciated the importance of internet inquiries. Eight years later in 2016 everyone accepts that customer internet inquiries are critical to success, but given that importance, why aren't all of today's dealership responses quick and complete? "There are three reasons for poor performance," said Fran O'Hagan, President and CEO of Pied Piper Management Company LLC. "First of all, this is a part of the business that's invisible to management unless management is vigilant and pays attention to what is really happening. Secondly, it's not easy to be perfect every hour of every day, with customer inquiries never falling through the cracks. And third, we often see failures of third-party CRM software, and these failures are usually invisible to the client."

Substantial differences between brands remain. Not only is there variation in today's performance, but also in how that performance has changed over time. For example, only six brands have improved their performance every year for the past three years: Acura, BMW, Chevrolet, Ford, MINI and Mitsubishi.

Among the largest manufacturers in the 2016 study, Ford was ranked highest, with Toyota, Honda and Nissan close behind, all above the industry average.

- Ford and Lincoln have performed well above the industry average for the past three years, with Ford the top-scoring non-luxury brand in 2016.
- Toyota has finished at or above the industry average for the past three years, and Lexus has finished not only above average, but at or near the top of the industry.
- Honda and Acura have performed above the industry average for the past three years.
- Nissan and Infiniti have been close to the industry average for the past three years and both finished above the average in 2016.
- Fiat Chrysler Automobiles brands dipped below the industry average this year after performing above average in 2014 and 2015.
- All General Motors brands performed below the industry average in 2016 as all have done for the past two years, and all but Buick for the past three years.

Among top-scoring brands, there were interesting differences in the approaches followed by their dealers. For example, dealers for number two ranked brand, Lexus, usually responded quickly by email and answered a customer's specific question 69% of the time, but attempted to follow-up by telephone only 20% of the time. In contrast, dealers for the number four ranked brand, Ford, who also responded quickly by email, answered the customer's specific question by email only 21% of the time, but the Ford dealers attempted to follow-up by telephone 70% of the time.

The following are three additional examples of performance variation by brand:

- How reliably did the brand's dealerships respond within 24 hours?
  - Failed to respond to 5% or fewer customer internet inquiries: Ford, Porsche and Subaru.
  - Failed to respond to 15% or more customer internet inquiries: Land Rover, Hyundai, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Scion, Buick, Jeep, Ram
- How often did the brand's dealerships provide a qualified response within 30 minutes?
  - More than 50% of the time: Ford, Lincoln, Lexus, Porsche, Land Rover.
  - Less than 33% of the time: smart, Buick, Cadillac, GMC
- How often did the brand's dealerships answer the customer's specific question?
  - More than 60% of the time: BMW, Lexus, MINI, Infiniti.
  - Less than 33% of the time: Ford, Fiat, Lincoln, Ram, Subaru, Jeep

The Pied Piper PSI® Internet Lead Effectiveness™ (ILE™) Benchmarking Study has been conducted annually since 2011. The 2016 Pied Piper PSI-ILE Benchmarking Study (U.S.A.) was conducted between September 2015

and March 2016 by submitting customer internet inquiries directly to a sample of 18,551 dealerships nationwide representing all major brands. Examples of other recent Pied Piper PSI studies are the 2015 Pied Piper PSI U.S. Auto Industry Study and 2015 Pied Piper PSI U.S. Motorcycle Industry Study, both of which measured in-dealership, in-person sales effectiveness. 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 “mystery shop” evaluations—in-person, internet or telephone—as tools to improve the sales effectiveness of their dealerships. For more information about the Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index, and the patent-pending PSI process, go to [www.piedpiperpsi.com](http://www.piedpiperpsi.com).

### **About Pied Piper Management Company, LLC**

Founded in 2003, Pied Piper Management Company, LLC is a Monterey, California, USA company that develops and runs sales and service programs to maximize the performance of dealer networks. Go to [www.piedpipermc.com](http://www.piedpipermc.com).

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