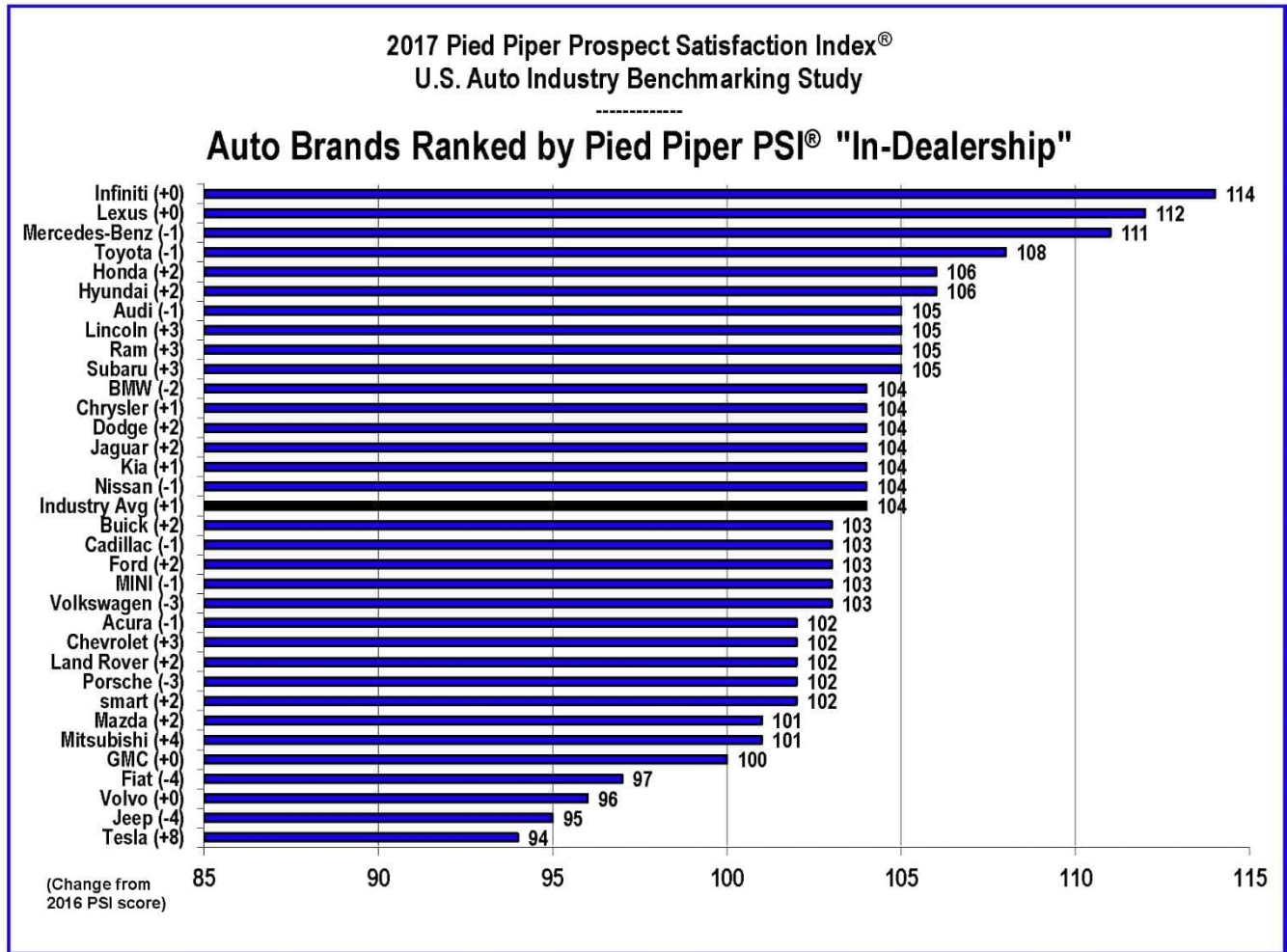




**INFINITI DEALERS RANKED HIGHEST
BY 2017 PIED PIPER PROSPECT SATISFACTION INDEX® (PSI®)
11th annual industry benchmarking study measured
in-dealership treatment of U.S. car-shoppers**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA – July 10, 2017 – For the second year, Nissan’s Infiniti brand dealerships ranked highest in the newly released 2017 Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index® (PSI®) U.S. Auto Industry Benchmarking Study. The study measured treatment of car-shoppers who visited 5,289 dealerships throughout the country. Study rankings by brand were determined by the Pied Piper PSI process, which ties “mystery shopping” measurement and scoring to industry sales success. Dealerships for Toyota’s Lexus brand were ranked second, and dealerships selling Mercedes-Benz were ranked third.



Source: 2017 Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index® U.S. Auto Industry Benchmarking Study

www.piedpiperpsi.com

Brands which improved the most from year to year were Tesla, Mitsubishi, Lincoln, Ram, Subaru and Chevrolet. Brands suffering the greatest declines were Jeep, Fiat, Volkswagen and BMW. A total of 21 brands improved or remained the same from 2016 to 2017, while 12 brands declined.

Nine brands have consistently ranked at or above the industry average for each of the past five years: Infiniti, Lexus, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, Honda, Hyundai, Audi, BMW and Kia. Five brands have consistently finished below the industry average for each of the past five years: Chevrolet, Land Rover, Mitsubishi, Mazda and Fiat.

Performance varied substantially by brand for many sales steps. The following are examples:

Salespeople are often taught to try to build rapport when they first meet a customer, rather than just saying, “Can I help you?”

- Salespeople most likely to attempt to build rapport – Lincoln, Hyundai, Infiniti, Lexus, smart (about 60% of the time)
- Salespeople least likely to attempt to build rapport – Porsche, Jeep, Fiat, Volvo, Ford (about 35% of the time)

Successful salespeople usually ask customers whether they have a vehicle to trade-in, since a trade-in can change the terms of the deal, but also because a customer’s need to dispose of a vehicle is an obstacle preventing purchase.

- Salespeople most likely to ask about trade-in – GMC, Nissan, Chevrolet, Dodge, Chrysler (about 90% of the time)
- Salespeople least likely to ask about trade-in – Tesla, Porsche, Lincoln, MINI, smart (about 55% of the time)

Helpful salespeople often mention features which differentiate their vehicle from competitor vehicles.

- Salespeople most likely to discuss features unique from competition – Tesla, Infiniti, Jaguar, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche (about 80% of the time)
- Salespeople least likely to discuss features unique from competition – Jeep, Chrysler, MINI, Fiat, Volvo (about 50% of the time)

Although the Tesla dealer network was ranked last again for 2017, with a PSI score of 94, Tesla improved 8 points from 2016, which was the most improvement of any brand. Tesla’s low PSI score was not caused by differences in sales process consistently followed by all Tesla locations nationally. Instead, the low score resulted from high variability in sales process behaviors from one Tesla dealership location to another. For example, Tesla staff on average asked how the vehicle would be used only about half the time (64%), asked about trade-ins 45% of the time, and suggested going through the numbers 56% of the time. About one in four (23%) of Tesla visits were exceptional experiences that under the PSI “letter grade” scale earned an “A,” with an average PSI score above 130. However, 32% of the visits earned a PSI letter grade of “D” or “F,” with an average PSI score below 75. In comparison, top-performing dealer networks such as those of Infiniti, Lexus or Mercedes-Benz earned a PSI letter grade of “A” about 50% of the time, and a “D” or “F” grade less than 15% of the time.

“Today nine out of ten car-shoppers gather information on-line before they ever visit a dealership,” said Fran O’Hagan, President and CEO of Pied Piper Management Company LLC. “Dealerships today have to work hard to be helpful from the first visit, because they may not have another opportunity.” Pied Piper has found that top performing dealerships may use slightly different sales processes, but what they all have in common is commitment for their salespeople to consistently follow the dealership’s sales process.

The 2017 Pied Piper PSI U.S. Auto Industry Study measured in-dealership treatment of car-shoppers and was conducted between July 2016 and June 2017 using 5,289 hired anonymous “mystery shoppers” at dealerships located throughout the U.S. Examples of other recent Pied Piper PSI studies are the 2017 Pied Piper PSI U.S. Motorcycle Industry Benchmarking Study, in which BMW motorcycle dealerships were ranked first, and the 2017 Pied Piper PSI Internet Lead Effectiveness® (ILE®) Benchmarking Study (U.S. Auto Industry), in which the Porsche dealer network 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 as a tool 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.

About Pied Piper Management Company, LLC

Monterey, California company Pied Piper Management Company, LLC was founded in 2003 to develop and run sales and service programs to maximize the performance of dealer networks. Go to www.piedpipermc.com.

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