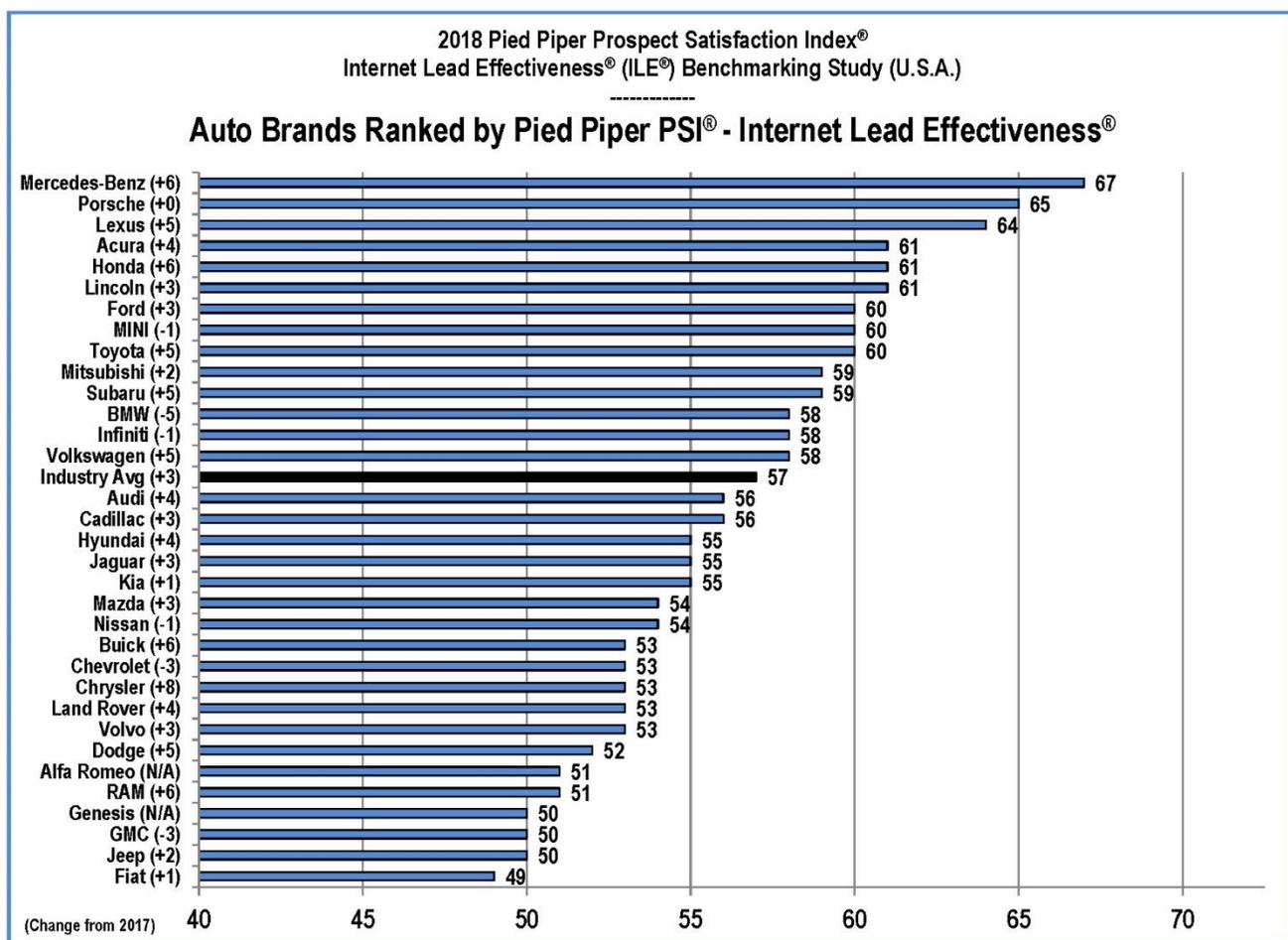




MERCEDES-BENZ DEALERS TOP RANKED FOR RESPONSE TO WEBSITE INQUIRIES REPORTS PIED PIPER PSI®

- **Industry average performance improved, but 1 out of 4 customers still failed to receive a personal response within 24 hours**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA – March 5, 2018 – Mercedes-Benz dealerships ranked highest in the 2018 Pied Piper PSI® Internet Lead Effectiveness® Benchmarking Study, which measured how auto dealerships responded to customer inquiries received through dealership websites. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) brands Chrysler, Ram and Dodge were among the most improved compared to the previous year, along with Mercedes-Benz, Honda and Buick. Study rankings by brand were determined by the Pied Piper PSI process, which ties “mystery shopping” measurement and scoring to dealership sales success.



Source: 2018 Pied Piper PSI® ILE® Benchmarking Study (USA)

www.piedpiperpsi.com

Industry average performance improved 3 points from last year, with 24 of 33 brands increasing their score. Factors driving overall industry improvement included more customers receiving a response of any type—even an automated response—within 24 hours (91% of the time vs 88% last year), answering a customer’s question (46%

of the time vs 41% last year), attempting to set an appointment (23% of the time vs 19% last year), and providing reasons to act quickly (20% of the time vs 18% last year).

Pied Piper PSI-ILE measures whether dealership employees perform the duties assigned to them, but successful dealership web response today depends just as much on multiple software processes often invisible to dealerships and manufacturers. First a customer inquiry must successfully transition from website to CRM system, and avoid getting misclassified by third-party bot and spam detection software. Then, a dealership's auto-response and personal response emails must avoid getting flagged as spam by the customer's email provider. "Today identification and diagnostics of software system failures is just as important as managing employee performance," said Fran O'Hagan, President and CEO of Pied Piper Management Company LLC. "One in ten customers today receive absolutely no response to their web inquiry, and of those who receive a dealer response, one in seven dealer emails land in the customer's spam folder."

Response to customer web inquiries varies by brand, and some brands have substantially improved their performance over time, or have consistently performed above average. Brands with the most improvement over the past eight years include Mitsubishi (+35%), BMW (+28%), Porsche (+20%), Mini (+15%), Mercedes-Benz (+15%) and Ford (+12%). Brands which have consistently remained ranked above the industry average over the past five years include Acura, Ford, Honda, Lexus, Lincoln and Porsche.

The following are examples of performance variation by brand:

- How well did the brand's dealership emails avoid customer spam folders?
 - Landed in customer spam folder less than 10% of the time: Nissan, Infiniti, Fiat, Lincoln, Mini
 - Landed in customer spam folder more than 20% of the time: Volvo, Genesis, Cadillac, Acura, Buick
- How often did the brand's dealerships fail to respond in any way?
 - Failed to respond less than 5% of the time: Porsche, Alfa Romeo, Mercedes-Benz, Chrysler
 - Failed to respond more than 15% of the time: Volvo, Genesis, Hyundai, Mazda
- How often did the brand's dealerships provide a qualified response within 30 minutes?
 - More than 60% of the time: Lincoln, Ford, Lexus
 - Less than 33% of the time: Chevrolet, GMC, Cadillac
- How often did the brand's dealerships answer the customer's specific question?
 - More than 70% of the time: Mercedes-Benz, Mini, BMW, Lexus
 - Less than 30% of the time: Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Genesis, Ford, Lincoln
- How often did the brand's dealerships attempt to contact the customer by telephone?
 - More than 74% of the time: Audi, Genesis, BMW, Toyota, Lincoln
 - Less than 55% of the time: Lexus, Land Rover, Infiniti, Porsche

Industry average dealerships achieved a PSI-ILE score of 57 out of a possible 100 in this year's study, but individual dealership performance varied substantially: 20% of dealerships scored above 80, 42% of dealerships scored between 60 and 79, 13% of dealerships scored between 40 and 59, and 25% of dealerships scored below 40. Although the highest scoring brand in this year's study, Mercedes-Benz, achieved an average score of 67, there are national dealer groups that consistently achieve average PSI-ILE scores in the 80s. How much of a difference does it make when dealerships achieve PSI-ILE scores in the 80s? Brands for which Pied Piper has web-lead close rate data find that their dealerships with PSI-ILE scores over 80 close 50%+ more customers on average than dealerships with PSI-ILE scores below 40.

The Pied Piper PSI® Internet Lead Effectiveness® (ILE) Benchmarking Study has been conducted annually since 2011. The 2018 Pied Piper PSI-ILE Benchmarking Study (U.S.A.) was conducted between April 2017 and March 2018 by submitting customer internet inquiries directly to a sample of 17,391 dealerships nationwide representing all major brands. Examples of other recent Pied Piper PSI studies are the 2017 Pied Piper PSI U.S. Auto Industry Study (Infiniti brand was ranked first), and 2017 Pied Piper PSI U.S. Motorcycle Industry Study (BMW brand was ranked first), 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.

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.

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