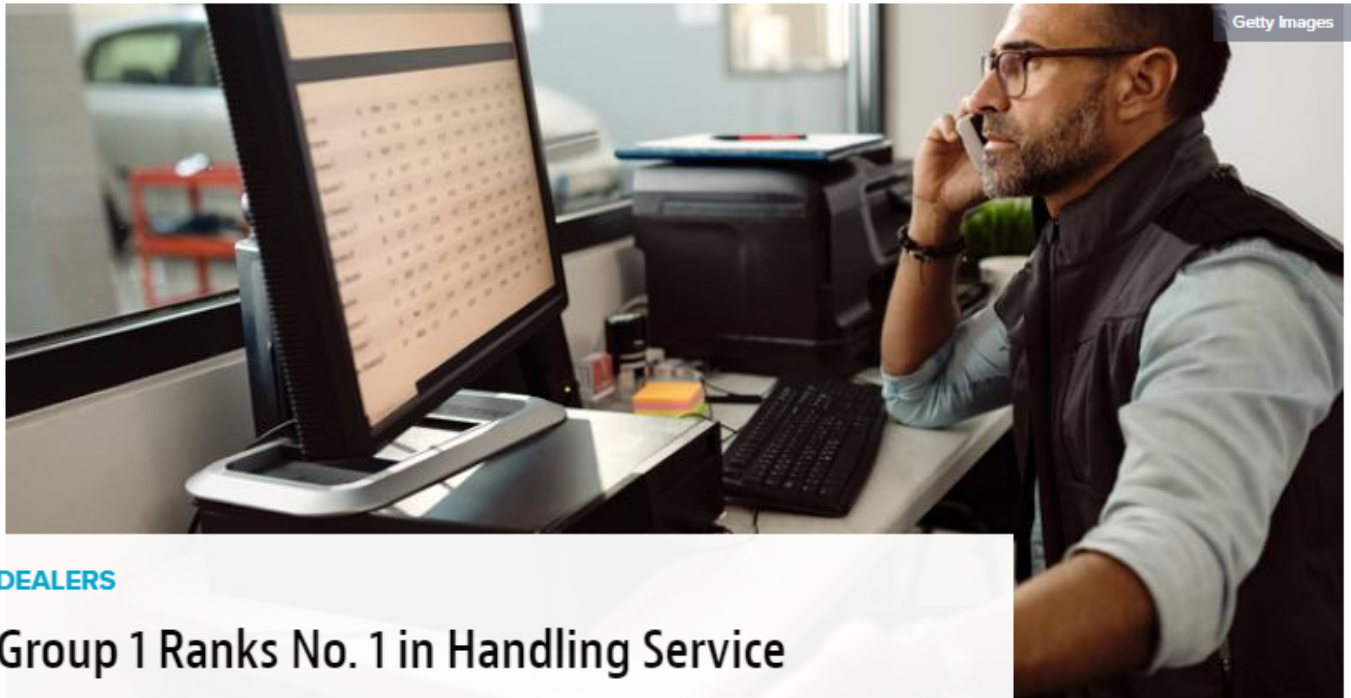




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DEALERS

Group 1 Ranks No. 1 in Handling Service Customer Calls

Dealerships were evaluated on how quickly and efficiently they handled service-appointment calls.

How well dealership service departments handle customer appointment calls makes a difference, Pied Piper's O'Hagan says.

Steve Finlay | Jun 08, 2023



Group 1 Automotive tops a new survey on how well America's largest dealership groups handle customer phone calls to their service departments,

Consultancy Pied Piper's inaugural Service Telephone Effectiveness Study focused on how quickly and efficiently service departments handle



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calls for service appointments (*see chart below story*). Following Houston-based Group 1, Dallas-based Berkshire Hathaway Automotive and Salt Lake City-based Ken Garff Automotive Group ranked No.2 and No.3 respectively.

How dealerships handle phone calls from customers seeking service appointments affects the bottom line, says Pied Piper CEO Fran O'Hagan.

"If no one answers or if customers leave a message, and no one gets back with them, they'll go somewhere else," he tells WardsAuto.

And what happens in the service department doesn't stay in the service department.

As O'Hagan notes, "The sales and service departments without exception are closely tied."

Consequently, a good or bad customer experience in either department can affect the other, such as whether a customer will return to buy a car.

Pied Piper used mystery shoppers who acted as first-time callers to the service departments they contacted. They asked basic questions, such as where on the premises they should go once they arrive at the dealership. Dealerships were scored on a 0-to-100 scale on how those calls went.

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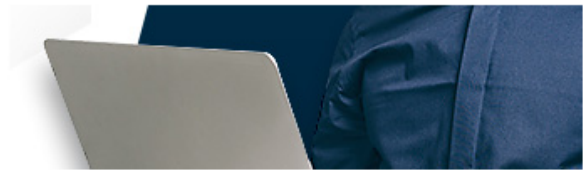
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“I’d have expected them to behave pretty similarly,” O’Hagan says. “Nothing could be further from the truth. Our advice is to focus more on the customer.”

He adds: “Customers who find scheduling a service appointment difficult vote with their feet by moving to another dealership or independent shop, or postponing service.”

Auto industry customer satisfaction surveys for years have focused on how well things go once customers bring their cars in for service.

“But what really happens leading up to the appointment?” O’Hagan says, adding that his firm’s inaugural study “fills in that gap.”



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For more than a decade, Pied Piper’s mystery-shopping studies have gauged internet and in-person sales effectiveness at the front end of dealerships. Now, the company has set its sights on the back end.

Posing as customers, Pied Piper representatives this year phoned each of the 1,739 dealerships owned by the largest auto dealer groups.

Performance varied by measurement. The following are examples of that:

What was the elapsed time before speaking with a service adviser?

Less than 60 seconds on average: Greenway, Berkshire Hathaway, Ganley.

More than 90 seconds on average: Group1, Penske, Asbury, Ken Garff.

Was the customer asked if they were experiencing any other issues?

More than 50% of the time on average: Ken Garff, Group1, Morgan, Herb Chambers, Hendrick.

Less than 25% of the time on average: Greenway, Napleton.

Was the customer told how long the service would take?

More than 40% of the time on average: Ken Garff, Ganley, Herb Chambers.

Less than 20% of the time on average: Morgan, Greenway.

Was the customer provided a cost estimate?

More than 45% of the time on average: Ganley, Victory.

Less than 23% of the time on average: Napleton, West Herr, Morgan, AutoNation, Penske.

Was the customer offered alternative transportation?

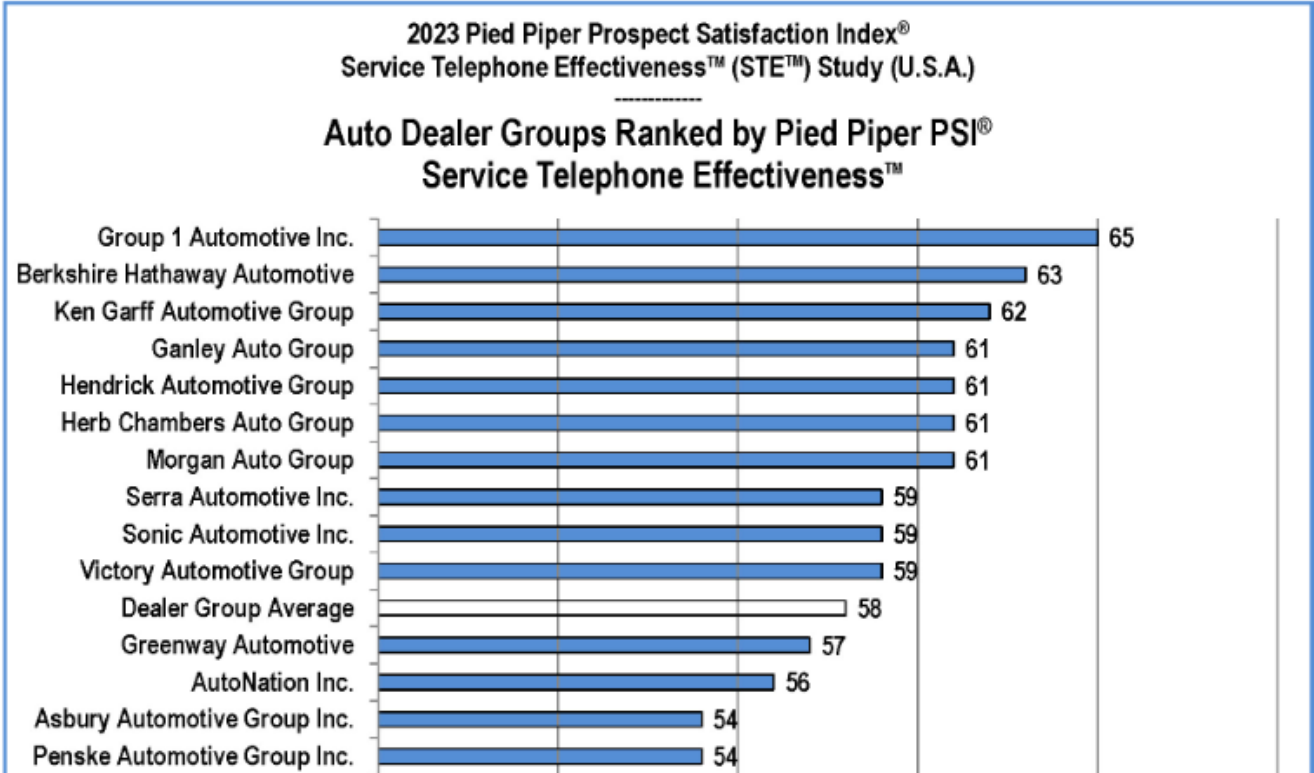
More than 40% of the time on average: Group 1, Penske, West Herr.

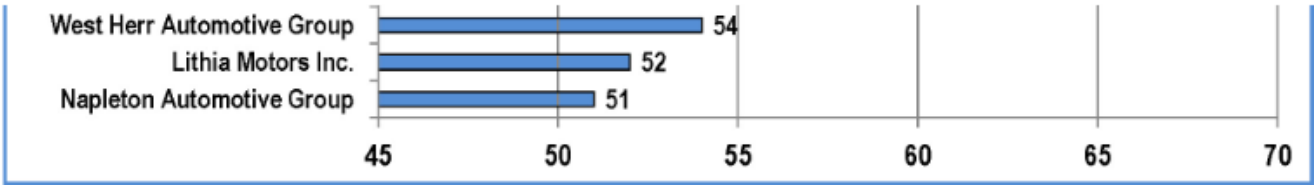
Less than 10% of the time on average: Ganley, Greenway, Napleton.

How many days out was the first available appointment?

Two days or less on average: Group1, Greenway.

More than 7 days on average: Ken Garff, Herb Chambers, Suburban, West Herr.





Source: 2023 Pied Piper PSI® Service Telephone Effectiveness Study (USA) - Scale 0 to 100

www.piedpiperpsi.com

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