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Dealerships' responses to website inquiries improving, shows

The industry average score rose to 62, indicating more dealerships are adequately and thoughtfully responding to online customer inquiries

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More dealerships than ever provided more thoughtful and thorough personal responses to inquiries on their websites, according to a new study from Pied Piper.

The study, released this month, ranks [dealerships](#) on a 100-point scale



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based on how they responded to mystery-customer inquiries on their websites within 24 hours. The industry average score rose to 62, the highest since Pied Piper started tracking responses in 2011.

Many dealerships implemented digital strategies to increase online effectiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic, Pied Piper CEO Fran O'Hagan told Automotive News. While car sales are primarily still in-person, these digital strategies are [improving customer satisfaction](#), he said.

"2024 is a more challenging business environment for car dealers, and many have responded by improving their interactions with online customers," O'Hagan said in a statement.

In this year's study, 34 percent of dealership groups received a score above 80, indicating they thoroughly and adequately responded to the inquiry in the allotted time.

2024 Pied Piper internet lead effectiveness study

Pied Piper submitted mystery-shopper customer inquiries through the websites of 3,957 dealerships, asking a specific question about a vehicle in their 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. The evaluations combine over twenty different measurements to generate a score ranging from 0 to 100. Here is how the dealerships ranked by brand.

	2024	2023	Change 2023 to 2024	Change 2020 to 2024
Infiniti	76	69	10%	33%
Volkswagen	70	67	4%	25%
Cadillac	69	72	-4%	11%
Subaru	68	66	3%	11%
Polestar	66	62	6%	N/A
Alfa Romeo	65	62	5%	18%
Chrysler	65	63	3%	14%
Dodge	65	56	16%	12%
Lexus	65	62	5%	12%
Genesis	64	55	16%	21%
Honda	64	55	16%	7%
Kia	64	55	16%	12%
Porsche	64	63	2%	10%
Toyota	64	64	0%	0%



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Volvo	64	64	0%	10%
BMW	63	61	3%	11%
GMC	63	60	5%	21%
Mazda	63	60	5%	7%
Nissan	63	59	7%	15%
Ram	63	57	11%	13%
Ford	62	58	7%	15%
Land Rover	62	61	2%	15%
Acura	61	63	-3%	2%
Jaguar	61	63	-3%	5%
Jeep	60	57	5%	7%
Mercedes-Benz	60	57	5%	3%
Mini	60	59	2%	-2%
Audi	59	57	4%	4%
Buick	59	56	5%	11%
Chevrolet	59	60	-2%	13%
Lincoln	59	57	4%	-2%
Hyundai	57	59	-3%	8%
Mitsubishi	57	55	4%	6%
Fiat	49	54	-9%	-4%
Tesla	42	38	11%	N/A
Lucid	37	30	23%	N/A
Rivian	34	48	-29%	N/A
INDUSTRY	62	58	7%	9%

Twenty-one percent of dealerships did not personally respond to website customers and scored below 40.

The study also found the time to respond to online customer inquiries by phone call or text message improved. Email response rates remained flat **year over year**, but the quality of emails sent increased, Pied Piper said.



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"Top performing dealerships reach out to a customer using multiple paths, then when the customer responds they follow up using the same path chosen by the customers," O'Hagan said. "Otherwise, too many customers are missed since they don't see emails or texts or don't answer phone calls."

Infiniti was the top-ranked brand in this year's survey, rising seven points to 76. Volkswagen (70), Cadillac (69), Subaru (68) and Polestar (66) rounded out the top five.

Mitsubishi (57), Fiat (49), Tesla (42), Lucid (37) and Rivian (34) were the lowest-ranked brands.

Dodge, Genesis, Honda, Kia and Infiniti saw the greatest improvements from last year — each increasing at least six points. Scores for Chevrolet, Acura, Hyundai, Jaguar, Cadillac, Fiat and Rivian fell from 2023.

Pied Piper surveyed 3,957 dealership websites by submitting mystery-shopper inquiries for the study. The study was conducted between October 2023 and January 2024.