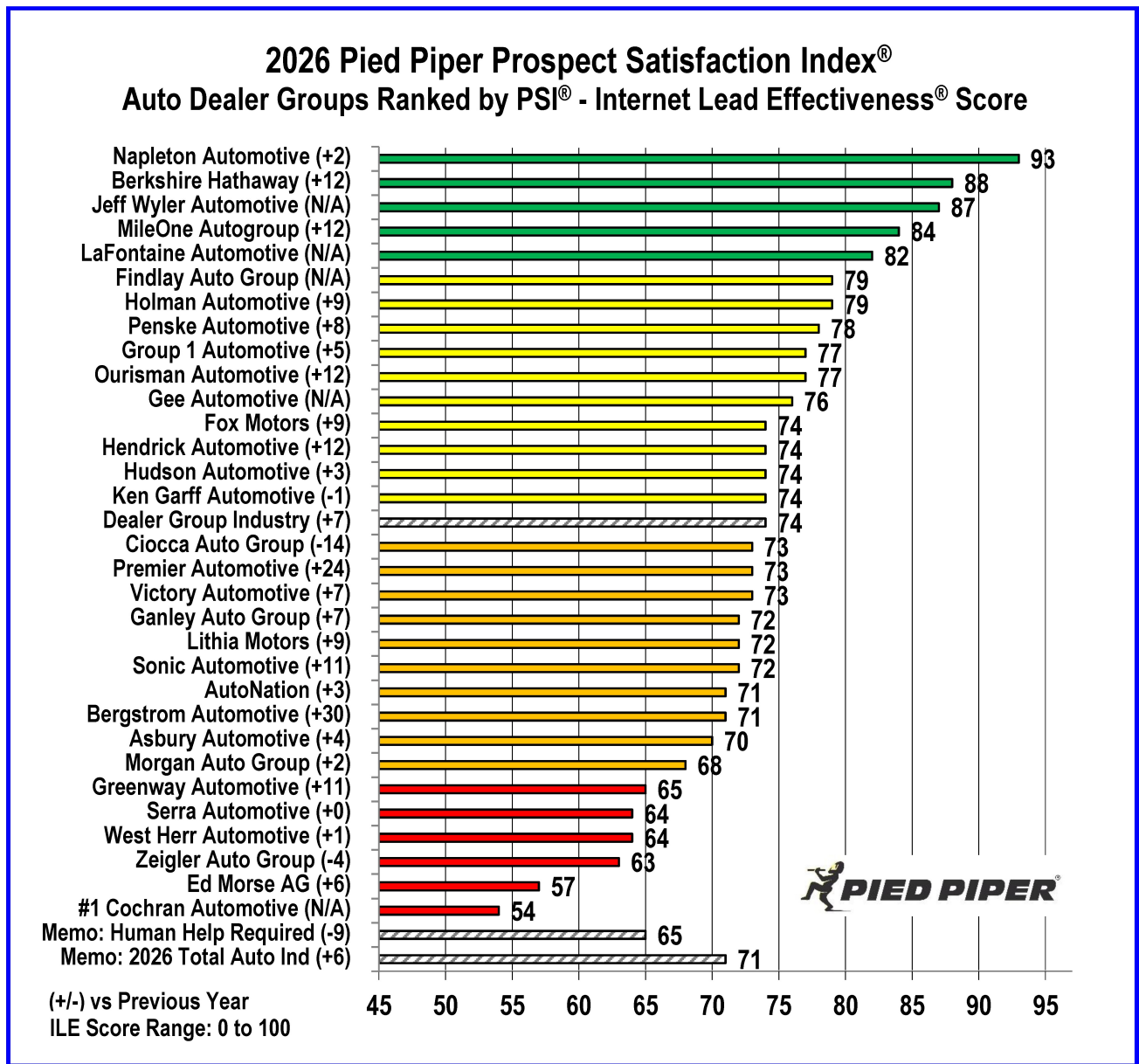




NAPLETON AUTO GROUP RANKS HIGHEST FOR 5TH YEAR IN 2026 WEB LEAD RESPONSE STUDY

- *Customer response hits all-time high: average ILE score jumps 7 points*
- *Same leads, very different outcomes: Dealer group scores ranged from 54 to 93*
- *Napleton sets new record: 90% of their dealerships delivered “perfect” responses*

AUSTIN, TEXAS, USA – May 11, 2026 – Napleton Automotive Group dealerships ranked highest for the fifth straight year in the 2026 Pied Piper PSI® Internet Lead Effectiveness® (ILE®) Auto Dealer Group Study, which compared the response behaviors of 31 large auto dealer groups when receiving sales leads through their dealership websites. Following Napleton were Berkshire Hathaway Automotive, Jeff Wyler Automotive Family, MileOne Autogroup, and LaFontaine Automotive Group.



Web Lead Response is Improving and Dealer Groups Are Leading the Way

In the 2026 study, the average dealer group ILE score reached 74, up seven points from last year and three points above the overall auto industry average. Of the 31 dealer groups measured, eight improved by more than 10 points, while only three declined. These gains reflect clear behavioral shifts, including a 20% increase in responding by text, an 11% improvement in multichannel follow-up, and 6% fewer slow or unhelpful responses.

Compared to the overall auto industry, dealer groups are widening the gap. Dealer group dealerships are 10% more likely to achieve ILE scores above 80, delivering quick, thorough, and proactive responses, and 20% less likely to fall below 40, where responses fail to move customers forward.

AI-Powered Automation Boosts Averages, But Fails Silently

AI automation has improved dealer responsiveness, but it also creates new ways for customer inquiries to invisibly fail. Dealerships that rely heavily on AI respond quickly to simple questions, but performance drops when inquiries require human involvement. When those “harder” questions are encountered, the typical dealership response drops an average of 9 ILE points. Breakdowns can also occur between systems, when AI interacts with DMS, website, CRM, email, text, and phone. In either case, the system may claim activity occurred while the customer still receives no useful response.

“AI is raising the baseline,” said Cameron O’Hagan, Pied Piper’s Vice President, Metrics & Analytics. “The challenge is that the most important failures now happen in the gaps, between systems, or when a customer needs human help. That’s where breakdowns tend to occur, and they’re often invisible without independent measurement.”

What Sets Napleton Apart from Other Dealer Groups?

2026 is the fifth consecutive year of Napleton ranking first place in the annual ILE Auto Dealer Group study. Napleton further improved their average score by an additional two points in 2026, reaching a new record average ILE score of 93; their second consecutive year scoring in the 90s.

- **9 out of 10 Napleton Customers Receive a Thorough Personal Response Within 30 Minutes:** Napleton web customers received an email or text answering their question and also a phone call, all occurring within 30 minutes, 91% of the time on average. To put the Napleton performance in perspective, the next best performing dealer group averaged 80% and the overall dealer group average was only 50% of the time for the same metric.
- **More than 4 out of 5 Napleton Customers Receive a Phone Response Within 15 Minutes:** 87% of Napleton internet leads received a phone call within 15 minutes, 31% more often when compared to the overall dealer group study average and an 11% higher rate than the next best performing dealer group. This measurement additionally stands out because the quicker the phone response, the lower the rate of customers ignoring an unknown phone number.
- **4 out of 5 Napleton Customers Are Offered an Appointment to View and Test Drive the Car:** 80% of Napleton dealership responses include an offer to schedule an appointment for a specific date and time. In comparison, the dealer group with the next highest rate of offering appointments trails by 5% and the overall dealer group average is only 33% of the time. The benefit of hard appointments is lower customer “no-show” rates, and higher close rates when customers visit in person.

What Top Dealer Groups Do Differently from Low Performers

The top five dealer groups in the 2026 study all achieved average ILE scores above 80, while the seven lowest performing dealer groups scored in the 60s or lower. When comparing the two categories, distinct behavior differences become evident.

“The difference is operational discipline,” said O’Hagan. “Top groups are three times more likely to suggest appointments and twice as likely to follow up across multiple channels, while lower performers lose sales with inconsistent responses.”

- **Offered more Appointments:** the top five dealer groups offered to set an appointment for a specific date and time 60% of the time on average while dealerships of the seven lowest ranked groups offered appointments only 24% of the time.
- **Utilized Texting more Effectively:** the dealers of the five top ranked groups used texting to answer customer’s questions 69% of the time on average, compared to only 33% of the time for the dealers of the five lowest ranked groups
- **Consistently Responded through Multiple Paths:** Customers often ignore phone calls, and emails are frequently missed or filtered to junk. Top-performing dealer groups counter this by responding across multiple channels: email, text, and phone for each inquiry. Because of this, 87% of dealerships in the top five groups delivered responses through multiple paths, compared to just 44% among the bottom seven groups.

2026 Dealer Group Performance Compared:

Response to customer web inquiries in the 2026 study had large variations by group in key metrics:

- **“Answered Question”** - How often did a group’s dealerships email or text an answer to a website customer’s question?
 - **More than 90%** of the time on average: Napleton, Berkshire Hathaway, Jeff Wyler Automotive Family, Fox Motors, Group 1 Automotive, LaFontaine Automotive
 - **Less than 60%** of the time on average: Greenway Automotive, #1 Cochran Automotive, West Herr Automotive
- **“Phoned Customer”** - How often did a group’s dealerships respond by phone to a website customer’s inquiry?
 - **More than 85%** of the time on average: Napleton Automotive, Berkshire Hathaway, LaFontaine Automotive, MileOne Autogroup, Ken Garff Automotive
 - **Less than 60%** of the time on average: Bergstrom Automotive, Greenway Automotive, #1 Cochran Automotive
- **“Did Both Fast”** - How often did a group’s dealerships email or text an answer to a website customer’s question and also phone the customer all within 30 minutes?
 - **More than 75%** of the time on average: Napleton Automotive, Jeff Wyler Automotive Family, Berkshire Hathaway
 - **Less than 25%** of the time on average: Ed Morse Auto Group, Bergstrom Automotive, Ourisman Automotive, Greenway Automotive, #1 Cochran Automotive

- **“Offered an Appointment”** - How often did a group’s dealerships offer to set an appointment for specific date/time?
 - **More than 70%** of the time on average: Napleton Automotive, AutoNation, LaFontaine Automotive
 - **Less than 20% of the time** on average: Morgan Auto Group, Serra Automotive, Hendrick Automotive, Holman Automotive, #1 Cochran Automotive, Bergstrom Automotive

- **“Failed to Respond”** - How often did the website customer fail to receive a response of any type (email, text, or phone call)?
 - **Less than 1%** of the time on average: Berkshire Hathaway, LaFontaine Automotive, Gee Automotive, Asbury Automotive Group
 - **More than 10%** of the time on average: Serra Automotive, Morgan Auto Group, Hendrick Automotive

Why is ILE Performance Valuable to Measure & Report?

Most lost sales don’t come from consistently poor web response performance, they come from a multitude of small, unnoticed breakdowns. Dealers who receive ongoing ILE measurement and reporting quickly spot when something invisible goes wrong and fix it before more opportunities are lost.

“Traditional dashboards and reports can be misleading, and are often ignored, leaving dealerships blind to what’s actually happening with their website customers,” said O’Hagan. “Three of the top five performing dealer groups use ongoing ILE measurement to track and understand real responses by phone, text, and email.”

How Was This Study Conducted?

Pied Piper submitted a total of 2,414 customer inquiries, evaluating every dealership within 31 U.S. auto dealer groups during normal business hours. Each inquiry appeared new and unique to each website and dealership, with a new customer name, email address, and local telephone number for each evaluation. Pied Piper evaluated the speed and quality of responses sent by email, telephone, chat, and text message within the next 24 hours following each inquiry. ILE evaluations are comprised of more than 20 differently weighted measurements, tied to best practices statistically linked to sales success. These measurements then combine to create an overall ILE score ranging between zero and 100 for each dealership, which are then consolidated into brand and industry averages and rankings.

About Pied Piper Management Company, LLC

Austin, Texas-based Pied Piper provides fact-based measurement and reporting that helps clients improve how their retailers handle new customers and grow sales. Its proprietary approach identifies the specific behaviors that drive retail success and measures whether they actually occur.

Pied Piper delivers simple, text-based reporting with interactive AI, making insights easy to access and act on. Its measurements reveal what actually happens when customers reach out, allowing organizations to identify missed opportunities, correct breakdowns, and improve sales and customer retention. The company also publishes annual industry benchmarking studies ranking brand performance and highlighting both top performers and gaps across industries.

Other recent Pied Piper PSI® industry studies include:

- 2026 Lead Handling Effectiveness™ (LHE™) Home Services Industry Study (Neighborly Brands' Precision Garage Door Service ranked first)
- 2026 Internet Lead Effectiveness® (ILE®) Auto Industry Study (Nissan's Infiniti brand ranked first)
- 2025 Service Telephone Effectiveness™ (STE™) Powersports Industry Study (BMW Motorrad ranked first)
- 2025 Telephone Lead Effectiveness® (TLE®) Pontoon Boat Industry Study (Bass Pro Shops' Sun Tracker brand ranked first)

Learn more, request a presentation of full industry study results, or request ongoing PSI® measurement and reporting at www.piedpiperpsi.com.

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Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index® (PSI®)
Auto Dealer Groups (USA)
Internet Lead Effectiveness® (ILE®) Scores 2022 through 2026

Brand	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	Change 2025 to 2026	Change 2022 to 2026
Napleton Automotive	93	91	87	83	74	2%	26%
Berkshire Hathaway	88	76	77	70	67	16%	31%
Jeff Wyler Automotive	87	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
MileOne Autogroup	84	72	N/A	N/A	N/A	17%	N/A
LaFontaine Automotive	82	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Findlay Auto Group	79	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Holman Automotive	79	70	69	N/A	N/A	13%	N/A
Penske Automotive	78	70	70	76	70	11%	11%
Group 1 Automotive	77	72	62	59	57	7%	35%
Ourisman Automotive	77	65	N/A	N/A	N/A	18%	N/A
Gee Automotive	76	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fox Motors	74	65	N/A	N/A	N/A	14%	N/A
Hendrick Automotive	74	62	60	63	58	19%	28%
Hudson Automotive	74	71	N/A	N/A	N/A	4%	N/A
Ken Garff Automotive	74	75	76	74	48	-1%	54%
Ciocca Auto Group	73	87	N/A	N/A	N/A	-16%	N/A
Premier Automotive	73	49	N/A	N/A	N/A	49%	N/A
Victory Automotive	73	66	56	66	55	11%	33%
Ganley Auto Group	72	65	74	61	N/A	11%	N/A
Lithia Motors	72	63	56	56	53	14%	36%
Sonic Automotive	72	61	67	65	58	18%	24%
AutoNation	71	68	67	66	58	4%	22%
Bergstrom Automotive	71	41	N/A	N/A	N/A	73%	N/A
Asbury Automotive	70	66	66	62	60	6%	17%
Morgan Auto Group	68	66	62	69	64	3%	6%
Greenway Automotive	65	54	57	55	51	20%	27%
Serra Automotive	64	64	72	61	61	0%	5%
West Herr Automotive	64	63	64	64	N/A	2%	N/A
Zeigler Auto Group	63	67	N/A	N/A	N/A	-6%	N/A
Ed Morse AG	57	51	N/A	N/A	N/A	12%	N/A
#1 Cochran Automotive	54	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2026 Dealer Group Average	74	67	66	65	59	10%	25%
Memo: Total Auto Industry	71	65	62	58	55	9%	29%