

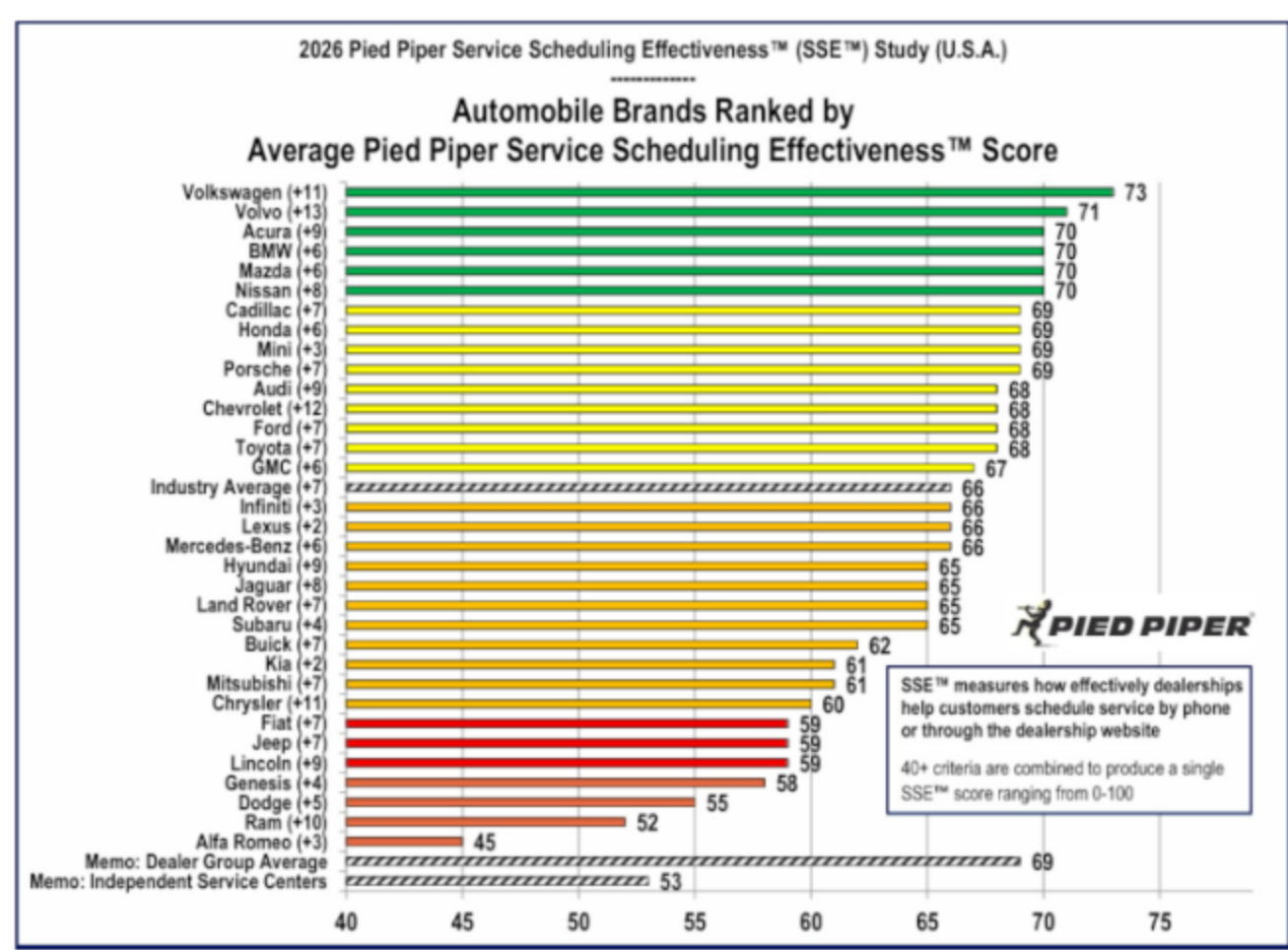
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VW dealers earn No. 1 ranking for service scheduling effectiveness



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Monday, Sep. 14, 2026, 03:09 PM

By Auto Remarketing Staff



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When it comes to making it easy for customers to schedule service on the phone or their websites, Volkswagen dealers, apparently, do it best.

Pied Piper released its 2026 Service Scheduling Effectiveness Auto Industry Study, which examines the customer experience scheduling service on dealership websites and via telephone.

Topping the list was VW, whose dealers averaged a Service Scheduling Effectiveness (SSE) score of 73 out of 100.

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Next was Volvo at 71, followed by Acura, BMW, Mazda and Nissan, each of scored 70.

“Top-performing brands and dealers remove friction,” said Cameron O’Hagan, Pied Piper’s vice president of metrics and analytics, in a news release.

“When instead a dealership makes the process difficult, customers have plenty of alternatives, and losing the appointment today can mean losing that customer for the long term,” O’Hagan said.

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Pied Piper conducted the study, now in its second year, by submitting 6,538 service requests, with 33 U.S. and four independent service center brands represented. The company used more than 40 weighted measurements impacting service revenue and customer loyalty in evaluating each dealership.

Among Pied Piper’s key findings were that Volvo dealerships scored the highest for website scheduling (79 out of 100), while VW was tops for phone scheduling (69/100).

Whether scheduling by phone or website, there was wide variation between brands.

“Providing online service scheduling does not guarantee consistent success. Website scheduling failure rates varied dramatically by brand, ranging from less than 1% of the time to 31% of the time, compared to 5% industrywide,” Pied Piper said in a news release.

“The most common barriers were website errors, calendars that failed to load correctly, and inflexible information requirements such as requiring a VIN that prevented customers from immediately scheduling.”

Switching over to the phone side, the company pointed out that 16% of callers in the study weren’t able to set an appointment.

“For five brands, that rate exceeded 25%, while three brands held it below 10%. The most common barriers were endless hold, phone-tree or AI loops, transfers to voicemail, and inflexible information requirements,” Pied Piper said.

Speaking of artificial intelligence, the study found that AI was often able to handle routine service inquiries efficiently, but that “more complex requests” often needed human intervention.

A third of AI-to-human transfer attempts in the study failed, with customers landing in voicemail, disconnected or on an “endless hold,” Pied Piper said.

“AI is raising the baseline,” said O’Hagan. “The challenge is what happens around the AI, when information needs to move between dealership systems or when a customer needs a person to take over. Those breakdowns are often invisible unless the entire customer interaction is measured independently.”

Meanwhile, the four independent service chains that were evaluated were Midas, Pep Boys, Firestone and Meineke.

These shops tended to outperform dealers on key metrics in telephone scheduling, Pied Piper said, adding that their performance in website scheduling was mixed.

The study found that 39% of customers found independent service centers delivered a “Mission Excellent” service call, with just 27% saying the same for dealers.

On the web, 2% percent of customers at independent service centers reported “Mission Failure,” while 5% of dealership customers reporting scheduling failure through the website. However, Pied Piper notes that dealers bested independent shops for the complete website scheduling experience.

When calling an independent facility, customers reached a service advisor in 38 seconds, on average. When calling a dealership, it was 66 seconds.

For customers calling independent facilities, the average earliest available appointment was 1.3 days away, Pied Piper said. For those calling dealerships, the average wait was 2.9 days.

“Dealerships risk losing service customers to independent service centers if their scheduling experience is poor,” said O’Hagan.

“Independents have built their reputation on speed and convenience, and dissatisfied customers who switch are unlikely to return once lost.”