



FACT SHEET

WOULD YOU BUY A CAR WITHOUT TAKING IT FOR A TEST DRIVE?

A Maritz Research Study Finds More than 1 in 10 Car Buyers Skip the Test Drive

Test drives are fundamental to car dealership operations, and from the customer's point of view they are a great touch point to experience everything a car has to offer, but according to a recent Maritz Research study 11.4% of car buyers didn't test drive their car before buying it.

Chris Travell, vice president of strategic consulting for Maritz Research says, "This may sound like heresy but some people really don't care. About 1 in 10 Americans we identify as being "purely pragmatic" which means a car is a very good thing for getting me from 'a to b' and that's about it. Because of this, it's easy to see why they wouldn't take it for a test drive."

How Important are Test Drives

Very Influential	52%
Somewhat Influential	28%
Not Very	9%
Did Not Test Drive	11%

The study also heard from buyers who seriously considered another vehicle. Of those customers, 38% did not test drive the other vehicle even though it was at the top of their shopping list.

Buyers Who Test Drove The Vehicle They Most Considered

Yes	62%
No	38%

Given the investment associated with a new car, Travell adds, "It's amazing that over 1 in 10 American buyers don't take their model for a test drive prior to buying." Why? One of the principal reasons is complacency. If you are coming out of the same brand/model, you may assume that it drives the same. According to Travell, "This is unwise since the average American has been out of the car market for 6.5 years. There have been huge advances in technology, vehicle design, ride and handling. It's in the customer's best interest to experience all that new car has to offer. It's also in the dealership's best interest to do everything possible to encourage test drives for these same reasons. The car the customer bought six or seven years ago is very different from the car they can buy in 2012."

Other Findings:

Did you use the internet in shopping for a new vehicle?

Yes	78%
No	22%

How did you use the internet?

Visit a manufacturer site	91%
Visit a dealer site	91%
Visit a 3 rd party site	34%
Obtain vehicle pricing information via the Internet	62%
Shop for credit/financing via the internet	9%
Apply for credit/financing via the internet	6%
Visit website to obtain necessary information	32%
Request a price quote for a vehicle via the internet	27%
Correspond with dealer or manufacturer via email prior to purchase	28%
Visit a social media site	5%
Request a brochure	8%
Set up a test drive	10%
Visit a manufacturer's finance company site	4%

Other Observations:

For the manufacturers and dealers, there's a large opportunity to get customers into a test drive during the shopping process, since nearly 4 out of 10 customers don't take their most considered vehicle out for a test drive. Again, anything that can be done to encourage test drives when the customer is in the dealership and even before they enter the dealership should be encouraged.

One area that is emerging in importance is the desire for customers to arrange for a test drive over the Internet. Practically, this has serious implications for the dealer. Who is looking after monitoring the test drive inquiries that come through over the Internet? Who is managing when the customer is coming in to ensure the desired vehicle (and salesperson) is available for the test drive? A dealer obviously does not want the customer to show up and nobody knew they were coming.

Methodology of Study

- The ***Test Drive Study*** collected responses from 80,219 customers who acquired a 2012 model year vehicle
- It's part of an ongoing study conducted by Maritz Research that collects market information on a monthly basis
- Data for this particular analysis is from customers who purchased or leased a vehicle in the October 2011 to February 2012 time frame

This test drive study was featured in [Chris Travell's blog](#) [Subscribe to the ride blog](#) to receive notifications of new posts about Maritz Research automotive studies, industry trends, and interesting observations from Chris.

For more information about this study and Maritz Research, contact Kathy Randall 636-827-6771 or Kathy.randall@maritz.com