Auto Dealer Service Departments Trying to Navigate Parts and Staffing Challenges, J.D. Power Finds

Lexus (Premium) and MINI (Mass Market) Rank Highest in Respective Segments

TROY, Mich.: 9 March 2022 — The combination of vehicle owners needing service more often due to accumulating mileage at pre-pandemic levels along with the disruption of the auto parts supply chain and significant staffing shortages is causing auto dealership service departments to navigate unique capacity challenges, according to the J.D. Power 2022 U.S. Customer Service Index (CSI) Study, released today.

Wait times to schedule service appointments for one- to three-year-old vehicles have increased by nearly one full day among owners of premium and mass market vehicles (to 4.5 and 4.3 days, respectively). Overall customer service satisfaction is 848 (on a 1,000-point scale).

“Dealer service departments are in a pivotal position to improve customer satisfaction and provide greater customer convenience, even though many challenges—including the parts supply chain disruption and the availability of new-vehicle loaners—are out of their control,” said Chris Sutton, vice president of automotive retail at J.D. Power. “Proactive communication with customers is one solution for dealerships to mitigate a disruptively tough situation. Simply implementing text or email alerts can greatly improve customer satisfaction. Additionally, letting customers know what is happening at each step along the way, including why it is taking longer to book an appointment or providing any updates in parts delays, can help improve satisfaction.”

The study, now in its 42nd year, has been redesigned this year to include emerging features such as valet service, remote vehicle servicing and online/smartphone app payment options to gauge the effect these processes have on the service experience. The study measures satisfaction with service at franchised dealer or aftermarket service facilities for maintenance or repair work among owners and lessees of one- to three-year-old vehicles. It also provides a numerical index ranking of the highest-performing automotive brands sold in the United States, which is based on the combined scores of five measures that comprise the vehicle owner service experience. These measures are (in order of importance): service quality (32%); service advisor (19%); vehicle pick-up (19%); service facility (15%); and service initiation (15%).

Following are key findings of the 2022 study:

- **Customers trust dealer service departments:** The redesigned study also measures factors relating to trust between a customer and the dealership. On a rating scale of 1 to 7 points, the most important trust attribute is, "I trust the dealership to perform complex repairs on my vehicle," with an average rating of 6.16. However, the second-most important attribute, "Takes responsibility when a mistake is made and resolves it effectively," has the lowest average rating (5.91).

- **Your vehicle is ready:** The service department sending simple text messages to remind of upcoming appointment dates or to provide a status for in-process work are preferred by 42% of customers. Additionally, owners today gravitate toward other technology channels to communicate with the service department, including making appointments online (27%) and via mobile app (7%), and paying online (17%). “Dealers who meet customers on their preferred communication channels are gaining an advantage,” Sutton said. “Service departments need to jump on the technology train now or risk being left behind.”
- **Seeing is believing**: New to the redesigned study is a metric that measures satisfaction when the service department provides a recommended photo or video of repair work with the customer after a multi-point inspection and before needed work is approved. This additional communication feature is having a positive effect on business and trust, as well as on customer satisfaction. When customers receive a photo or video communication regarding their needed maintenance work, they are three times more likely to have advisor-recommended work done. Additionally, on a 7-point rating scale, dealerships are building a higher level of trust with customers (.39 point higher) than are their counterparts who do not provide a photo or video.

- **If you go to them, satisfaction will improve**: New to the study in 2022 is a measurement of satisfaction among customers who select to have their vehicle serviced either by valet (when a dealership picks up the vehicle) or mobile (when the dealership sends a technician to the customer’s location). Overall customer satisfaction among owners using valet or mobile service is 866 compared to 847 among those who had an in-person dealership visit.

- **Next frontier is battery electric vehicle (BEV) service experience**: With BEV sales expected to increase in the coming years, dealers have a significant service quality satisfaction gap to close. Overall service satisfaction among BEV owners (784) is 68 points lower than among owners of gas- or diesel-powered vehicles (852). Additionally, the average number of service visits a BEV owner makes in a year is 1.9 compared with 2.4 among owners of gas- and diesel-powered vehicles. “BEV service is the next frontier for dealerships,” Sutton said. “The automotive industry has to get ready now and get the service experience right with BEV owners or they risk losing them to aftermarket service providers. This includes fully understanding BEV customer pain points like range anxiety, unique maintenance requirements and support for related services such as availability of charging stations.”

**Study Rankings**

**Lexus** ranks highest in satisfaction with dealer service among premium brands with a score of 897. **Cadillac** (880) ranks second, followed by **Porsche** (879), **Acura** (871) and **BMW** (866).

**MINI** ranks highest in satisfaction with dealer service among mass market brands for a second consecutive year, with a score of 873. **Buick** (872) ranks second, followed by **Mazda** (856), **Mitsubishi** (854) and **GMC** (853).

The 2022 U.S. Customer Service Index (CSI) Study is based on responses from 67,185 verified registered owners and lessees of 2019 to 2021 model-year vehicles. J.D. Power goes to great lengths to ensure that survey respondents are true owners of the brand they are representing. The study was fielded from July through December 2021.


See the online press release at [http://www.jdpower.com/pr-id/2022018](http://www.jdpower.com/pr-id/2022018).

**About J.D. Power**

**J.D. Power** is a global leader in consumer insights, advisory services and data and analytics. A pioneer in the use of big data, artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic modeling capabilities to understand consumer behavior, J.D. Power has been delivering incisive industry intelligence on customer interactions.
with brands and products for more than 50 years. The world's leading businesses across major industries rely on J.D. Power to guide their customer-facing strategies.

J.D. Power has offices in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific. To learn more about the company’s business offerings, visit JDPower.com/business. The J.D. Power auto shopping tool can be found at JDPower.com.

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NOTE: Two charts follow.
Overall Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking
(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

**Premium Brands**

- Lexus: 897
- Cadillac: 880
- Porsche: 879
- Acura: 871
- BMW: 866
- Audi: 865
- Infiniti: 862
- Jaguar: 858
- Lincoln: 854
- Volvo: 854
- Mercedes-Benz: 849
- Genesis: 836
- Land Rover: 815
- Alfa Romeo: 801

**Segment Average:** 866

*Source: J.D. Power 2022 U.S. Customer Service Index (CSI) Study℠*

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J.D. Power
2022 U.S. Customer Service Index (CSI) Study

Overall Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking
(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

Mass Market Brands

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<td>Buick</td>
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