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### Ipsos Study Finds Dealers Not Ready for Influx of EV Curious Shoppers

#### US Market EV Boom Requires Dealers to Improve their EV Knowledge and Sales Process

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When it comes to electric vehicles (EVs), auto dealerships around the U.S. are struggling due to unprepared salespeople, limited vehicles and inconsistent sales practices.

That's one of several findings from a recent Ipsos Electric Vehicle Dealership Readiness Study. Ipsos deployed mystery shoppers into dealerships across the top-selling electric vehicle markets in the U.S. to see how prepared dealerships are for consumers. The mystery shoppers examined the current sales process across automotive brands that currently offer battery or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. "With more than 100 electric vehicles set to be available in the next few years, the results of this study can help OEMs and dealerships identify improvements needed to create an informative and supportive EV sales process," says Mike VanNieuwkuyk, Senior Vice President at Ipsos Automotive. These improvements, driven by Ipsos' findings, can "transform shoppers who are exploring EVs into informed, excited buyers."

"The OEMs have done an incredible job of creating excitement about EVs and generating strong consumer interest," VanNieuwkuyk added. "Unfortunately, production delays due to COVID and the microchip shortage have created a lag in EV supply to leverage the increase in demand."

#### Unprepared Staff Not Capitalizing on Customer Curiosity

Ipsos found that dealer websites, where many consumers begin their new vehicle shopping journey, lack EV-specific information. This continues when shoppers set foot in the showroom, where it is evident that many dealers often are not prepared for the EV-curious customer. Even Tesla, a company with an EV-only product line, appears to be having fewer in-depth conversations with customers to help alleviate concerns about the vehicles. "Tesla no longer stands alone, as new entrant, Polestar, along with Volvo and VW – traditional OEMs with mixed-vehicle line-ups – have joined Tesla among the top-performing brands for EV dealership readiness. These brands are shown to spend more time addressing shoppers' concerns and pointing out the advantages that EVs offer," says VanNieuwkuyk.



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Customers see auto dealers as trusted sources to help them understand the EV ownership experience. The lack of information and inventory leaves shoppers with many unanswered questions. “Being knowledgeable about EVs allows the salesperson to match the vehicle type to the person, ultimately building trust with the customer and assuring that an EV is a good match for their needs and lifestyle,” says Kacey Muccino, Vice President, Ipsos Automotive. “As EVs are such a new and different choice for consumers, the dealer is the main source for them to get the answers they need to make the right decision.”

### Customers Aren’t Able To “Try It On”

The lack of EV inventory at dealers also means fewer opportunities for potential customers to take an EV test drive. The test drive is key: it allows the salesperson to show the uniqueness of EV performance benefits and highlight key features. “Most people want to try things out before they buy them, and this is especially important when it comes to electric vehicles,” says VanNieuwkuyk. “EVs are often misunderstood by customers, with the belief that they are not as capable or as versatile as their gas-engine counterparts. Giving the customer the EV experience is everything. It’s what ultimately sells the vehicle.”

### About the Study

The EV Dealership Readiness Study is a syndicated partnered project between Ipsos Automotive and Ipsos Channel Performance. The study was conducted in May and June of 2021. This mystery shopping project covered 22 premium and non-premium brands across 12 of the largest EV markets in the U.S. Ipsos investigated the entire sales process all the way up to the point of purchase. Mystery shoppers documented the shopping experience of 201 EV selling dealerships by completing a scorecard which measures attributes related to knowledge of EVs, availability and readiness of the vehicle, quality of the test drive, recommendation, needs assessment, etc. In addition to mystery shopping, Ipsos also completed an informal review of shopped brands’ websites to understand how they promote and position their EVs.

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