



# Press Release

## Ipsos RDA Study Finds U.S. Dealerships Not Prepared for the EV Invasion

### Electric Vehicle Sales Process Wrought with Inconsistencies

**Detroit, MI, November 15, 2017** — The inaugural Ipsos RDA Electric Vehicle (EV) Sales Experience and Best Practice Study, released today, examines the sales process across automotive brands currently offering battery electric vehicles. Ipsos RDA deployed mystery shoppers to dealerships in the top selling all-electric vehicle markets in the U.S. to assess their preparedness for this growing consumer base.

According to Mike VanNieuwkuyk, SVP, Ipsos RDA, “Many OEMs have already introduced electric vehicles to their product lineups and there will be many more in the coming years. The results of this study can assist OEMs and dealerships in establishing an informative and supportive sales process focused on the unique elements of Electric Vehicle ownership.”

### Unprepared Staffs, Inconsistent Practices, and Limited EV Inventory and Information

Tesla sales staff, advantaged given their EV-only product line, exude a passion for electric vehicles and are equipped with the information needed to help consumers make informed decisions. This is not the case for traditional brand dealers who sell EV’s alongside other vehicles. The EV sales process, in many instances, has not been differentiated from the traditional and, in effect, is passive. The availability of inventory, as well as critical EV ownership information in-store (from the sales staff or marketing materials) and online, is concerning and leaves shoppers with unanswered questions.

Furthermore, the sales process experience at traditional brand dealerships is largely inconsistent. Consumers shopping for a specific EV model may have distinctly different experiences from one dealership to another in the same brand family — one well informed, educational and supportive, the other completely lacking. “The lack of consistency in the EV shopping experience, even within the same brand, highlights the need for better product knowledge and support to effectively position electric vehicles with the U.S. automotive consumer” said Todd Markusic, VP, Research at Ipsos RDA.

These core issues tend to result in dealers moving consumers toward other, non-EV, models they are more comfortable selling. One key issue revealed in these findings was the belief held by some dealers that the consumer must be prepared to compromise on their EV shopping experience expectations. This included expecting limited or no inventory to physical evaluate or select from. Rather than search for, or order, the desired vehicle, many shoppers are pressed to accept what is available — including hybrids or even gas-engine alternatives. “Attempting to switch a shopper away from their EV interest is not only damaging the likelihood of a potential sale, but it can damage the trust a consumer has with the dealership” added VanNieuwkuyk.

### EVs Do Not Take Center Stage

Electric vehicles are not often seen on the showroom floor nor are marketing materials displayed or made available and many dealerships that sell these vehicles don’t have designated EV sales people to manage the various questions and concerns potential owners have. “This lack of support for the EV shopper lessens the likelihood that they will make the decision to go electric” said

Address: 450 Enterprise Court  
Bloomfield Hills, MI, 48302  
Tel: +1 248-750-7406

Contact: **Mike VanNieuwkuyk**  
*Senior Vice President, Ipsos RDA*  
Email: +1 248 750-7406  
Tel: mike.vannieuwkuyk@ipsos.com



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Markusic. “It is surprising that consumers often were not offered an EV test drive, a key experience that showcases the uniqueness of its performance benefits. Most of the time the consumer had to request one”.

### About the Study

The Inaugural Electric Vehicle (EV) Sales Experience and Best Practice Study is a syndicated partnered project between Ipsos RDA Automotive and the Ipsos Loyalty’s mystery shopping practice — the largest such practice in the world. The study was conducted in September and October of 2017. This mystery shop project covered 11 Electric Vehicle brands across the 10 largest EV markets in the U.S. Ipsos shopped the EV sales process — up to, but not including, the actual finance process. Mystery shoppers documented the shopping experience of 141 EV selling dealerships by completing a scorecard that includes up to 50 sales process attributes. A selection of the mystery shops was also videotaped, providing rich details on the consumer’s perspective of the EV shopping experience.

#### For more information on this news release, please contact:

Mike VanNieuwkuyk  
Senior Vice President  
Ipsos RDA  
+1 248 750-7406  
[mike.vannieuwkuyk@ipsos.com](mailto:mike.vannieuwkuyk@ipsos.com)

Address: 450 Enterprise Court  
Bloomfield Hills, MI, 48302  
Tel: +1 248-750-7406

Contact: **Mike VanNieuwkuyk**  
*Senior Vice President, Ipsos RDA*  
Email: +1 248 750-7406  
Tel: [mike.vannieuwkuyk@ipsos.com](mailto:mike.vannieuwkuyk@ipsos.com)



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### About Ipsos RDA

Ipsos RDA is a full-service market research and consulting firm. Founded in 1969, Ipsos RDA is a top 5 U.S. automotive research firm conducting research in over 50 countries. Ipsos RDA is built around four areas of research — Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty Research, New Product Development, Brand Research, and Product Quality Research. RDA Group joined Ipsos in July 2015 becoming Ipsos RDA.

### About Ipsos

Ipsos is an independent market research company controlled and managed by research professionals. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has grown into a worldwide research group with a strong presence in all key markets. Ipsos ranks fourth in the global research industry.

With offices in 88 countries, Ipsos delivers insightful expertise across five research specializations: brand, advertising and media; customer loyalty; marketing; public affairs research; and survey management.

Ipsos researchers assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media and they measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,782.7 million in 2016.

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[www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)

Address: 450 Enterprise Court  
Bloomfield Hills, MI, 48302  
Tel: +1 248-750-7406

Contact: **Mike VanNieuwkuyk**  
Senior Vice President, Ipsos RDA  
Email: +1 248 750-7406  
Tel: [mike.vannieuwkuyk@ipsos.com](mailto:mike.vannieuwkuyk@ipsos.com)