



# 2022 Car Buyer Journey: Top Trends Edition

January 2023

# Study background & methodology

## Background

For over a decade, Cox Automotive has conducted research to monitor key shifts in the car buyer journey.

In 2022, Cox Automotive Surveyed...

**6,118**  
Buyers

**4,150**  
Shoppers



# 2022 Car Buyer Journey: Top 10 Trends







1

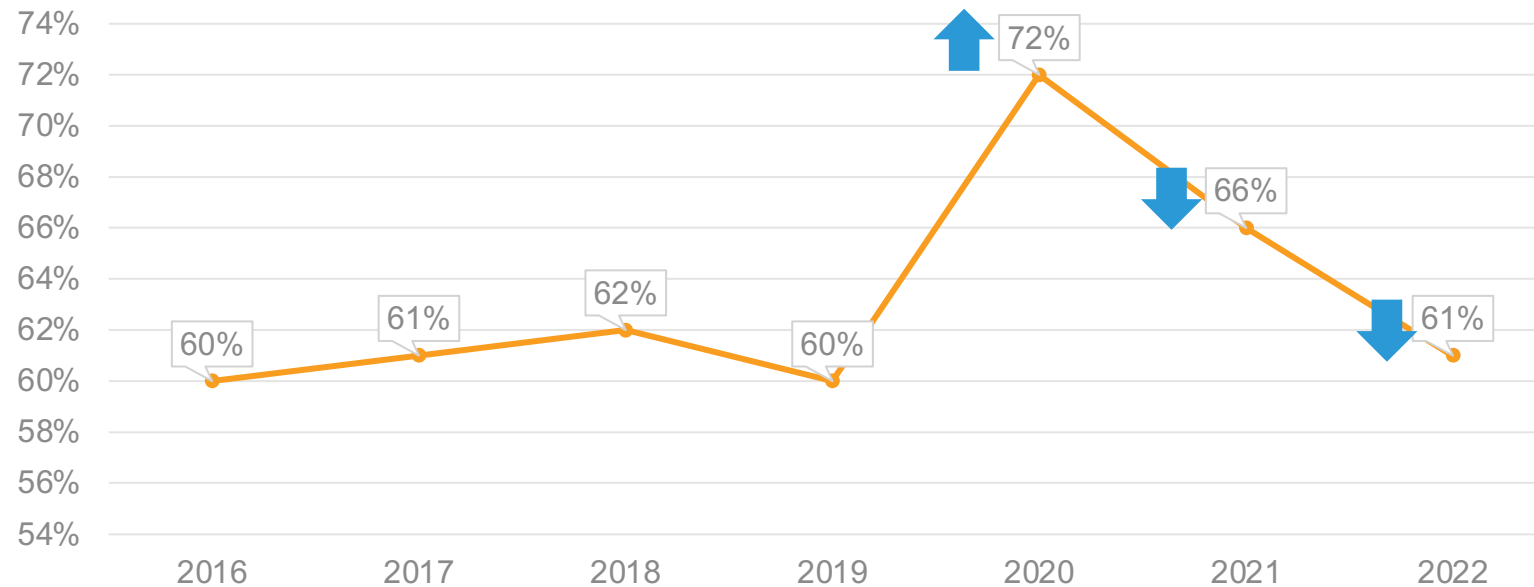
**Satisfaction with the experience  
is down to pre-pandemic levels**



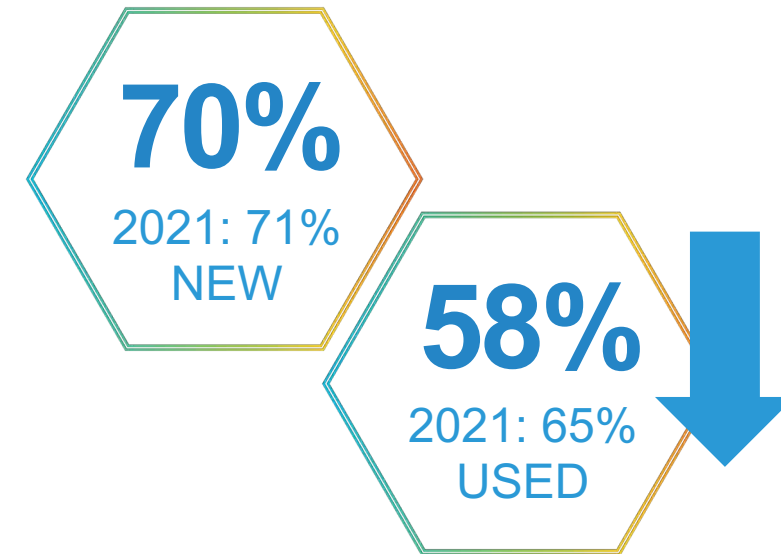
# Satisfaction with the overall shopping experience declined

Used car buyers experienced a sharper decline vs. new buyers

## Highly Satisfied with Overall Shopping Experience % 8-10

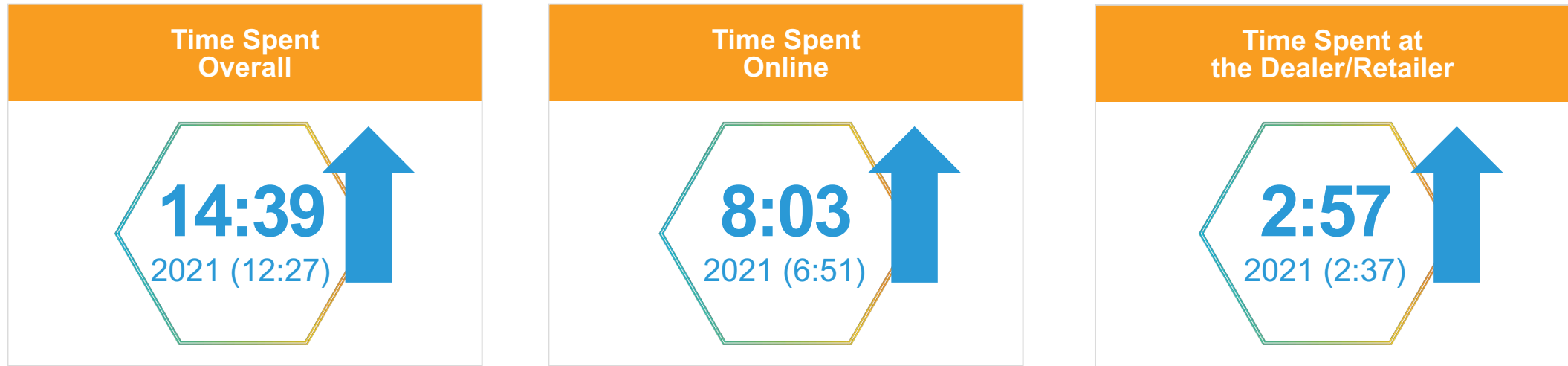


Arrows indicate significant difference between years at the 95% confidence interval



# The buying journey became less efficient

## Time Spent Researching and Shopping



Increased Time Online: **52%** ↑  
of buyers who reported limited inventory selection said they **spent more time researching and shopping online as a result (2021: 46%)**

Declining Satisfaction: **72%** ↓  
Overall satisfaction with dealership experience dropped (2021: 75%) **Used buyers experienced a sharper decline vs new buyers**

*Arrows indicate significant difference between years at the 95% confidence interval*





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## **Inventory shortages force buyers to do more online research**

# Limited inventory forced more cross-shopping, leading to diminished customer loyalty



## Average Supply

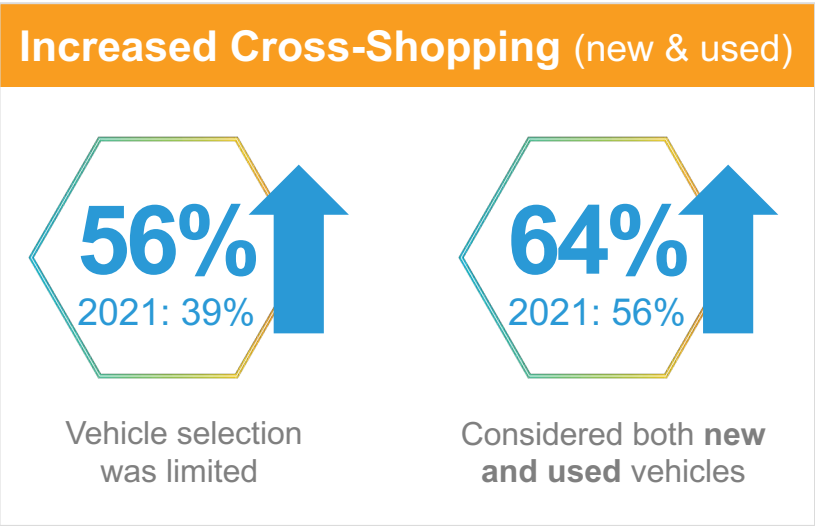
### New Vehicles

| 2020 | 2022 | DECLINE |
|------|------|---------|
| 3.0M | 1.1M | -1.9M   |

### Used Vehicles

| 2020 | 2022 | DECLINE |
|------|------|---------|
| 2.6M | 2.5M | -100K   |

## Shopping Experience

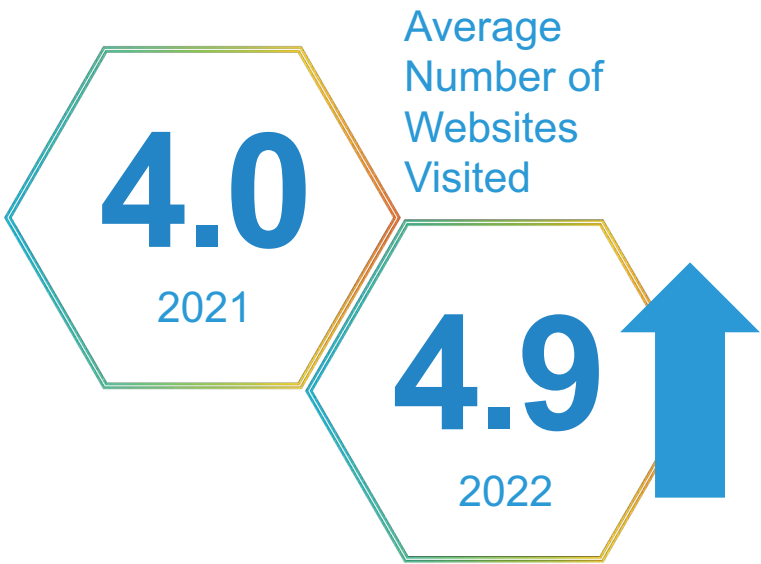
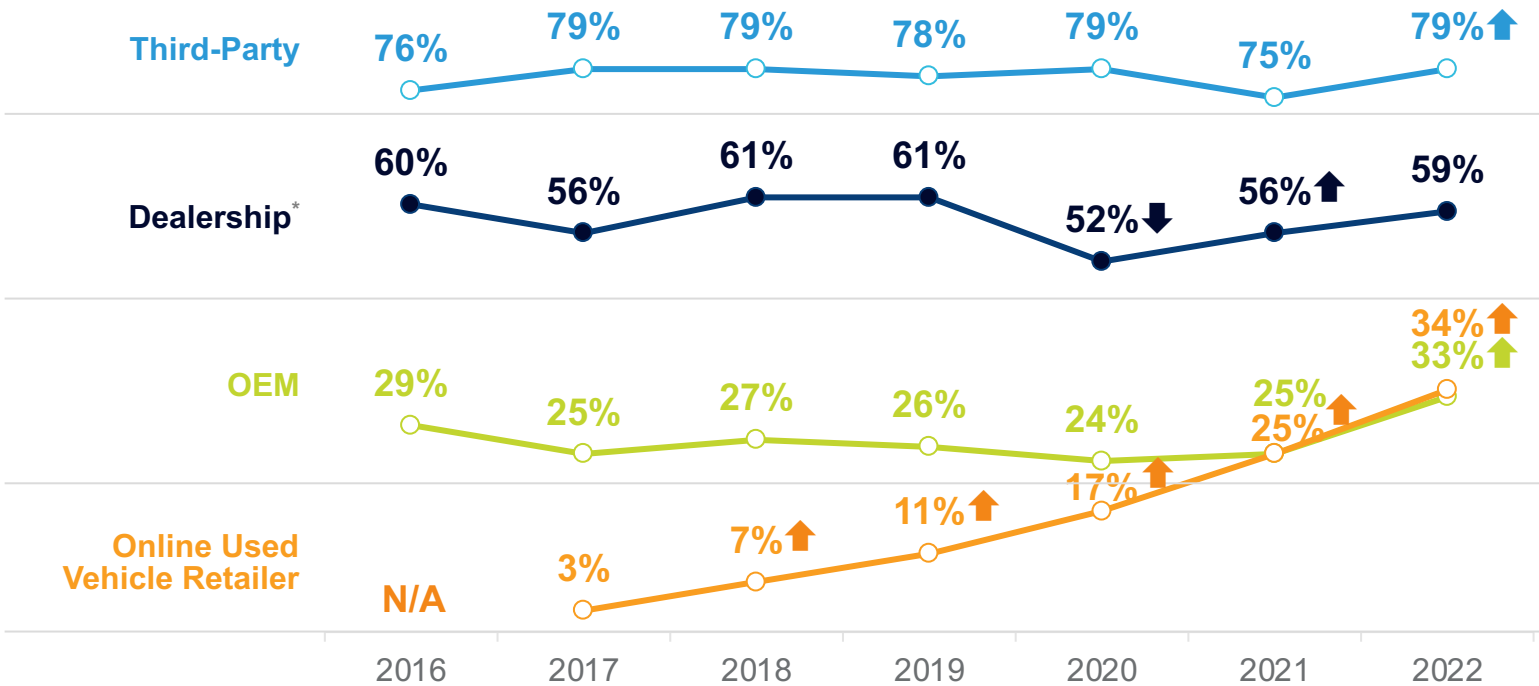


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# Buyers expanded their online searches to more websites

## Automotive Website Category Usage



Arrows indicate significant difference between years at the 95% confidence interval



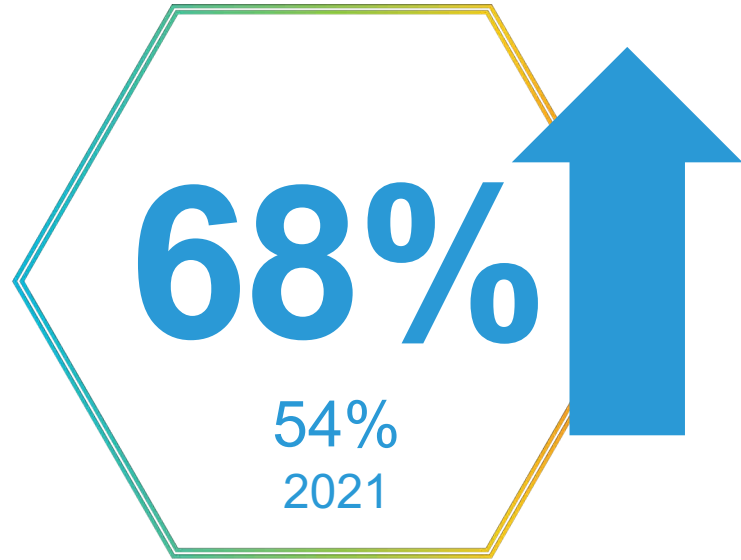
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## **Consumer preference for online purchasing continues to climb**

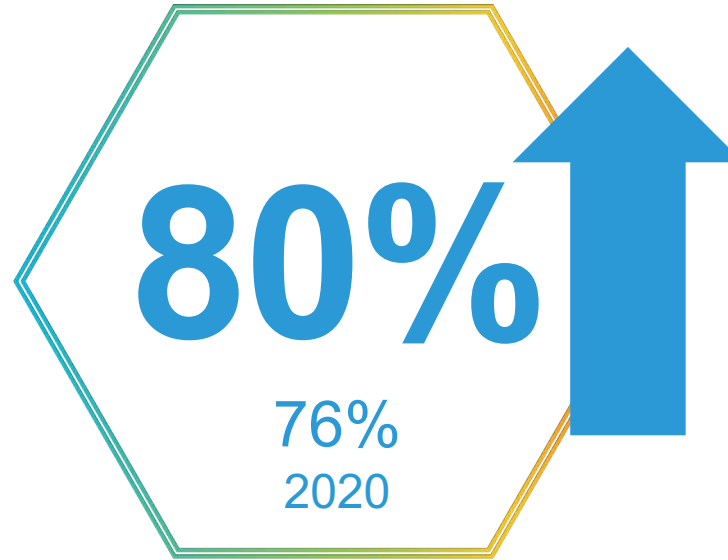




## Consumers are still eager to do more online



Say they will do most or all of their vehicle purchase process online in the future

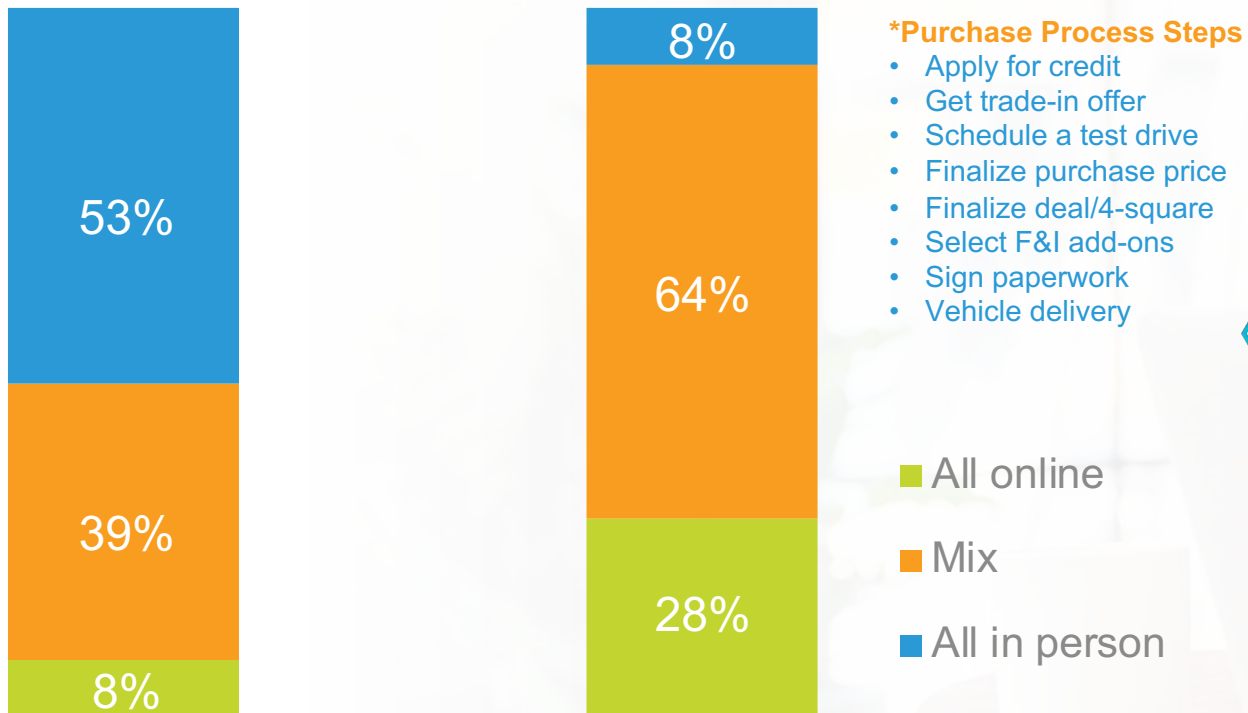


Think it's a good or great idea to buy entirely online

*Arrows indicate significant difference between years at the 95% confidence interval*

# Omnichannel and e-commerce will grow, and buyers will seek out websites with these capabilities

## Method for Completing Purchase Process\*



What buyers did in 2022

What shoppers will likely do next time

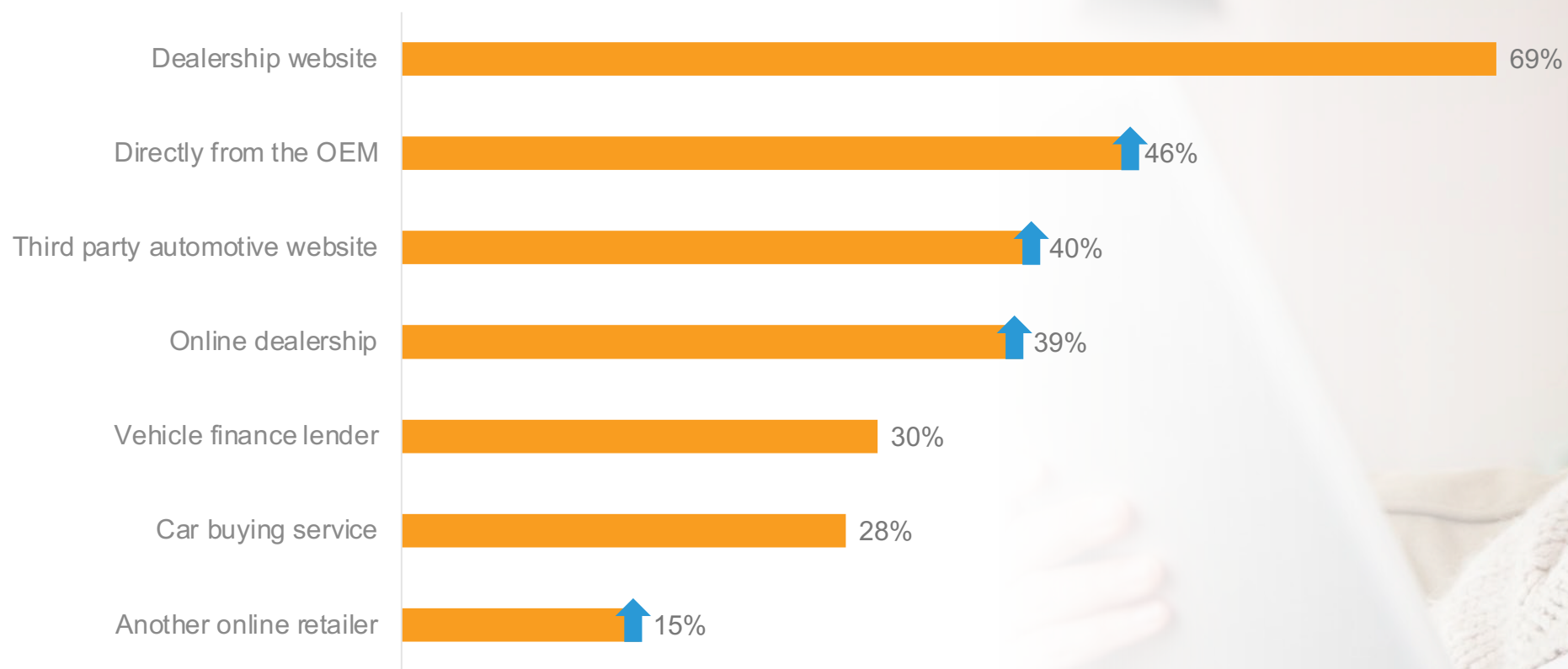
**44%**  
of consumers **only** plan to look on websites that allow them to complete desired vehicle steps online



Dealer website is the top site consumers envision themselves using to purchase a vehicle entirely online in the future, with OEM and third-party sites on the rise

### Sites Consumers Could See Themselves Purchasing/Leasing from Online in the Next 1-2 Years

(Among those who would consider buying completely online in next 1-2 years)



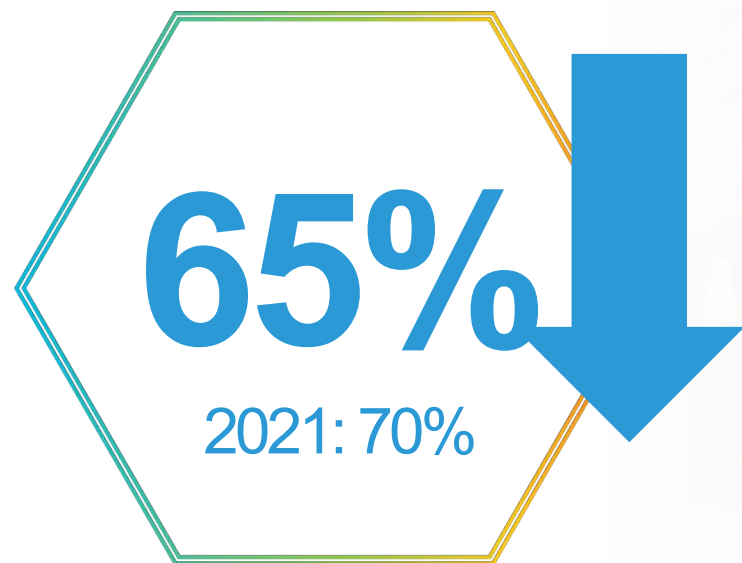
Arrows indicate significant difference between years at the 95% confidence interval

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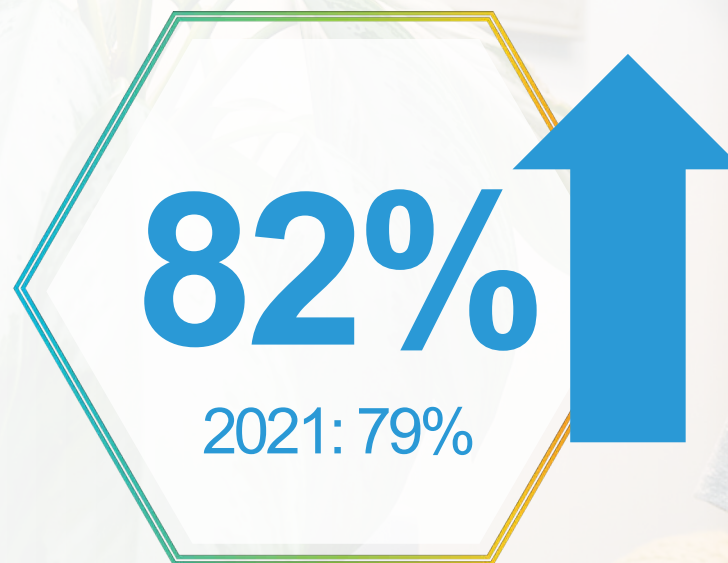
## Trust factors increasingly influence lender selection



## Growing importance of familiarity in lender consideration



% considered 2+ lenders\*



% who say "familiarity" is important in lender consideration\*

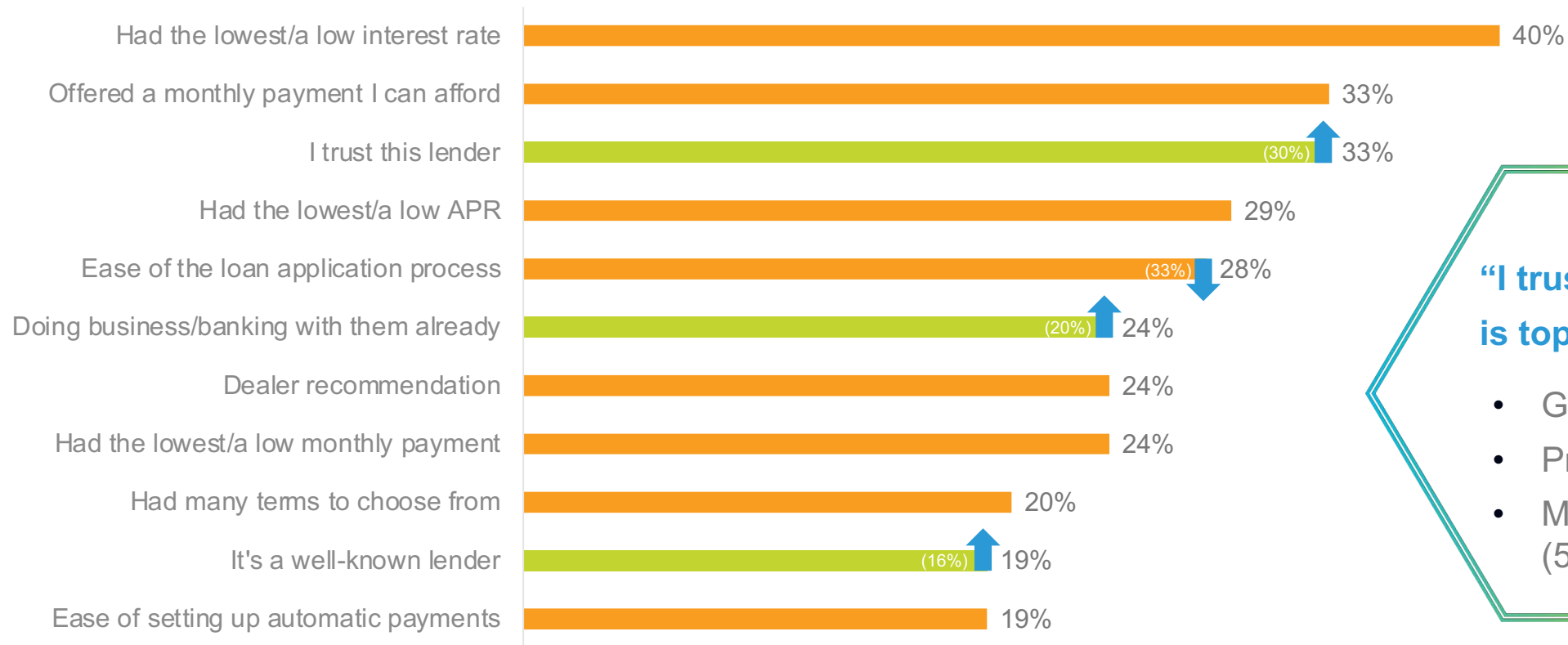
*Arrows indicate significant difference between years at the 95% confidence interval*



# While “Rates” is the top reason for selecting a lender, do not overlook trust factors

## Top Reasons for Choosing Lender

(Among purchasers\*)



**“I trust this lender”  
is top 2 for...**

- Gen Z
- Prime (650+)
- Mostly Digital (51%+ online)

Arrows indicate significant difference between years at the 95% confidence interval



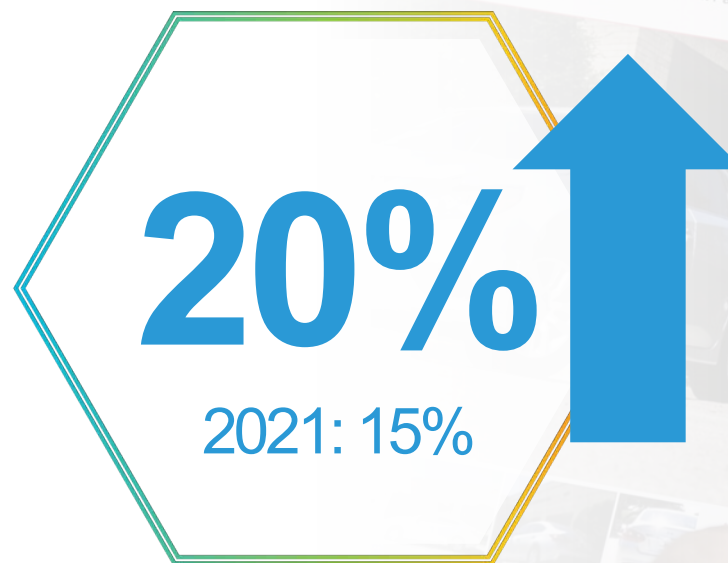
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**Nearly half of buyers are interested  
in using lender websites as a  
vehicle shopping source**

# Growing reliance on websites for financing research



#1 Source for researching financing options  
Among those who researched



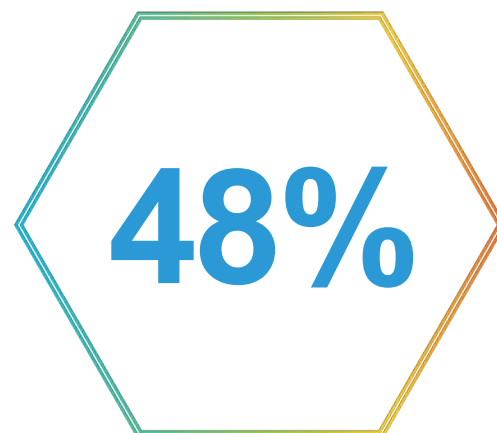
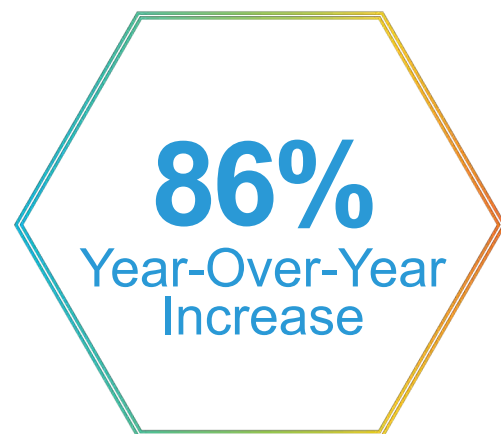
Online **only** research has grown significantly

Arrows indicate significant difference between years at the 95% confidence interval



# Opportunity for lenders to engage directly with buyers online

13% of buyers used a ***lender website*** when shopping for their vehicle purchase



% Interested in  
searching for a vehicle  
on a lender's website



% Open to buying a  
vehicle online from  
lender website



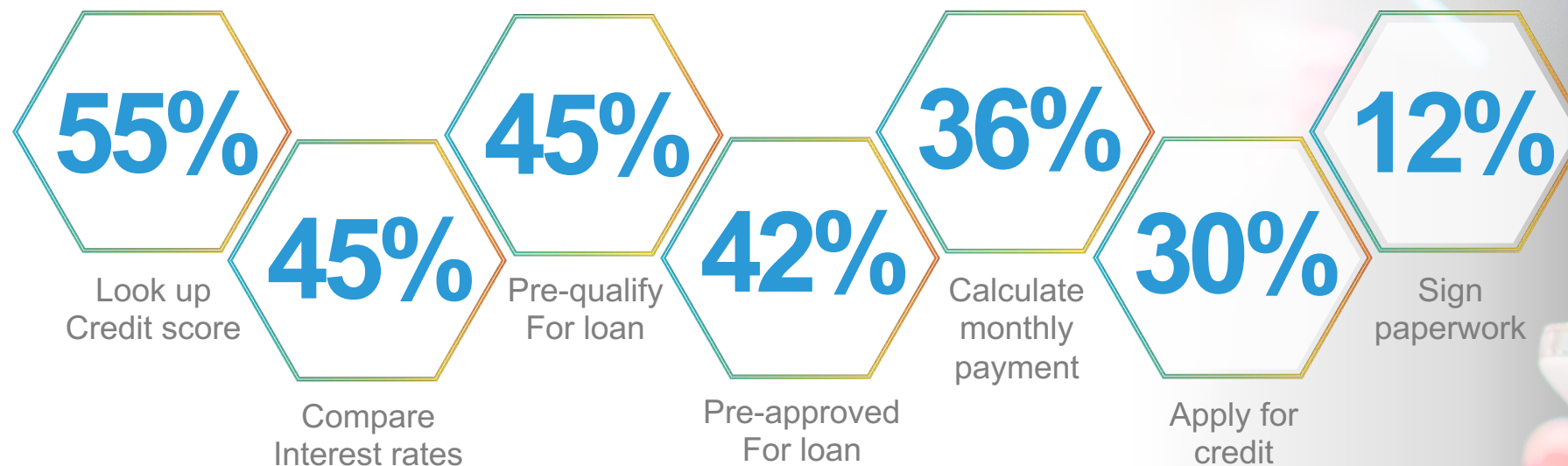


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**Completing all steps of the  
financing journey online save  
2 hours at the dealership**

# For most financing steps, less than half of buyers complete them online today

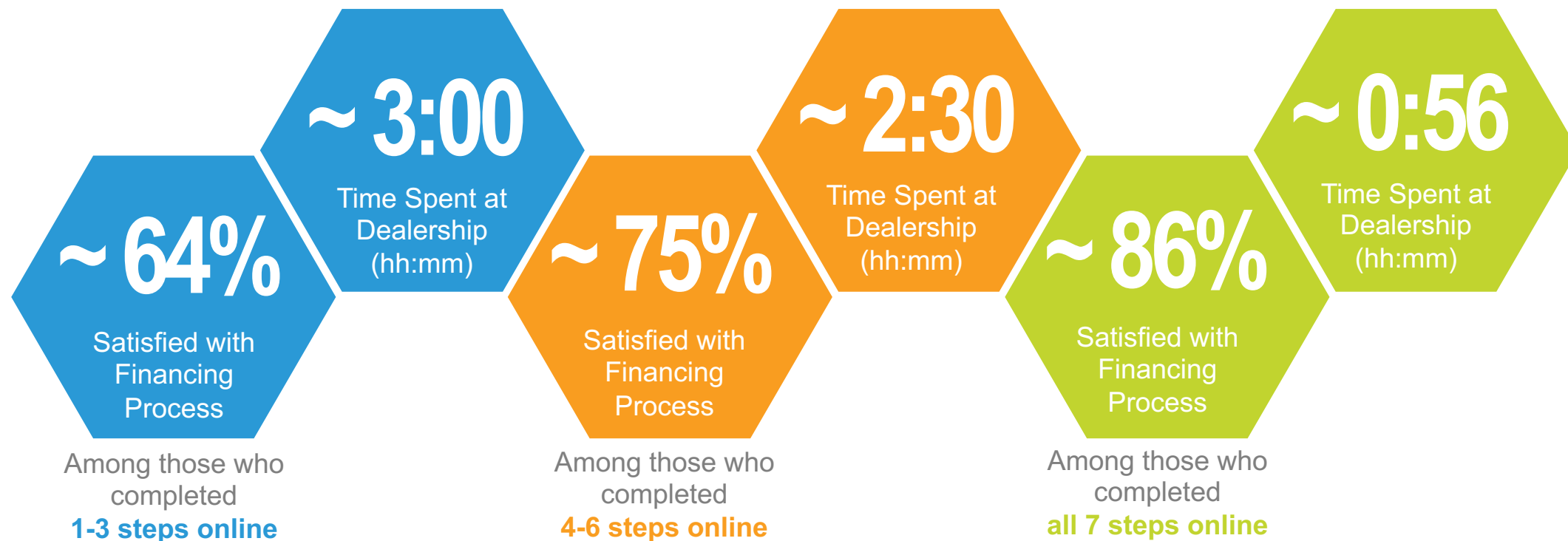
**% Buyers Who Completed Financing Step Online**  
(Among Those Who Did Each Step)





# More steps completed online = higher satisfaction & less time at the dealership

## Impact of Completing More Financing Steps Online (Among Those Who Did Each Step Online)



A decorative graphic in the top left corner featuring several overlapping hexagons in various colors (blue, green, yellow, orange). A large blue number '7' is prominently displayed inside one of the hexagons.

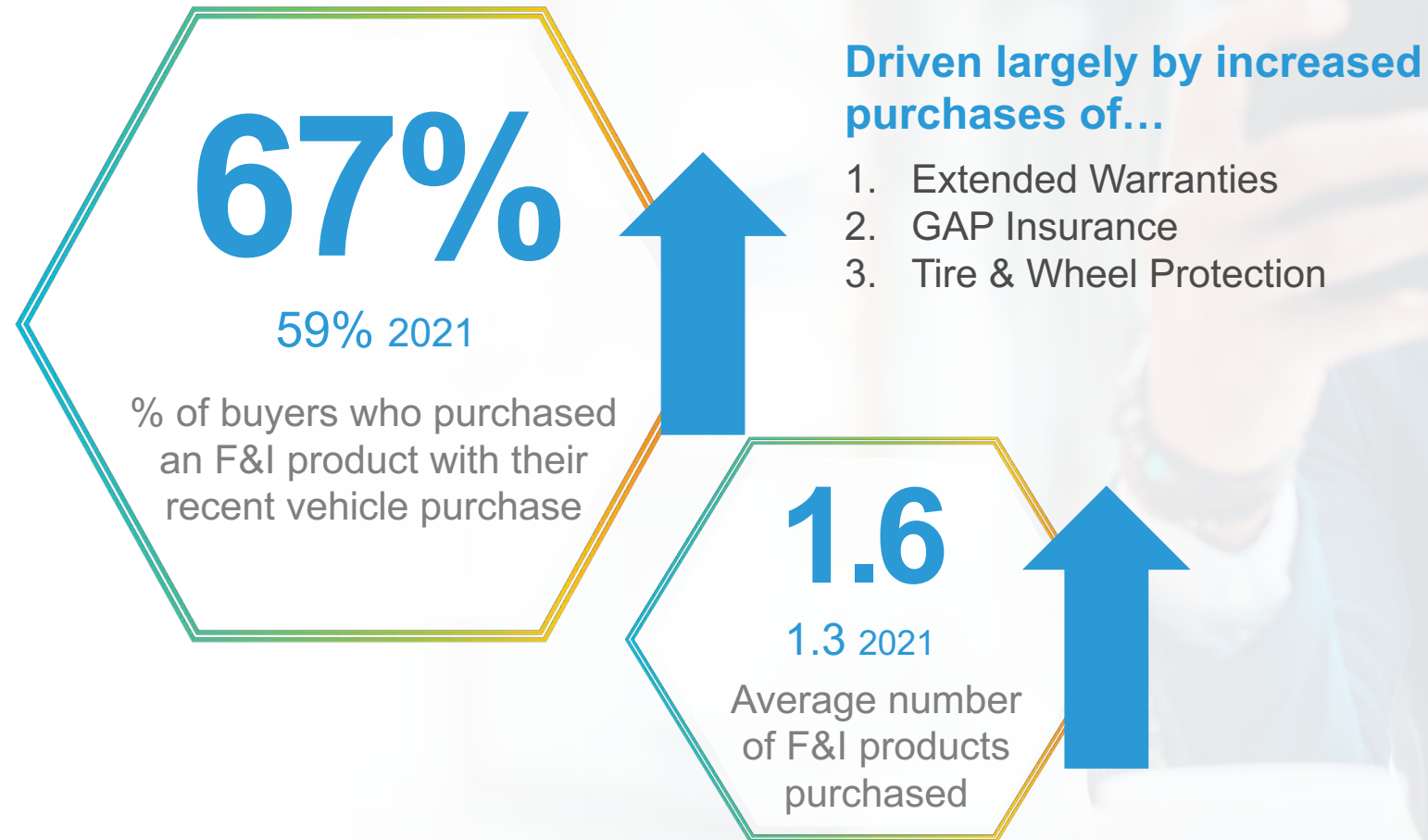
7

**2 in 3 buyers purchased an  
F&I product, increased for  
second consecutive year**





## F&I purchases are on the rise



*Arrows indicate significant difference between years at the 95% confidence interval*



## Research positively impacts F&I purchases

**53%**

% of buyers who  
researched F&I products  
before visiting a  
dealership/retailer

**51%**

**More Likely to Buy**

Impact of research  
on likelihood to  
purchase

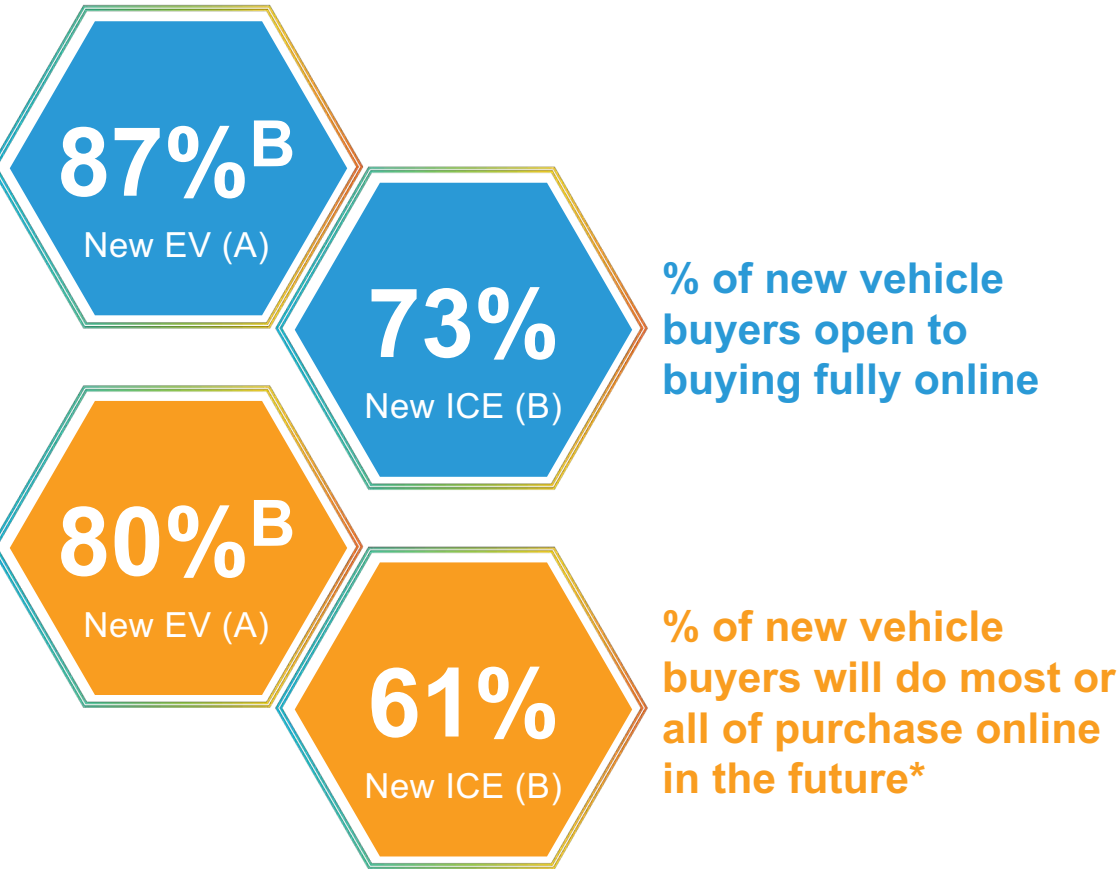




8

**EV buyers purchase online to save time, while new ICE buyers do so to avoid feeling pressured or rushed**

# EV consumers are more digital-focused



Base: New Vehicle Buyers  
Letters indicate significant difference between groups at the 95% confidence interval

## Sites Consumers Could See Themselves Purchasing/Leasing from Online in the Next 1-2 Years





# Shopping sites need to accommodate EV intenders' need for time savings, empowerment and ease

## Top Motivators for Wanting to Complete Steps Online (among new vehicle shoppers)

### New EV

- 1 Able to do it at my convenience
- 2 **Save time/faster to do it myself**
- 3 **Make purchase process easier**
- 4 **I like to feel more in control**

### New ICE

- Avoid feeling pressure or rushed
- Able to do it at my convenience
- To make sure I'm getting the best deal
- Avoid spending time at the dealership



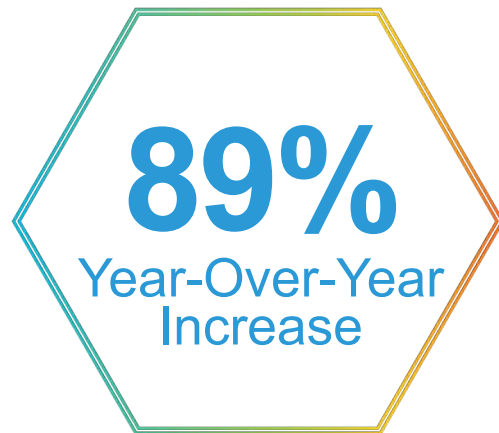
Base: New Vehicle Buyers

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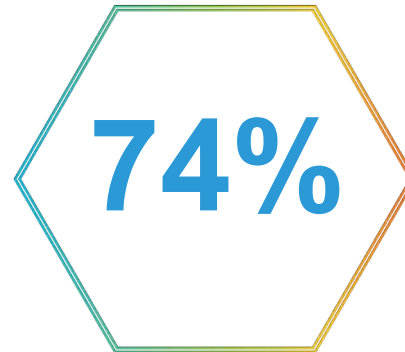
**Nearly 1 in 5 new vehicles  
purchased in 2022 were  
pre-ordered, an 89%  
year-over-year increase**

# There's been tremendous growth in pre-orders

Nearly 1 in 5 new vehicles were pre-ordered in 2022



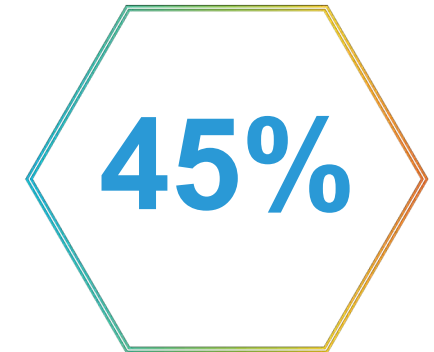
Factors that motivated consumers to pre-order



Ability to order features I want and exclude features I don't want



Willing to wait – don't need a vehicle right away



Limited vehicle inventory

*"I was able to choose exactly what I want, and I got exactly what I wanted when the car delivered. This makes the entire waiting time worth it"*





10

**Buyers think pre-ordering  
a vehicle provides a better  
experience than the  
traditional way**

Buyers tend to be more satisfied with pre-ordering than more traditional experiences

**79%**

More satisfied with pre-order experience compared to buying a vehicle off the dealership lot in the past

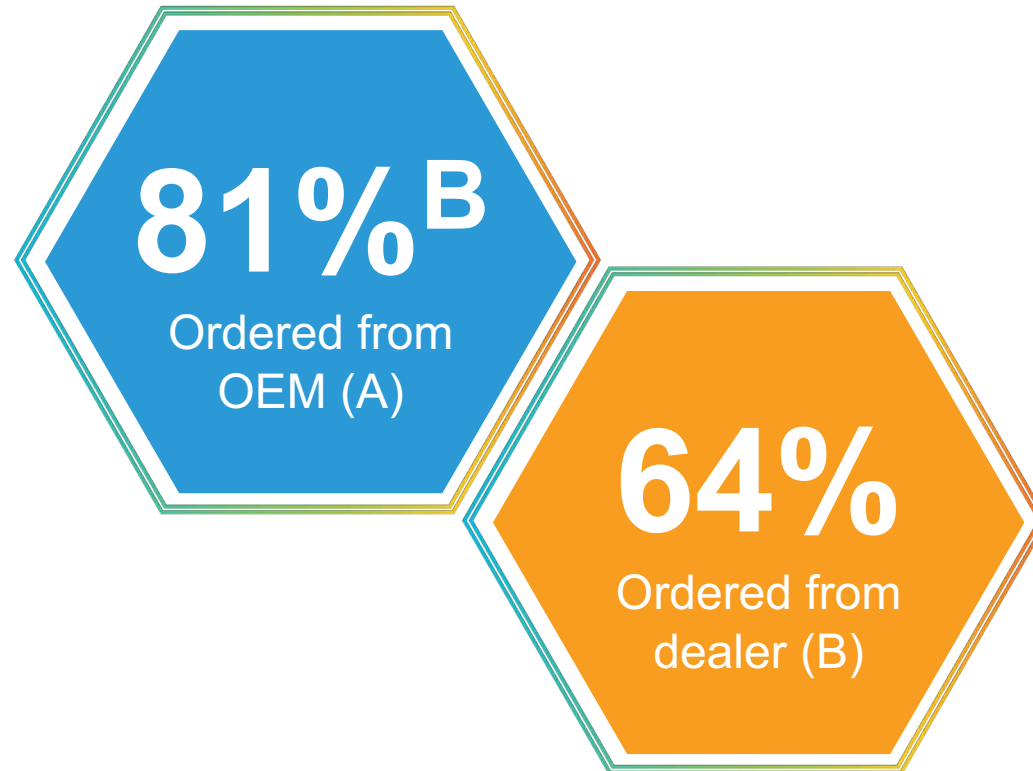
**72%**

Will pre-order again for their next vehicle (Top 2 Box)



# Buyers more satisfied when pre-ordering from OEM sites

## Satisfaction with overall pre-order process



## Those who ordered from the OEM are more likely to:

- 1 Had a shorter waiting period
- 2 Had tracking ability
- 3 Received more touchpoints

Excludes any buyer who purchased from a direct-to-consumer brand (e.g. Tesla, Rivian, Polestar)  
Letters indicate significant difference between groups at the 95% confidence interval



A cluster of several hexagons of varying sizes, each with a thin, multi-colored border (shades of blue, green, yellow, and orange). They are arranged in a non-uniform pattern in the upper left corner of the slide.

# Implications



# 2022 Car Buyer Journey: Implications

