



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cox Automotive Unveils Key Insights into Successful Car Deals in New Study, Drivers of Car Shopping Satisfaction

- The last decade was defined by the introduction and evolution of digital retailing technology, which has put more control into the hands of shoppers.
- Control, transparency, knowledgeable staff and feeling well informed drove vehicle purchase satisfaction in 2025, ultimately giving buyers more confidence and created trust, and resulted in less friction among buyers and dealers.
- Idle or waiting time at the dealership was the top friction point.

ATLANTA, Aug. 26, 2025—[Cox Automotive Inc.](#), today released, the [Drivers of Car Shopping Satisfaction](#), a comprehensive report detailing the emotional journey and satisfaction of car shoppers. The study surveyed more than one thousand new- and used-vehicle buyers and reveals significant improvements in the car buying experience over the past decade.

The study surveyed 740 new-vehicle buyers and 350 used-vehicle buyers regarding vehicles purchased in the past 12 months from a franchise dealership. The report also includes responses from 256 franchise dealers relating to improvements to customer satisfaction and the business outcomes from those efforts.

Shopper satisfaction with car buying rose eight percentage points, from 60% in 2016 to 68% in 2024. Most shoppers, 81%, associated positive emotions such as excitement, hopefulness, empowerment and confidence with their purchase experience.

This study affirms the four pillars that drive car shopper satisfaction: knowledgeable and supportive staff, transparency, feeling well-informed, and being in control. Dealerships that intentionally deliver on these specific emotional and practical needs of their customers see two times more efficiency and two times more profitability than those who do not.

Key Findings of the Study:

- **In-Store Experience Remains Crucial:** Despite the rise of digital retailing, the majority of vehicle purchase journeys still occur in-store, particularly the final aspects of the deal.
- **Emotional Experience is Improving:** Since 2016, the buying process has become more positive, especially during traditionally challenging purchase steps, such as negotiating price and trade-in value and securing financing terms.
- **Online to Offline Buyers Feel More Positive:** Buyers who transition from online to offline have a smoother, more positive experience with greater feelings of control and can be attributed to better integrated dealer platforms.
- **Opportunities for Improvement:** Convenience, personalization, and stress reduction remain areas for continued focus, particularly among Gen Z and used car buyers.

- **Customer Service Matters:** Excellent customer service significantly boosts loyalty and the likelihood of returning for service.

Emotional Dips Along Purchase Journey

The report highlights growing positivity throughout the car buying journey, with significant improvements in satisfaction and control, such as when shoppers engage with dealership staff and compare vehicle and payment. However, some emotional dips remain, particularly during trade-in appraisals, where shoppers feel disappointed, and when evaluating finance and insurance products, where shoppers feel overwhelmed and confused.

The top five most stressful points in the car buyer's journey were waiting/idle time at the dealership; selecting/purchasing F&I products; determining what one can afford; finalizing the deal terms; and getting a trade-in offer and applying for and finalizing financing were ranked equally low.

"While the car buying experience is not yet a perfect science, dealers will want to focus on areas where buyer needs are not being fully met to create a less stressful, more convenient sales process that is tailored to their customers", said Lori Wittman, President of Retail Solutions at Cox Automotive. "To alleviate these negative feelings, dealers can provide accurate appraisals, clear F&I product transparency, and personalized recommendations."

Digital Retailing Empowers Car Buyers

Dealer adoption of digital retailing tools has grown steadily over the past three years and has empowered customers, enabling them to start their purchase process online, explore options, and customize payments without staff intervention. This shift has led to enhanced pricing transparency, better communication, and a seamless transition from online to in-store processes.

Customer Satisfaction Equals Better Business

Dealers are increasingly focusing on educating customers, offering transparent pricing, and providing digital retailing tools to improve customer satisfaction. These strategies are crucial for building trust, loyalty, and competitive advantage.

For a comprehensive breakdown of the top satisfaction best practices being implemented by winning dealerships and more insights, download the full ebook, *The 4 Key Drivers of Shopper Satisfaction*: <https://www.coxautoinc.com/retail/drivers-of-shopper-satisfaction/>.

About Cox Automotive

Cox Automotive is the world's largest automotive services and technology provider. Fueled by the largest breadth of first-party data fed by 2.3 billion online interactions a year, Cox Automotive tailors leading solutions for car shoppers, auto manufacturers, dealers, lenders and fleets. The company has 29,000+ employees on five continents and a portfolio of industry-leading brands that include Autotrader®, Kelley Blue Book®, Manheim®, vAuto®, Dealertrack®, NextGear Capital™, CentralDispatch® and FleetNet America®. Cox Automotive is a subsidiary of Cox Enterprises Inc., a privately owned, Atlanta-based company with \$23 billion in annual revenue. Visit [coxautoinc.com](https://www.coxautoinc.com) or connect via [@CoxAutomotive](#) on X, [CoxAutoInc](#) on Facebook or [Cox-Automotive-Inc](#) on LinkedIn.

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