

# High Gear

How today's car consumer navigates the auto buyer journey



Today's auto shoppers are more patient, open, and engaged than ever before. They enter the auto journey with a willingness to be wowed and won over by multiple makes and models, as opposed to hard-set rules and loyalties. They prefer to take their time with their decision.

Consumers on Snapchat accentuate this trend more than auto brands might realize.<sup>1</sup> Compared to Non-Snapchatters, Snapchatters take more test drives and are more likely to visit multiple dealerships and consider a broader set of auto brands.<sup>1</sup>

We teamed up with location data company Factual to examine data across the auto buyer journey and see how today's shopper navigates their path to purchase.

**Here's what we found.**



# Auto shoppers are taking more time to review their options.

Most car buyers are undecided as they start the shopping process, a far cry from the days of putting one make and model ahead of the pack due to brand loyalty or legacy. Without preconceived notions of what they're going to buy, today's shopper is willing to spend more time info-gathering and testing out different options to find the right one. 59% are open to considering multiple vehicles.<sup>2</sup>

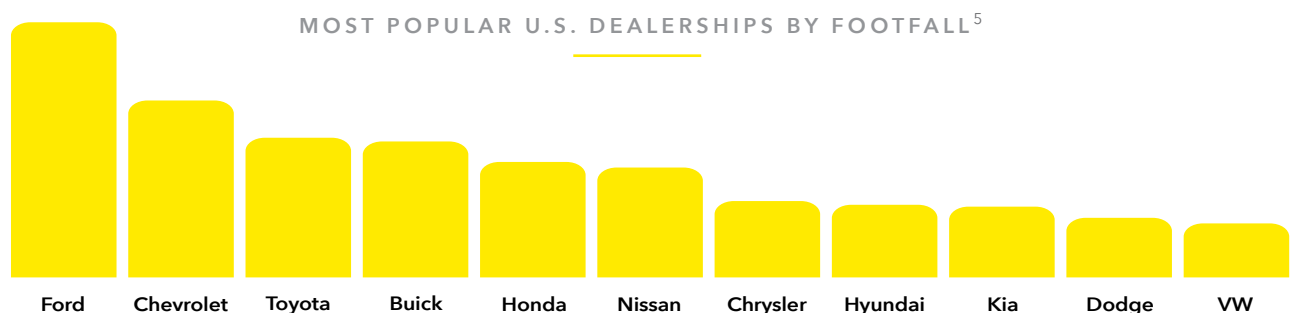
For many shoppers, their journey is increasingly digital. **The average car buyer spends 61% of their shopping activity researching online.**<sup>2</sup> Auto brands have taken notice of digital's growing role in the shopper journey. Digital spend across the auto industry is expected to hit \$15.9B this year.<sup>3</sup>

Most tellingly, car consumers spend more than half their research time (56%) on their phone<sup>4</sup>, which means they likely have a smart consultant with them at all times, even when they're visiting a dealership.



# Ford has America's most frequently visited dealerships... but it has competition.

When car consumers enter a dealership, their journey kicks into high gear as they start to consider their vehicular choices more seriously. Using dealership footfall as a proxy for consideration, Factual found Ford has wide appeal across the U.S., with its dealerships seeing more footfall than any other.<sup>5</sup> Among Snapchatters, though, it has some competition:<sup>6</sup>



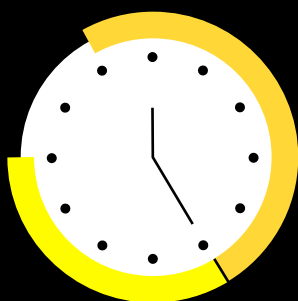
# For some brands, their strongest competition comes from within.

Buyers may not have hard and fast rules about the make and model vehicles they'll consider, but they may like to shop within a particular auto brand's portfolio if they can help it.

For four brands (Chrysler, Honda, Toyota, Volkswagen), their #1 competitor was a brand in their automotive family, many of which were higher end. In the case of BMW, the top competitive dealership is owned by the original brand.<sup>5</sup>

Here's a look at each brand's stiffest competition:

	TOP COMPETITOR	OTHER COMPETITORS (in footfall order, highest to lowest)
BMW	MINI	Porsche, Jaguar, Mercedes, LandRover
CHRYSLER	RAM	Jeep, Fiat, GMC, Dodge
HONDA	ACURA	Volkswagen, Nissan, Mazda, Hyundai
TOYOTA	LEXUS	Hyundai, Volkswagen, Nissan, Honda
VOLKSWAGEN	AUDI	Porsche, Mazda, Subaru, Fiat



For Snapchatters, the prime days to visit dealerships are on Friday and Saturday. On **Friday**, Snapchatters tend to visit in the evening (from 5pm to close), whereas **Saturday** sees highest visitation during the afternoon (between 11am and 5pm).<sup>6</sup> The onset of the weekend may give them the time they need to engage this critical step of the buyer journey.

# Today's shopper considers their next auto purchase holistically.

The brands that interest shoppers intersect with a greater set of lifestyle choices. Auto brands should consider how other purchase behaviors influence a prospective buyer's auto decision.

Here are a few examples:

## Chevrolet shoppers

According to Factual data, Chevrolet shoppers are also interested in the outdoors, but the more idyllic variety.<sup>5</sup>



**+37%** more likely to shop at Land's End  
**+13%** more likely to shop at L.L. Bean

## Honda shoppers

Factual's data shows Honda shoppers favor the convenience and deals they find at malls, for example.<sup>5</sup> The Snapchatters who frequent Honda dealerships further exemplify this trend. Compared to the average Snapchatter, they're more likely to be:<sup>7</sup>



**2.7x**  
Department Store Shoppers



**2.5x**  
Big Box Shoppers



**2.5x**  
Fast Food Junkies

## Infiniti shoppers

Buyers interested in Infiniti like to wear their luxury on their sleeves.<sup>5</sup>



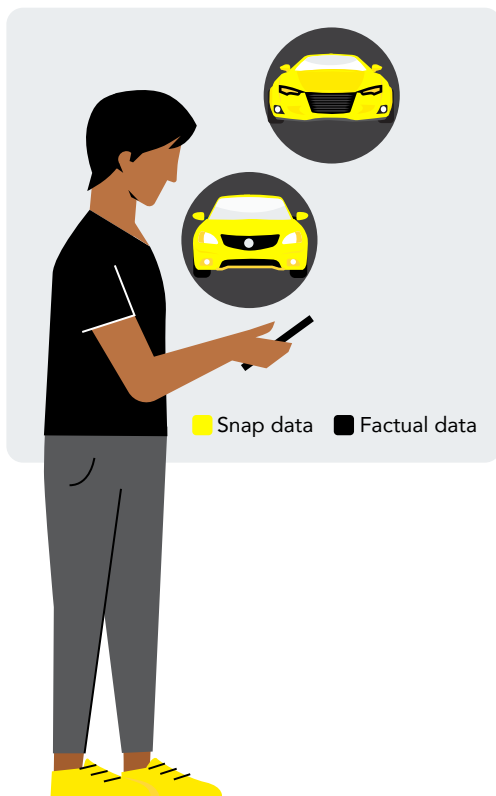
**+74%**  
Visit Aldo



**+37%**  
Shop Chanel



**+51%**  
Visit Dior



## Volvo shoppers

Volvo shoppers lead active lifestyles indoors and outdoors. They like a good home improvement project and visit stores such as:<sup>5</sup>



**+170%**  
Ikea



**+74%**  
Pier 1 Imports



**+41%**  
Ashley Furniture  
Homestore

For Snapchatters considering Volvo, they're more likely to be...<sup>7</sup>



**3x**  
Cycling Enthusiasts



**2.2x**  
Yoga Enthusiasts

...though, they're not above indulging.



**2.3x**  
Candy & Sweets Lovers



**2.1x**  
Burger Lovers

## BMW shoppers

BMW shoppers on Snapchat prioritize more family-oriented experiences. They're more likely to be:<sup>7</sup>



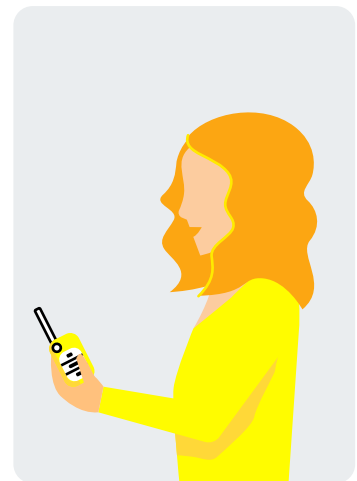
**3.1x**  
Toy Shoppers



**2.6x**  
Department Store  
Shoppers

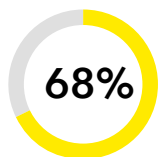
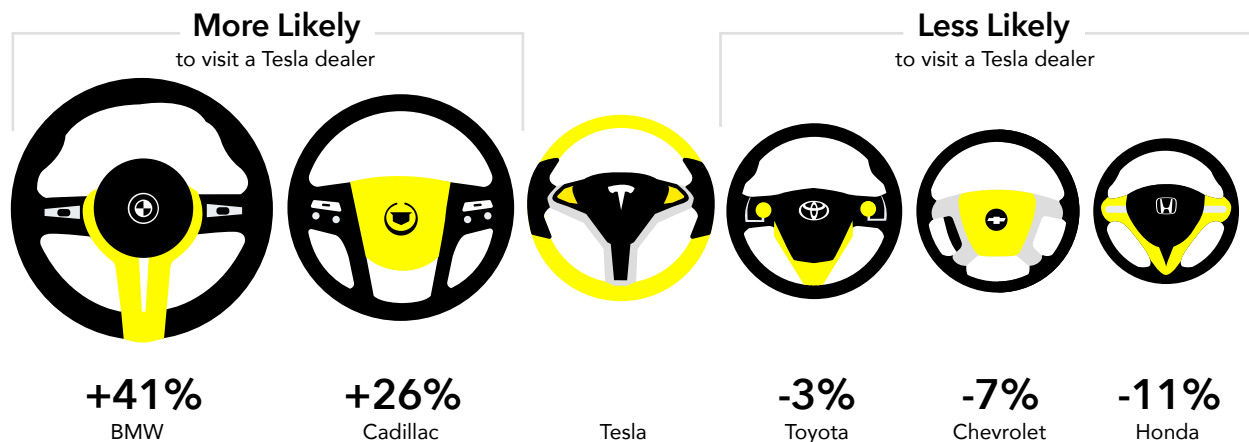


**2.5x**  
Family Travelers



# Is Tesla the future for today's shopper?

As of now, Tesla, the auto industry's favorite disrupter<sup>8</sup>, looks as though it may appeal to a particularly more affluent buyer, according to Factual:



The Elon Musk-led manufacturer does, however, capture the interest of millennial Snapchatters in big numbers. **68% of Snapchatters who have visited Tesla are age 18-24.**<sup>6</sup>

Interested in more insights like these? Visit [factual.com](https://factual.com) or contact the team here to learn more about how location data can uncover audience insights to help you better understand and reach consumers.

For more on reaching and converting Snapchatters who visit your brick-and-mortar locations, use **Snapchat's Audience Insights** tool to curate impactful marketing strategies informed by location technology.

1 2017 Kantar Vermeer study commissioned by Snap Inc.

2 2018 Car Buyer Journey, Autotrader & Kelley Bluebook

3 US Automotive Industry Digital Ad Spend, eMarketer 2019

4 J.D. Power 2017 New Autosshopper Study

5 Factual examined aggregated, normalized dealership visitation data from September 2017 - August 2018; visits to multi-brand dealerships count for all brands within the dealership

6 Snap Inc. Internal U.S. Location Data; Snapchatters 13+; September 2018 - February 2019; visits to multi-brand dealerships count for all brands within the dealership

7 Snap Inc. Foot Traffic Insights tool; December 2018 - March 2019

8 "How Tesla Could Dominate The Auto Industry," Forbes, Oct. 2018



