



Automotive Reputation Report

Contents

Executive Summary	3
The Auto Industry Leads in Reputation Score, But Risks Exist for Brands and Dealerships	4
Why This Report Matters	7
Dispelling the Myth	8
Scope of Analysis	10
What's Your Reputation Score?	10
Key Findings	12
Reputation Scores for Largest U.S. Brands	13
Reputation Scores for Large U.S. Dealer Groups	17
A Deeper Dive Into Reputation Score Influencers	27
Brand-Level Customer Feedback	34
Final Thoughts	37

Executive Summary

Maintaining a competitive advantage against the backdrop of ever-changing online customer sentiment requires constant vigilance: Dealers must tune into customer feedback and use it to continually improve operations and the customer experience, or watch their ratings and reviews tank.

Over the past several years, the automotive industry has made a real effort to manage online customer sentiment, and it has had a real impact. Our research shows that when they listen to and act on online consumer feedback, they are rewarded with more reviews, better online sentiment and more engagement. This data is the foundation of the Reputation Score and has a direct link to revenue.

Our research revealed that a higher Reputation Score results in higher sales: Dealers see approximately 1% increase in sales for every 30-40 point increase in Reputation Score — up to a 10% difference between dealerships that are effectively managing their reputations and those that aren't.

The 2019 Auto Reputation Report provides OEM brands with detailed insights into their dealerships' strengths and weaknesses, uncovering opportunities for operational improvements based on insights from analyzing unstructured data in customer reviews, social media comments, surveys and more.



69%

Automotive has the highest response rate to negative feedback compared to other industries

The Auto Industry Leads in Reputation Score, but Risks Exist for Brands and Dealerships

With its incredible growth over the last century and its millions-strong workforce around the world, the auto industry is a major player in the global economy.

Automotive has a long history of transformation through technological advancements. Now more than ever, the industry is faced with the need to keep up and gain a competitive advantage in the digital space. This requires that OEM brands and tier 3 retail dealers adapt to the preferred ways customers now search and shop for cars. Online reviews, business listings and social media now play a much larger role in the research that goes into a customer's decision about where to purchase a car or service their vehicles.

Maintaining a competitive advantage against this backdrop of ever-changing online customer sentiment requires constant vigilance: Dealers must tune into customer feedback and use it to continually improve operations and the customer experience—or watch their ratings and reviews tank.

Over the past several years, those in the automotive industry have made a real effort to manage online customer sentiment, and it shows in the dealership's and OEM brand's Reputation Score — a comprehensive index of their online presence. They see that when they listen to and act on online consumer feedback, they are rewarded with more reviews, better online sentiment and more engagement. Ultimately, this data is the foundation of the Reputation Score and has a direct link to revenue.

In fact, our research has revealed that a higher Reputation Score results in higher sales: Dealers see approximately 1% increase in sales for every 30-40 point increase in Reputation Score.



Reputation Score is a vital measurement for Hendrick Automotive Group that's discussed weekly in direct calls between every General Manager and our Executive team. The reputation of our dealerships reflects on Mr. Hendrick himself and on our brand.

Using the Reputation.com platform, we can monitor Reputation Score for each dealership and for the organization as a whole, drill down into the specifics for unprecedented insight into the service we're delivering, and take immediate action on what we learn. That helps us continue to improve the customer experience and inspire customer loyalty and advocacy in the communities we serve.

Ed Brown

CEO, Hendrick Automotive Group

Reputation Score to Sales Volume

+10%

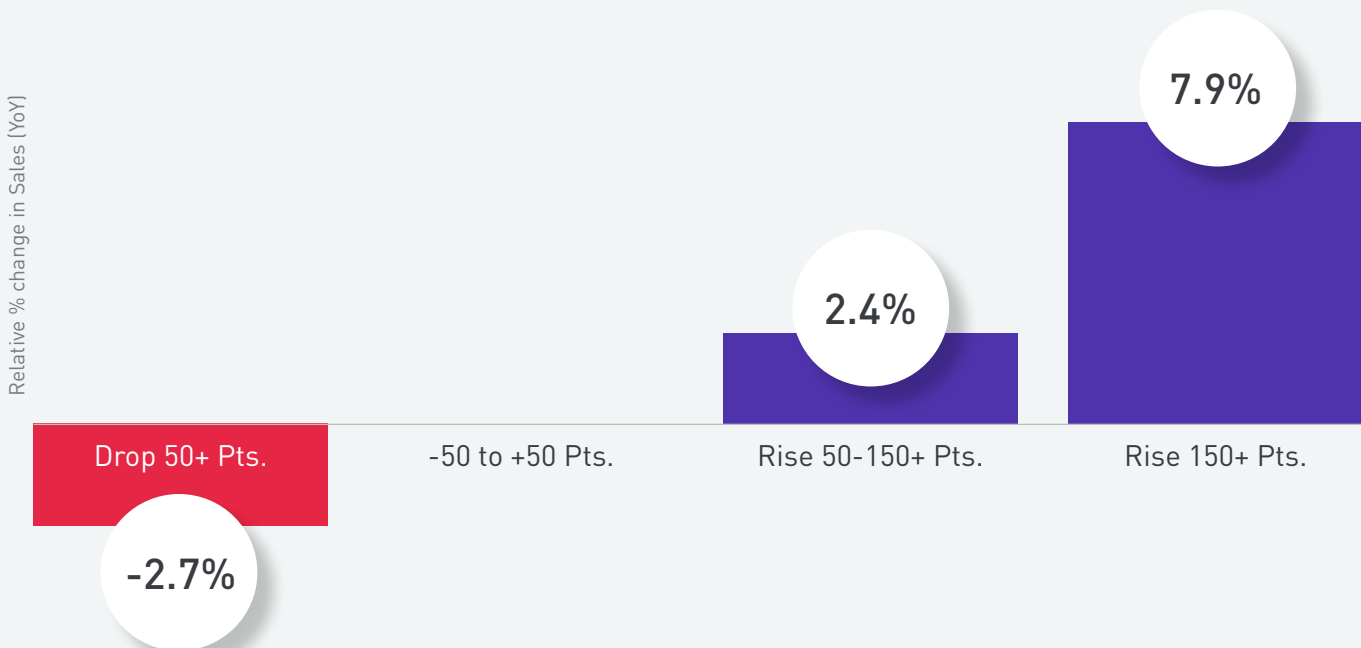
INCREASE IN SALES VOLUME

Our findings show dealers that effectively manage their reputations can see up to a 10% increase in average sales volume compared to those who are not. The opposite is true as well, where dealers who have a drop in their Reputation Scores versus their competition see a corresponding drop in sales.

Average Sales Volume Change

Score Change vs. Similar Dealers.

Based on aggregate ROI studies of some of the major OEMs.



Why This Report Matters

The 2019 Auto Reputation Report provides OEM brands with detailed insights into their dealerships' strengths and weaknesses, uncovering opportunities for operational improvements based on insights from analyzing unstructured data in customer reviews, social media comments, surveys and more. This report reveals which auto brands and dealerships lead the pack on key dimensions of the auto-buying experience — as expressed in the unfiltered voice of the customer. The findings underscore the importance of reputation management as a key element of a dealership's consumer experience strategy.

This report covers:

- How an increase in a dealership's Reputation Score translates to increases in sales
- The relationship between online review factors and Reputation Score
- Specific reviews and ratings reflecting consumer sentiment of top auto brands' dealerships based on their experience with sales, service and a variety of other categories
- The importance of reputation management as a core element of a dealership's customer experience strategy

While automotive achieved the highest overall Reputation Score as an industry, many challenges are presented for each operating store location on a daily basis.

With 95% of vehicle buyers using digital sources to conduct research and 60% of automotive-related searches happening on a mobile device, it is critical that you manage the experience customers have with your brand at each point throughout their purchase journey. Proactive communication is how to win business in the digital age, and lack of engagement with consumers on social channels and search engines may lead them to consider a competing dealer with better reviews and responses.

95%

OF VEHICLE BUYERS USE DIGITAL SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

60%

OF AUTOMOTIVE SEARCHES HAPPEN ON A MOBILE DEVICE

— [The auto dealer's guide to moving metal in a digital world](#)

Dispelling the Myth

With the data from this report, OEM brands and their dealerships are better positioned to bridge the gap between automotive marketing and customer experience. They can listen, understand and act on all feedback channels, manage and address their online reputation, analyze consumer feedback to improve operations and processes, and increase consumer engagement. This information enables dealers to implement corrective actions where appropriate to drive increased sales and profits, as well as standardize processes based on what's working well across their locations.

One of the most surprising findings of our report?

Our findings dispel the myth of the cliché “car salesman.” In fact, auto dealerships have better overall customer sentiment and higher Reputation Scores than the other major industries Reputation.com examined. In particular, auto dealers have higher average online sentiment and are among the most responsive to online feedback.

Although auto has done a decent job as an industry, dealers and OEM brands shouldn't become complacent.

Reputation Scores can change quickly in the Feedback Economy, so consistent monitoring, responding and engagement are essential to successfully maintain a presence with consumers and proactively mitigate potential problems.

Significant revenue benefits are associated with a higher Reputation Score, meaning dealerships who invest in regularly monitoring and optimizing the experience at each touchpoint along the customer journey gain the strongest advantage.

Automotive vs. Other Industries

Automotive has the highest average online sentiment and is most responsive to online feedback.

Industry	Reputation Score	Star Rating Last 12 months	Reviews per Location Last 12 months	Response Rate to Negative Feedback
Auto Dealers	607	4.4	263	69%
Hospitality	605	4.2	609	23%
Dining	584	4.0	444	66%
Real Estate	571	4.0	45	70%
Retail	552	4.2	254	9%
Healthcare	401	3.6	14	48%
Finance	367	3.0	5	15%

Scope of Analysis

Reputation.com analyzed online data covering more than 16,000 dealerships in the United States from reviews, listings, social media, search results and customer engagements from sources such as Google, Facebook, Cars.com, Edmunds and other sources. By leveraging Reputation.com's proprietary machine learning algorithms and natural-language processing technology, we drilled into the actual customer feedback to understand what auto consumers are focused on and their overall sentiment. We separated the dealership feedback into overall, sales-specific and service-specific to understand consumer sentiment around each.

16K+

REPUTATION.COM ANALYZED ONLINE DATA COVERING MORE THAN 16,000 DEALERSHIPS IN THE UNITED STATES

What's Your Reputation Score?

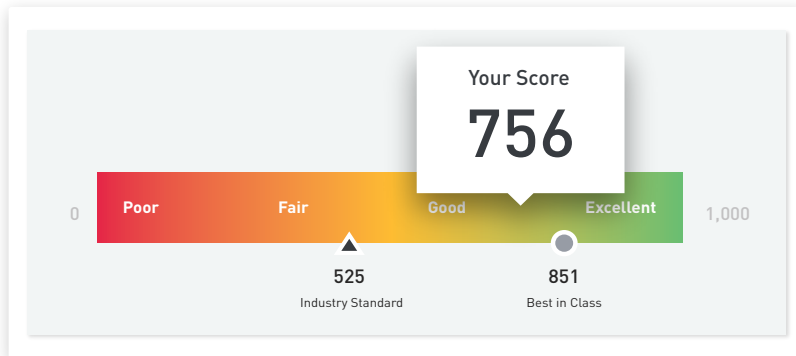
Measured on a scale of 0 to 1,000, Reputation.com's Reputation Score is a comprehensive index of the digital presence of business locations in more than 70 industries. It is calculated based on multiple factors measuring overall review sentiment across review sites, business listings accuracy and other indicators that reflect the consumers' car-buying experiences and opinions about dealerships — online and onsite.

The Reputation Score is comprised of nine elements:

- Star average
- Review volume
- Review recency
- Review spread
- Search impression
- Review response
- Listing accuracy
- Social impression
- Review length

Each element has internal factors that are calibrated independently (e.g. more recent and prominent reviews have a greater impact on star averages than older reviews). Once each of these measurements are calibrated, the overall Reputation Score is calculated.

In the auto industry, Reputation Score is the most comprehensive measure of a dealership's online reputation, helping OEM brands and retail dealer locations determine where improvements must be made.



Auto dealerships must look into their overall Reputation Score to ensure they're paying attention to all the factors that comprise it.

Some dealerships still struggle in certain areas of their business, and it's reflected in their Reputation Score and overall success. In reality, dealerships have only scratched the surface with owning their online reputation. For example, while a dealership may have a satisfactory Reputation Score thanks to its focus on collecting and regularly responding to reviews, it may be leaving additional Reputation Score points on the table by ignoring an inaccurate business listing or not engaging with customers through social media. All of these factors affect the customer journey, and the public's perception of your brand, and it's critical to monitor, engage and evaluate at each customer touch point.

Key Findings

The following tables show the 28 largest OEM brands ranked by Reputation Score. Highlights include:

- Lexus has the highest average Reputation Score, along with the most consistent retail dealer body of locations pushing Reputation Scores above 700.
- Lincoln is generating the most favorable consumer sentiment within the industry.
- Consumer review volumes are the greatest for Toyota retail dealers amongst all OEM brands.
- Tesla had the poorest response rate to consumer reviews.
- Top dealer groups include AutoNation, Hendrick Automotive, and Ford and Lincoln. They represent 40% of the top 100 dealerships.
- It is well known that Google is the leader in search. Our findings conclude Google also dominates in online review volume, further reinforcing the need for brands and dealers to become committed to managing their online reputation.



28

Largest OEM brands
analyzed

Reputation Scores for Largest U.S. Brands

Reputation Scores for Largest U.S. Brands

Scores can be analyzed down to the retail dealership level, meaning the largest opportunity for OEMs, brands and dealers is to work collectively to improve reputation management efforts at each location.

Brand	Average Reputation Score per Dealership	Reviews per Locations (Last 12 Months)	Average Location Rating (Last 12 Months)	Recent Response Rate (Negative Feedback)
Lexus	672	311	4.49	48%
Nissan	663	353	4.38	55%
Acura	654	222	4.47	46%
Subaru	647	269	4.43	56%
Lincoln	642	168	4.45	40%
BMW	641	284	4.42	48%
Buick	639	153	4.35	52%
Toyota	630	423	4.38	50%
Mercedes-Benz	628	260	4.41	47%
Chevrolet	627	180	4.32	47%
Ford	617	213	4.35	42%
Kia	613	226	4.24	39%
GMC	612	119	4.3	48%
Audi	612	180	4.39	43%
Honda	604	321	4.37	40%
Infiniti	602	164	4.39	40%
Ram	593	286	4.2	46%
Jeep	584	244	4.21	40%
Volkswagen	582	164	4.25	41%
Dodge	581	239	4.21	40%
Chrysler	580	238	4.21	40%
Mazda	573	135	4.3	37%
Cadillac	572	108	4.34	57%
Hyundai	565	193	4.26	38%
Land Rover	561	102	4.27	48%
Volvo	550	85	4.3	35%
Tesla	549	96	4.47	1%
Mitsubishi	512	108	4.11	24%

Data Factored into the Reputation Score

Many factors go into the Reputation Score, including listings accuracy, social sentiment and search impressions.

Brand	Visibility Score	Engagement Score	Sentiment Score	Locations w/ Score <500	Locations w/ Score >700
Lexus	65%	68%	79%	8%	49%
Nissan	70%	72%	72%	6%	38%
Acura	61%	64%	76%	12%	39%
Subaru	66%	74%	73%	10%	36%
Lincoln	58%	65%	79%	15%	43%
BMW	63%	66%	74%	11%	33%
Buick	60%	71%	74%	11%	33%
Toyota	65%	66%	71%	14%	32%
Mercedes-Benz	63%	66%	73%	14%	34%
Chevrolet	59%	66%	73%	13%	30%
Ford	59%	64%	73%	19%	32%
Kia	62%	56%	69%	14%	23%
GMC	54%	67%	74%	17%	27%
Audi	56%	63%	74%	19%	33%
Honda	59%	58%	71%	19%	27%
Infiniti	56%	62%	72%	18%	29%
Ram	64%	64%	65%	18%	17%
Jeep	60%	59%	66%	20%	16%
Volkswagen	56%	58%	68%	22%	20%
Dodge	59%	59%	66%	21%	16%
Chrysler	59%	58%	66%	21%	16%
Mazda	51%	56%	71%	26%	20%
Cadillac	49%	77%	75%	27%	25%
Hyundai	54%	56%	68%	28%	21%
Land Rover	49%	65%	70%	29%	18%
Volvo	44%	57%	73%	36%	22%
Tesla	44%	3%	76%	31%	7%
Mitsubishi	46%	42%	66%	43%	11%

Reputation Score Results

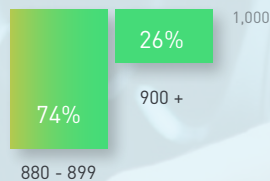
For the Top-Rated Large Dealer Groups and Top 100 Dealerships

Average Reputation Score for top rated dealer groups and dealership

891



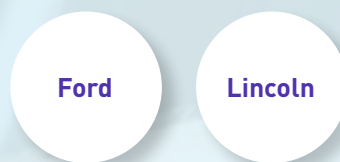
Reputation Scores for the top 100 Dealerships in the U.S. range from 880 to 930 points.



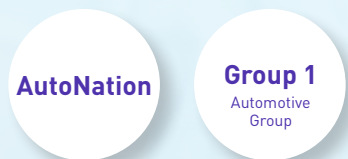
TOP RANKING



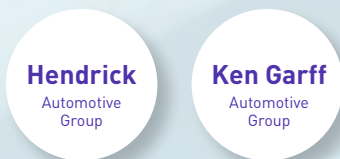
Lexus and Nissan ranked in the top two spots at the brand level, and 4 Lexus dealers and 6 Nissan dealers rank among the Top 100 Dealership Reputation Scores.



Ford & Lincoln have a total of 42 dealerships on the Top 100 list, with 6 ranking in the Top 10.



The top 2 publicly held Dealer Groups include AutoNation and Group 1.



The top 2 privately held dealer groups include Hendrick and Ken Garff Automotive Group.

Reputation Scores for Large U.S. Dealer Groups

(As of Q2 2019)

Brand	Average Reputation Score per Dealership	Visibility Score	Engagement Score	Sentiment Score
Hendrick Automotive	722	77%	91%	77%
AutoNation	704	84%	98%	68%
Group1	696	77%	89%	72%
Sonic Automotive	693	78%	86%	70%
Asbury Automotive Group	673	77%	95%	64%
Penske	656	63%	83%	76%
Lithia	641	74%	55%	68%
Ken Garff Automotive	638	69%	82%	65%
Larry H. Miller	636	76%	81%	62%
Berkshire Hathaway Automotive	618	67%	67%	69%
Greenway Automotive	592	70%	47%	63%

Reputation Scores for Publicly Held Large U.S. Dealer Groups

(As of Q2 2019)

Brand	Average Reputation Score per Dealership	Visibility Score	Engagement Score	Sentiment Score
AutoNation	704	84%	98%	68%
Group1	696	77%	89%	72%
Sonic Automotive	693	78%	86%	70%
Asbury Automotive Group	673	77%	95%	64%
Penske	656	63%	83%	76%
Lithia	641	74%	55%	68%
Berkshire Hathaway Automotive	618	67%	67%	69%

Reputation Scores for Privately Held Large U.S. Dealer Groups

(As of Q2 2019)

Brand	Average Reputation Score per Dealership	Visibility Score	Engagement Score	Sentiment Score
Hendrick Automotive	722	77%	91%	77%
Ken Garff Automotive	638	69%	82%	65%
Larry H. Miller	636	76%	81%	62%
Greenway Automotive	592	70%	47%	63%

Top 100 Dealerships

(As of Q2 2019)

Dealership Name	City	State	Reputation Score
Hendrick Lexus Charlotte	Charlotte	NC	930
Gilbert & Baugh Ford, Inc.	Albertville	AL	917
Mazda City of Orange Park	Jacksonville	FL	917
Keller Bros. Ford Lebanon	Lebanon	PA	913
King Ford	Murphy	NC	913
Hendrick Lexus Northlake	Charlotte	NC	910
Friendly Ford	Geneva	NY	910
Porsche Riverside	Riverside	CA	910
Witt Lincoln	San Diego	CA	910
McKie Ford Lincoln	Rapid City	SD	909
Bob Boyd Lincoln	Columbus	OH	908
Metro Ford	Miami	FL	907
BMW of Catonsville	Catonsville	MD	906
Rusty Wallace Ford	Dandridge	TN	906
Leman's Chevy City	Bloomington	IL	906
Bayou Ford	Laplace	LA	905
Smail Honda	Greensburg	PA	905
Bill Jacobs MINI	Naperville	IL	905
Brilliance Subaru	Elgin	IL	905
Hendrick Honda Bradenton	Bradenton	FL	904
Chastang Ford	Houston	TX	904
Lamoille Valley Ford	Hardwick	VT	904
Sykora Family Ford	West	TX	903
Mike Carpino Ford	Columbus	KS	902
Earl Duff Subaru	Harriman	TN	900
Hendrick Acura	Charlotte	NC	900
Nye Ford	Oneida	NY	899
Howard Bentley Buick GMC	Albertville	AL	899
Hendrick Lexus Kansas City	Merriam	KS	898

Top 100 Dealerships Continued

(As of Q2 2019)

Dealership Name	City	State	Reputation Score
D'ELLA Honda of Glens Falls	Queensbury	NY	898
Bob Tomes Ford	Mckinney	TX	897
Autosaver Ford	Comstock	NY	896
AutoNation Lincoln Clearwater	Clearwater	FL	896
Libertyville Lincoln	Libertyville	IL	896
Shaker's Family Ford Lincoln	Watertown	CT	895
Jack Kain Ford	Versailles	KY	894
Suburban Ford	Sandy	OR	893
Sunbury Motor Company	Sunbury	PA	893
Tom Peck Ford of Huntley	Huntley	IL	892
Miller Motor Sales Inc	Burlington	WI	892
Planet Hyundai	Golden	CO	891
Hendrickson Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram	Monticello	IN	890
White Bear Mitsubishi	White Bear Lake	MN	890
Kimber Creek Ford	Pine River	MN	889
McCoy and Mills Ford	Fullerton	CA	889
Wagner Subaru	Fairborn	OH	889
Ray Dennison Chevrolet	Pekin	IL	888
Royal Nissan	Baton Rouge	LA	888
Heritage Toyota Owings Mills	Owings Mills	MD	888
Finnin Kia	Dubuque	IA	888
Heritage Mazda Bel Air	Bel Air	MD	887
Crown Nissan	St. Petersburg	FL	887
RBM of Alpharetta	Alpharetta	GA	887
Rick Ridings Ford	Monticello	IL	887
Courtesy Buick GMC	Louisville	KY	887
Doug's Northwest Cadillac	Shoreline	WA	887
Garnet Ford	West Chester	PA	886
MINI of Charleston	Charleston	SC	886

Top 100 Dealerships Continued

(As of Q2 2019)

Dealership Name	City	State	Reputation Score
George Coleman Ford	Travelers Rest	SC	886
Classic Cadillac	Mentor	OH	886
Terrebonne Ford Lincoln	Houma	LA	885
Parker Ford-Lincoln	Murray	KY	885
Flood Ford Lincoln	Narragansett	RI	885
Faulkner Volvo	Feasterville-Treose	PA	885
Smail Acura	Greensburg	PA	885
O'Brien Nissan Of Bloomington	Bloomington	IL	884
MINI of Bedford	Bedford	NH	884
Golden Circle Ford-Lincoln	Jackson	TN	884
Sunnyside Chevrolet	Elyria	OH	884
Audi Temecula	Temecula	CA	884
Jim Ellis Hyundai	Atlanta	GA	883
Arundel Ford	Arundel	ME	883
Tamaroff Nissan	Southfield	MI	883
Hendrick Subaru Southpoint	Durham	NC	883
Hendrick Porsche	Charlotte	NC	883
Marlboro Nissan	Marlborough	MA	883
Bob Ruth Ford	Dillsburg	PA	883
Bill Colwell Ford Inc.	Hudson	IA	883
Handy Toyota	St Albans City	VT	882
Tom Gibbs Chevrolet	Palm Coast	FL	882
Honda of Lincoln	Lincoln	NE	882
Sullivan Honda	Torrington	CT	882
Sam Wampler's Freedom Ford	Mcalester	OK	882
Butler Lexus	Macon	GA	881
Volvo Cars Mall of Georgia	Buford	GA	881
Lighthouse Buick GMC	Morton	IL	881

Top 100 Dealerships Continued

(As of Q2 2019)

Dealership Name	City	State	Reputation Score
Seelye Kia of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo	MI	881
Crown Acura	Clearwater	FL	881
BMW Southpoint	Durham	NC	881
John Lee Nissan	Panama City	FL	881
Crest Ford	Center Line	MI	881
Jaguar Palm Beach	West Palm Beach	FL	881
Riley Ford	Chazy	NY	880
DeVoe Cadillac	Naples	FL	880
Mainer Ford	Okarche	OK	880
Toyota of Wausau	Wausau	WI	880
Paoli Ford	Paoli	PA	880
Classic Hyundai	Mentor	OH	880
Flammer Ford of Spring Hill	Spring Hill	FL	880
Pauli Ford	Saint Johns	MI	879

Leveraging Location-Level Feedback to Maximize the Value of Your Reputation

In addition to providing brand feedback, Reputation Score provides insight at the location level and beyond.

Overall averages can mask poorly performing locations, but because much of the underlying data exists at a dealership level, an OEM, regional manager, dealer group or individual dealership can see detailed insights about particular locations or departments in real time — to catch problems when they arise and address them.

For example, monitoring your Reputation Score in real time can help you identify:

- Which dealerships are seeing a drop in customer sentiment and why.
- When you have received negative feedback that needs to be addressed.
- Sites where your volume of customer feedback is lagging behind your competitors.
- When and where your listings data has become inaccurate.
- Which regions are leading and lagging in local search, and which competitors are ahead of you.

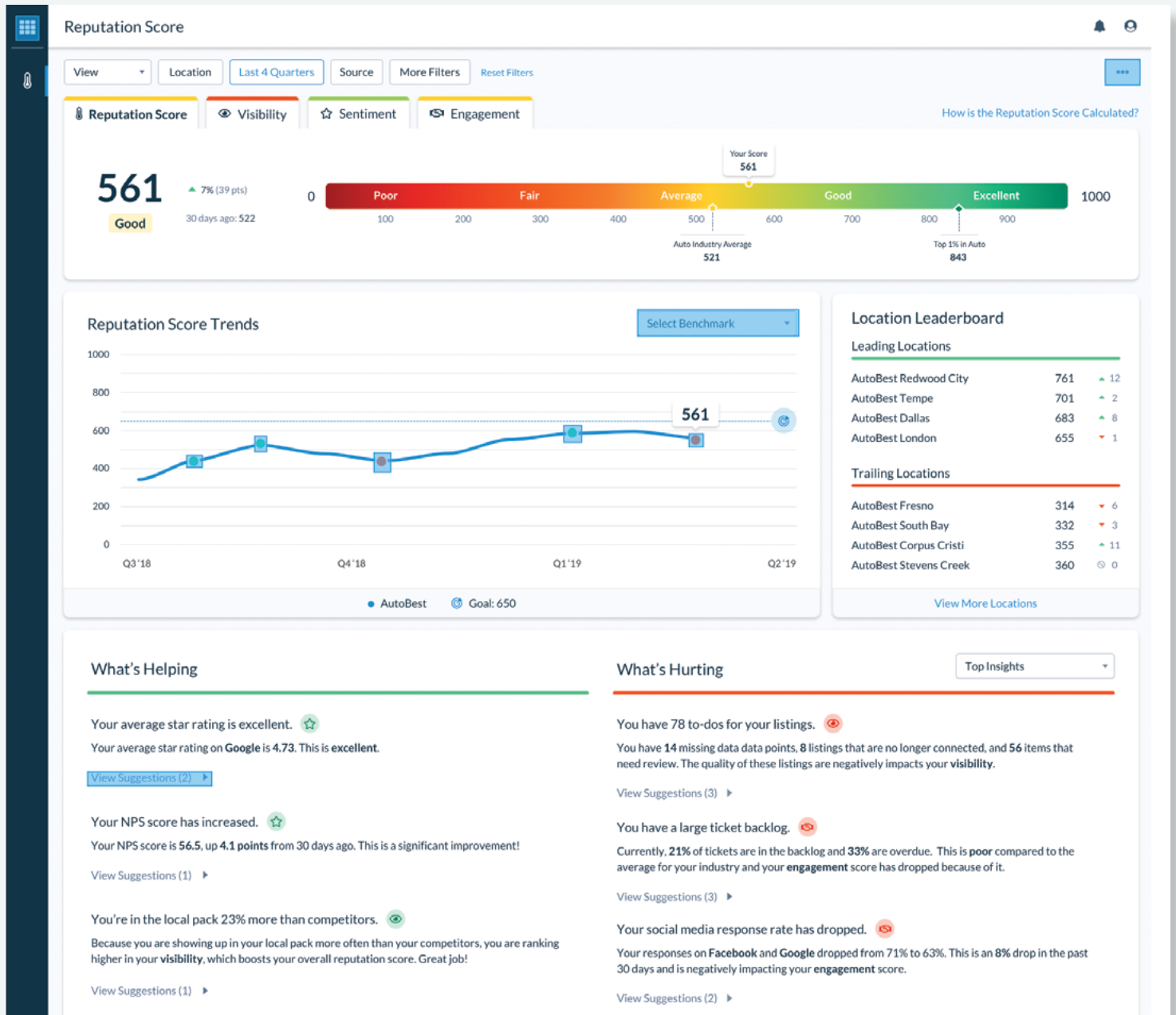


At Sonic Automotive and at our dealerships we place significant importance and invest our efforts in managing our online customer reviews. We closely monitor and respond to all reviews, positive or negative. Daily reports are reviewed at all levels of our organization including by our CEO and President.

Rachel Richards

CMO, Sonic Automotive

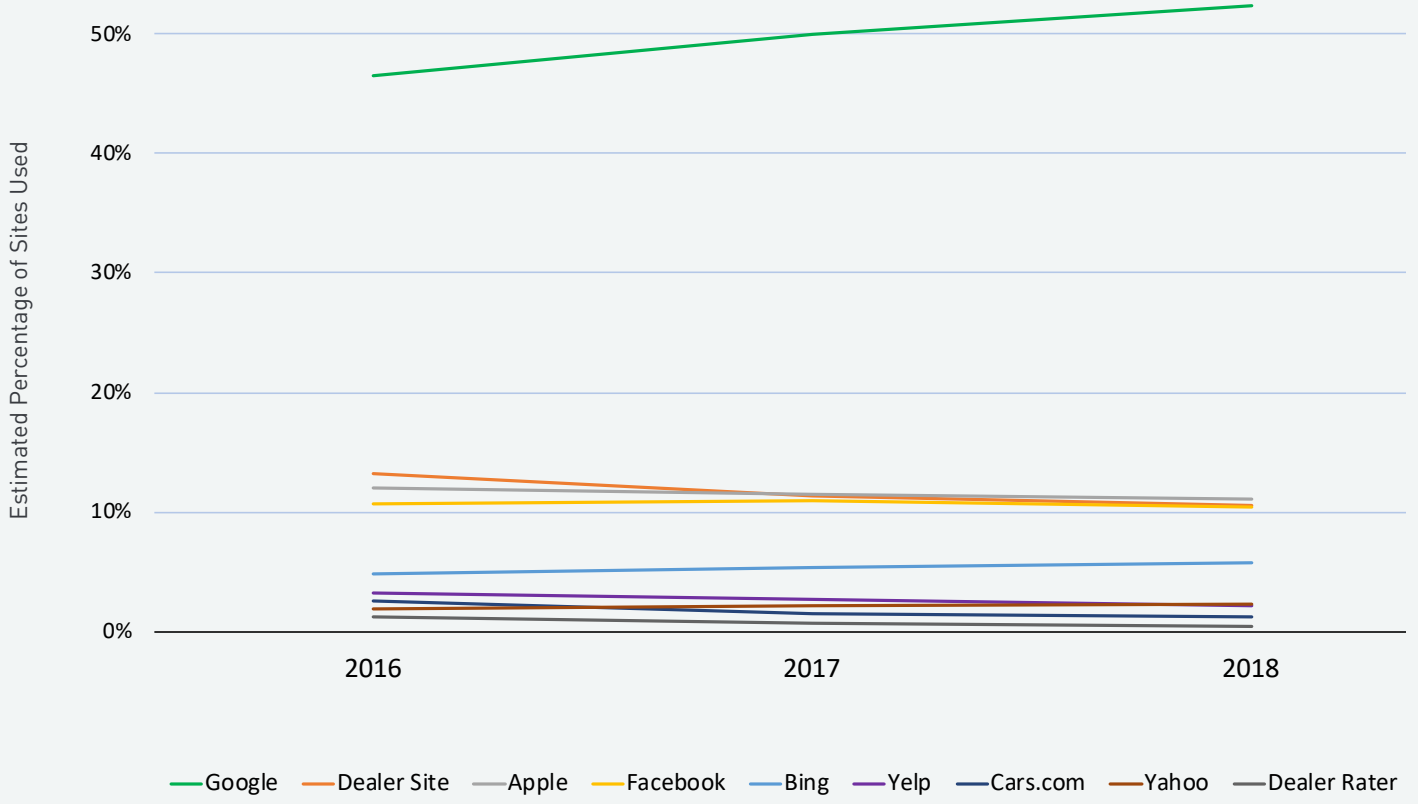
Reputation Score Provides Location-Level Feedback



Locations, groups and OEM brands that manage their reputation across all touchpoints and all locations can ensure the highest overall score and maximize the entire impact of their reputation and how it drives customer visibility and satisfaction at every one of their dealerships.

Google, Facebook and dozens of other sites have become the go-to resources for information about vehicles and auto dealers, which means your reputation is displayed prominently on the results pages of any search, whether you ask for it or not.

Sites Used to Find Listings Information for Auto Dealers



The nature of search engines and how they help consumers instantly gain answers is why you have to manage your online reputation.

Customers prefer to do business with the best. Having a high Reputation Score and ratings is essential to boosting your visibility and improving how consumers perceive your dealership's brand.

A solid strategy for improving and maintaining your online reputation has many components:

1. Make sure that all review sites have correct and consistent information.

After all, that's how car buyers find you. Plan quarterly, track monthly and monitor on a daily basis.

2. Build up a solid base of positive reviews.

Consistently increasing the volume of positive reviews helps offset existing negative reviews and show the true level of customer satisfaction.

3. Monitor and responding to reviews.

Demonstrate commitment to your customers and build customer advocacy by proactively monitoring your website and social channels. Unfiltered feedback provides valuable insights into what your dealership is doing well and where some improvements could be made.

4. Develop a social media strategy.

The best way to amplify your dealership and brand online is to be proactive on social media. Develop a strategy to publish consistently on sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Sharing positive customer feedback via social channels and your website is a final essential step.



Reputation management has always been a priority to our business, and continuing to lead within our industry is really a testament to each of our 26,000 associates who do everything to create a best-in-class experience for our customers.

Marc Cannon

EVP & CMO, AutoNation



3

Key influences affecting the
Reputation Score

A Deeper Dive into Reputation Score Influencers

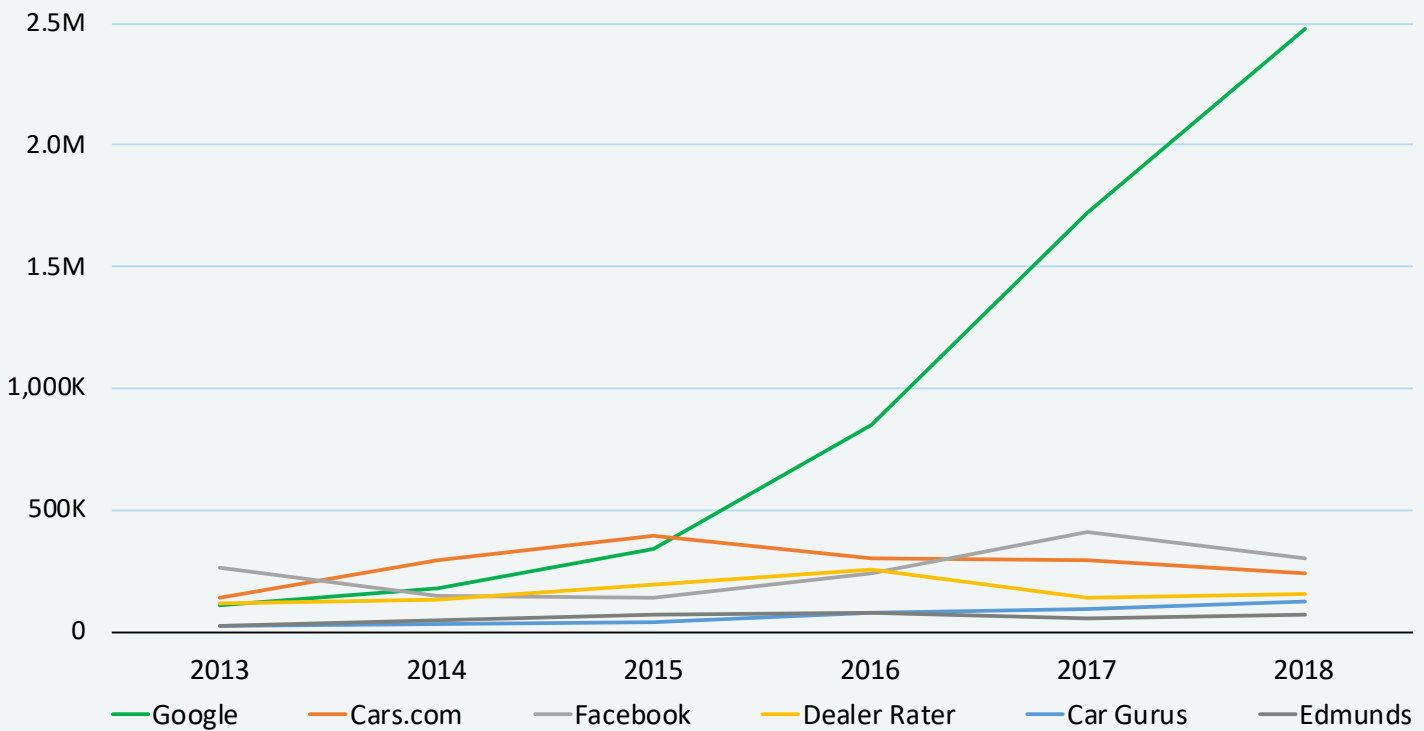
Let's take a look at three of the main categories influencing Reputation Score: visibility, engagement and sentiment.

Visibility

Visibility refers to the dealership's online presence, which includes business listings accuracy as well as the consumer's ability to easily find reviews and feedback.

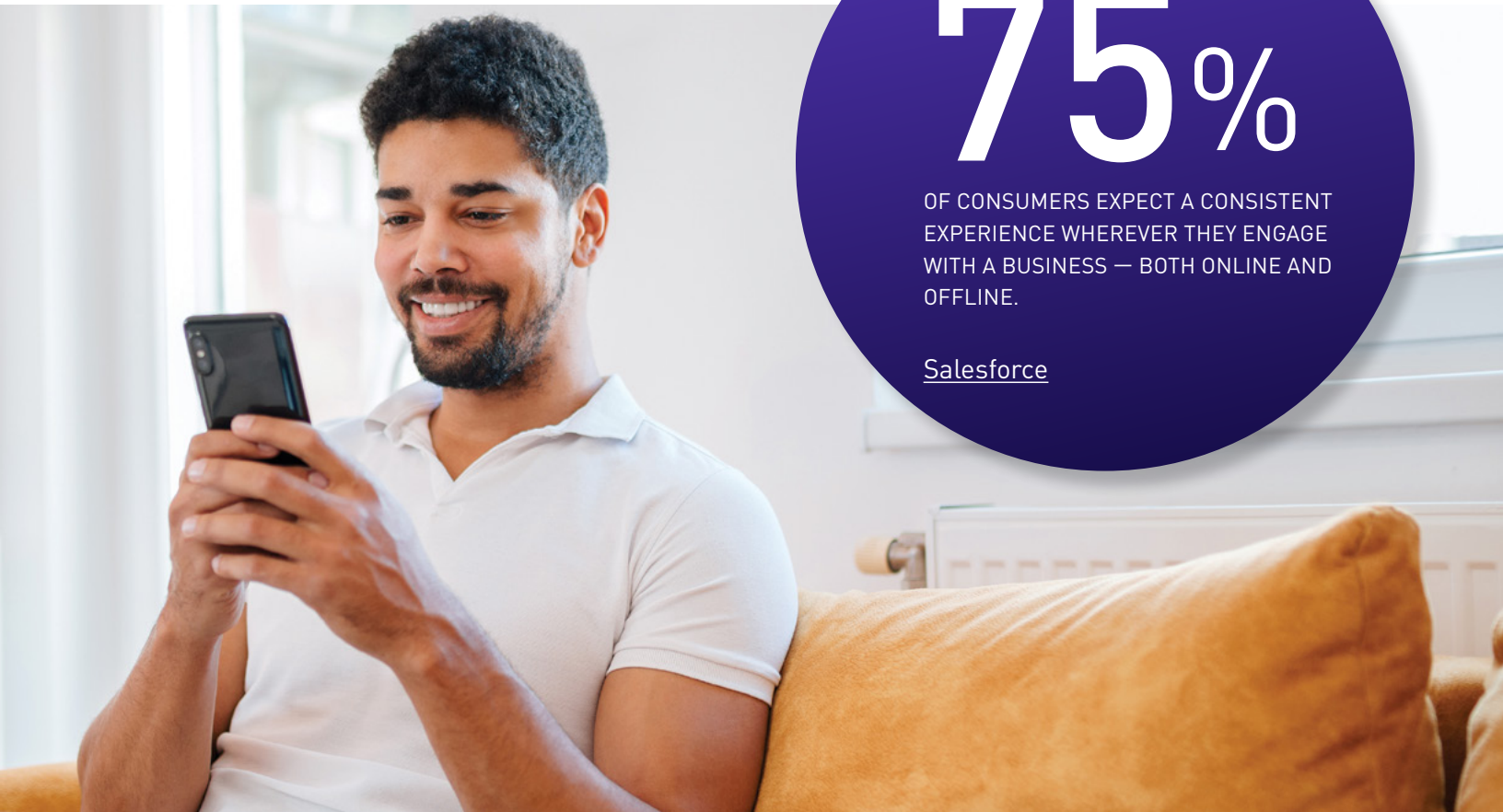
Google emerges as the primary source of information about dealership locations (e.g. where to find a dealership's address, phone number or business hours) — even more than the dealer sites or auto industry-specific sites like Cars.com and Car Gurus. Over the past three years, Google has also dominated in user feedback. While Google star ratings are only one element influencing Reputation Score, they feature prominently on search results and are therefore a key factor in driving consumer choices.

Relative Volume of Dealer Feedback



Engagement

Engaging with customers throughout the customer journey drives new content, higher search rankings and greater customer satisfaction. Responding to reviews is no different.



In fact, 75% of consumers expect a consistent experience wherever they engage with a business — both online and offline. That certainly holds true for the automotive industry.

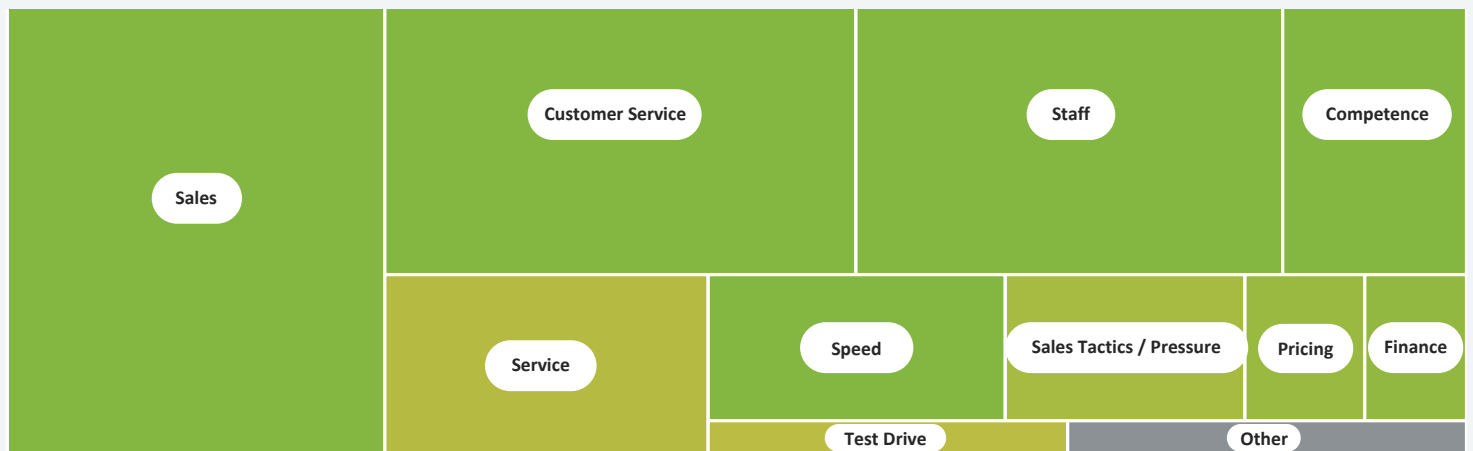
Dealerships that respond to all negative reviews and the majority of overall reviews have significantly higher sentiment, more reviews, better search rankings, higher Reputation Scores and higher sales volume.

Sentiment

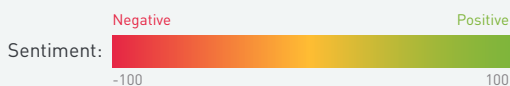
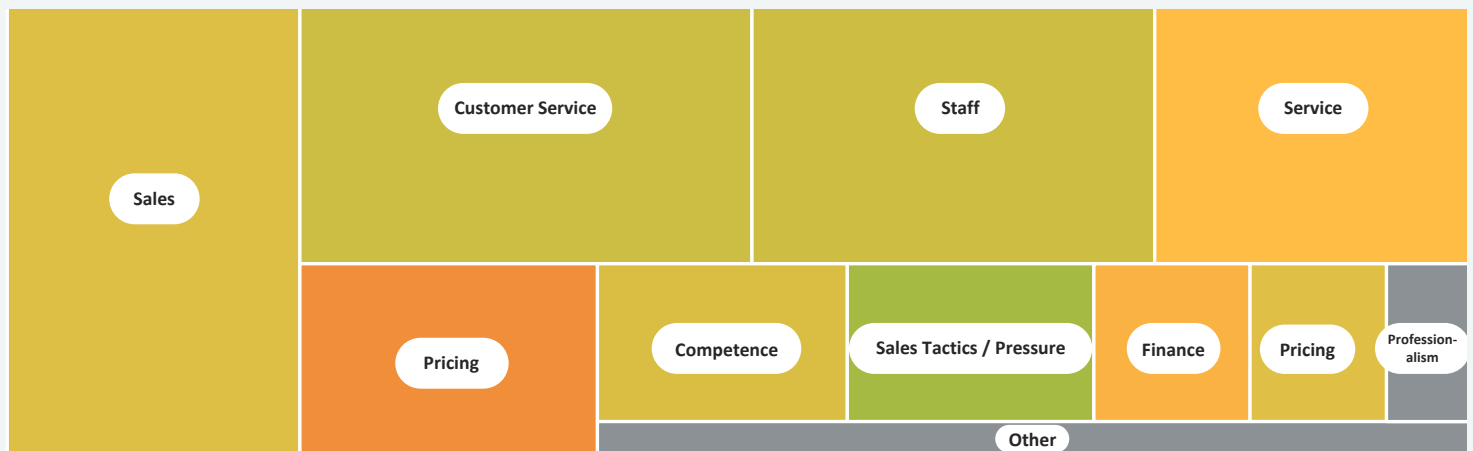
Sentiment refers to the actual consumer feelings about a brand, typically found in written reviews and social media discussions.

The first chart illustrates the overall consumer sentiment for the top dealerships. The second chart illustrates the same for dealerships with a lower Reputation Score. Here, we see many more complaints around sales, service and pricing for lower-ranked dealerships.

Consumer Sentiment for the Top Dealerships



Consumer Sentiment for Dealerships with Lower Reputation Scores



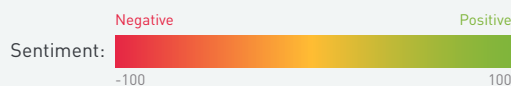
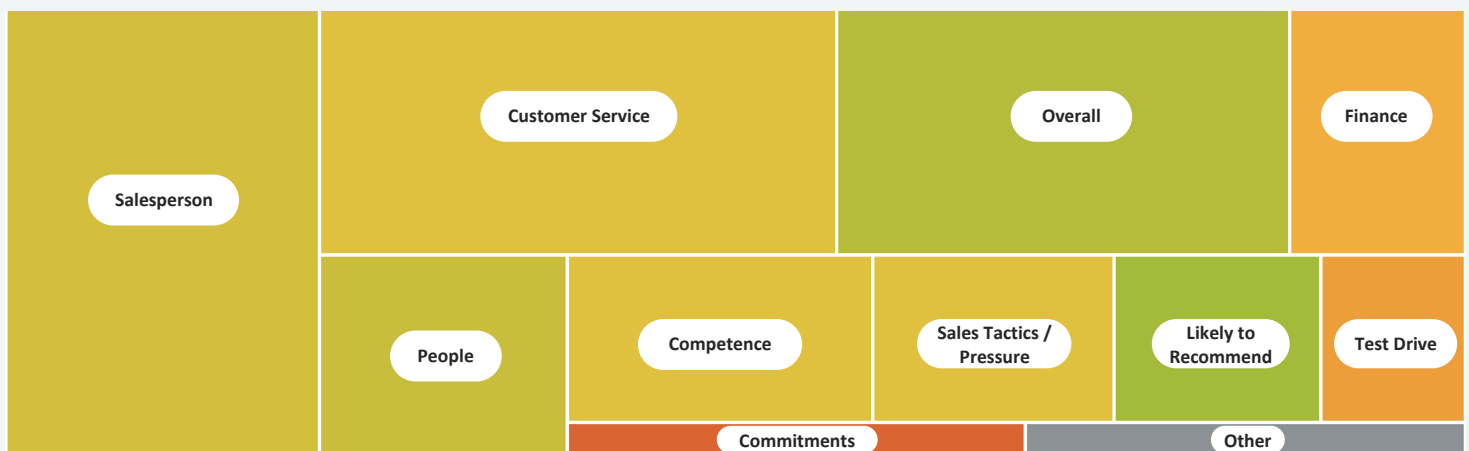
The following charts compare feedback for the top and bottom dealerships in the category of sales.

The number of complaints for dealerships with lower Reputation Scores is much greater, and centers on the salesperson and customer service, financing, issues related to test drives and honoring commitments.

Feedback for the Top Dealerships in the Category of Sales



Feedback for the Bottom Dealerships in the Category of Sales



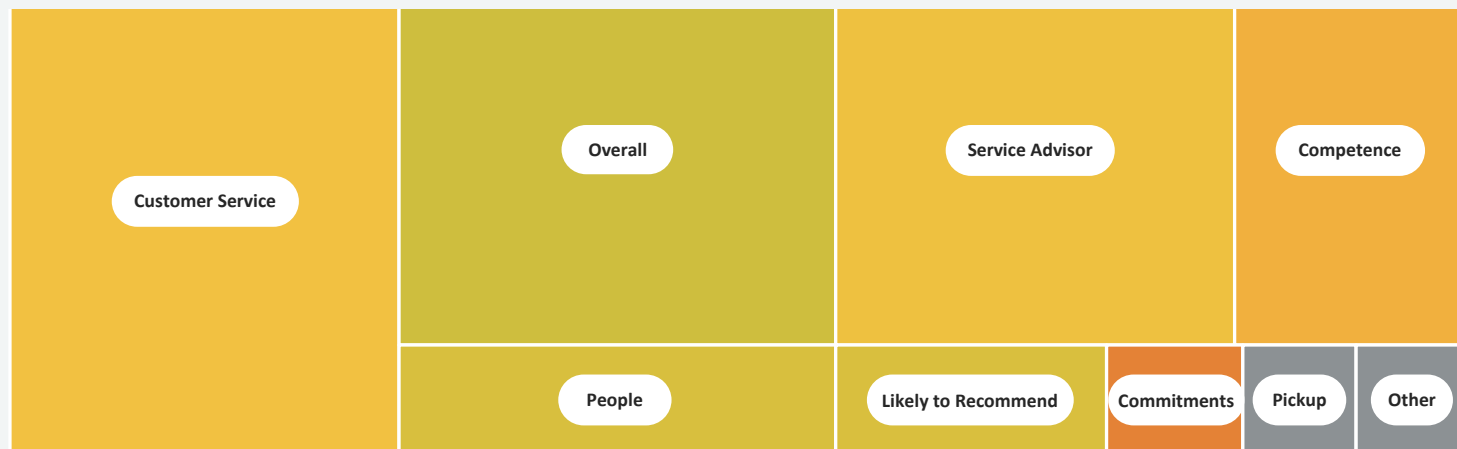
These charts compare feedback for the top and bottom dealerships on service.

A similar theme emerges: The lower-ranked dealerships received more complaints around service advisors, and customer service, as well as competence and honoring commitments.

Feedback for the Top Dealerships in the Category of Service



Feedback for the Bottom Dealerships in the Category of Service



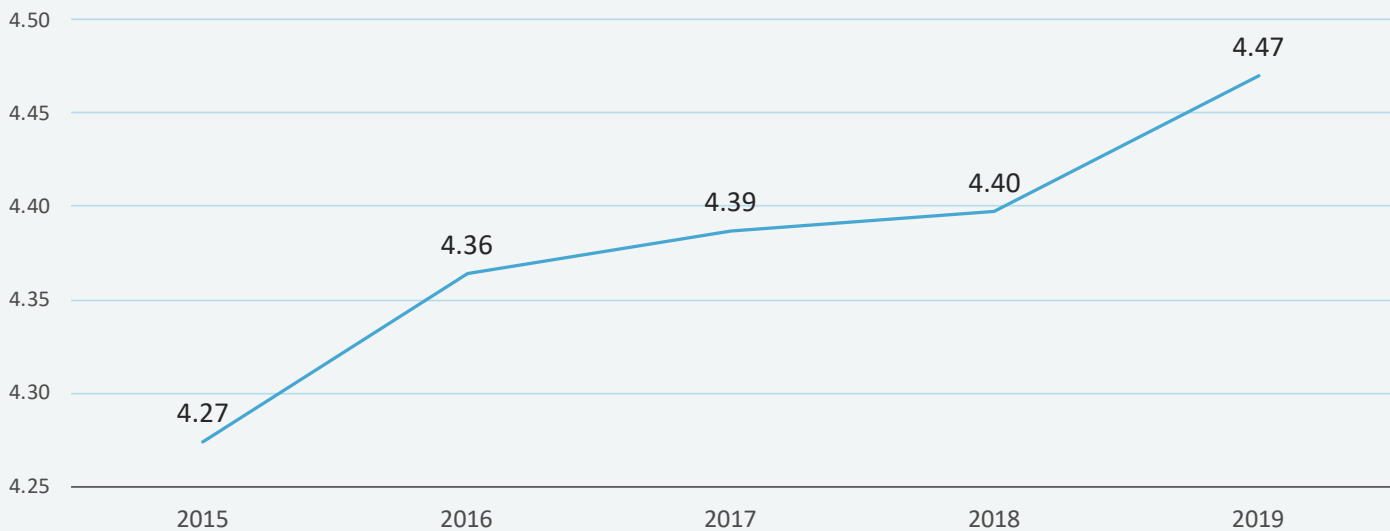
In addition, Reputation.com found that dealership ratings vary by source: A rating that appears on Google may be higher than one that appears on Facebook, for example:

Comparison of Ratings for the Location on Different Sources

Google	Cars.com	Facebook	Dealer Rater	Car Gurus	Edmunds
4.4	4.65	4.37	4.76	4.21	4.73

Ratings also vary over time. One item worth noting, along with the increasing volume of reviews over the last several years, star ratings have been rising for auto dealers as well. For example, ratings on Google have risen 0.2 points from 2015 to 2019 (4.27 to 4.47), meaning that getting your dealership noticed online is more competitive than ever, and that 4-star average may not look as great as you think it does.

Average Google Rating Over Time



Brand-Level Customer Feedback

The following charts show the top five OEM brands' actual rankings in eight categories — Sales, Service, Speed, Pricing, Salesperson, Sales Competence, Service Advisor and Service Competence/Quality — based upon an analysis of all of the online feedback we gathered through 2018.

Each brand was measured on a scale of 1 to 5 in each category (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest).

Sales

Brand	Category NPS	Associated Rating
Subaru	71%	4.5
Lexus	68%	4.5
Lincoln	66%	4.4
Mazda	65%	4.4
Honda	65%	4.4

The Sales category refers to the actual car-buying experience, from initial greeting through test drive and out the door. Subaru and Lexus tied for the top spot with a 4.5 ranking for each. The others — Lincoln, Mazda and Honda — all tied for second place with a rating not far behind, at 4.4.

Service

Brand	Category NPS	Associated Rating
Lexus	49%	4.3
Acura	48%	4.3
Infiniti	44%	4.2
Volvo	43%	4.1
Audi	40%	4.1

Service relates to any service maintenance experience, such as an oil change, tire rotation, tune-up, and so on. In this category, Acura bested Subaru to join Lexus at the top with a 4.3 rating. Infiniti came in at No. 2 with a 4.2 rating, and Volvo and Audi tied for third with 4.1 each.

Speed

Brand	Category NPS	Associated Rating
Subaru	71%	4.5
Lexus	68%	4.5
Lincoln	66%	4.4
Mazda	65%	4.4
Honda	65%	4.4

Ironically, Speed in the automotive report has nothing to do with how fast any of these cars can go. Rather, Speed refers to the speed of service delivery, such as wait times and representative availability at dealerships. In this category, Lexus again emerged at the top with a 4.6 rating. Acura and Subaru followed close behind with ratings of 4.5. Honda and Toyota rolled in at 4.4.

Pricing

Brand	Category NPS	Associated Rating
Subaru	32%	4
Mazda	27%	3.9
Acura	26%	3.9
Lexus	24%	3.8
Honda	23%	3.8

The Pricing category relates to pricing fairness, including terms and competitiveness of rates and optional services. It also includes the payment experience. Interestingly, this category logged the lowest scores. Subaru came in at 4.0, Mazda and Acura at 3.9, and Lexus and Honda at 3.8.

Salesperson

Brand	Category NPS	Associated Rating
Subaru	68%	4.5
Lincoln	66%	4.4
Lexus	66%	4.4
Ford	64%	4.3
Acura	63%	4.3

Employees' attitudes and demeanor often make all the difference in positive online ratings and reviews. The Salesperson category attempted to quantify this. Here, Subaru claimed the top spot with a 4.5 rating. Lincoln and Lexus came in at 4.4 each, and Ford and Acura rounded out the top five with ratings of 4.3.

Sales Competence

Brand	Category NPS	Associated Rating
Subaru	77%	4.7
Lexus	76%	4.6
Acura	75%	4.7
Honda	73%	4.6
Mazda	73%	4.6

The Sales Competence category relates to how informed and prepared a dealership's sales representatives are to answer customer questions. Subaru and Acura each rated a 4.7, and Lexus, Honda and Mazda came in with ratings of 4.6.

Service Advisor

Brand	Category NPS	Associated Rating
Lexus	60%	4.3
Acura	56%	4.2
Volvo	53%	4.1
Mercedes-Benz	50%	4
Honda	49%	4

A service advisor is the liaison between the customer and the service technicians at a dealership. In this category, Lexus earned the top spot with a rating of 4.3. Acura and Volvo came in second and third, with ratings of 4.2 and 4.1, respectively. Mercedes-Benz debuted in the top five in this category with a rating of 4.0, as did Honda.

Service Competence/Quality

Brand	Category NPS	Associated Rating
Acura	59%	4.5
Lexus	59%	4.4
Infiniti	52%	4.2
Volvo	52%	4.2
Honda	50%	4.2

Service Competence/Quality refers to the quality of work performed in the service department. Acura and Lexus claim the top two spots with ratings of 4.5 and 4.4, respectively. Infiniti, Volvo and Honda all clock in with 4.2 each.

Final Thoughts

In terms of reputation management, the auto industry has done well — better than any other industry we've focused on to date. But that's not a sign that dealerships can rest on their laurels.

With the revenue benefits associated with a higher Reputation Score and customer sentiment always changing, dealerships should regularly monitor every touchpoint on the customer journey to make sure nothing is overlooked that could negatively affect the customer experience. A reputation management platform can help here to identify potential issues and ensure you're covering all your bases. In fact, more than one-third of dealers in the United States now use Reputation.com's state-of-the-art technology platform and managed services to better attract and engage customers, drive traffic and increase revenue. Find out how you can better manage online customer reviews and increase sales with Reputation.com.

As evident in the findings of this report, brands that are proactively managing online reputation and the customer experience connect with more customers. Your Reputation Score is a window into where your organization is excelling and where issues or opportunities exist. There is tremendous room for brands and dealers to improve overall ratings, as well as drive more traffic and actions such as click-to-call, click for driving directions and scheduling appointments — ultimately resulting in more visits and higher sales.

About Reputation.com

Reputation.com, Inc., based in Silicon Valley, pioneered online reputation management (ORM) technology for the enterprise market in 2006. With its SaaS platform, Reputation.com's patented technology has managed tens of millions of consumer reviews and consumer interactions across hundreds of thousands of online points of presence for global companies spanning 77 industry verticals. Most recently, Reputation.com was ranked No. 1 in Enterprise Online Reputation Management in G2 Crowd's Summer 2019 report.

We are pleased to offer a complimentary assessment of your Reputation Score and overall search presence.

To request your custom report, contact Ali Fawaz, GM of Automotive at: automotive@reputation.com.



Thank You to Contributors:

Data Science Team

Brad Null, Chief Scientist

Ji-Ying Lu, Data Analyst

Hsin-wei Tsao, Lead Data Scientist

Faye Zhang, Data Engineer

Reputation.com Data Science Team

Automotive

Stephen Banbury, Vice President, Worldwide Marketing

Ali Fawaz, General Manager & Senior Director, Worldwide Automotive

Susannah Adler, BOCA Communications

Lori Maupas, Senior Editor

Gabi Klausner-Abrahamson, Lead Designer

Amanda Devenport, Marketing Program Manager

Reputation.com Leadership Team

Contact

Ali Fawaz, General Manager & Senior Director, Worldwide Automotive

Stephen Banbury, Vice President, Worldwide Marketing

