

WOMEN AT THE WHEEL

Women: A Driving Force In Car Buying

(NAPSA)—Female auto shoppers now arrive at dealerships smarter than ever before.

Long gone are the days when the only decision women were expected to make about a new car was which color to choose. Women are now the fastest growing segment of new car buyers and, thanks to the Internet, are more confident, more educated and better prepared to make a buying decision than ever before.

According to *American Women Road & Travel* magazine, not only do women spend \$300 billion annually on used car sales, maintenance, repairs and service, but they also buy or influence the purchase of 85 percent of all new cars and trucks. Given the fact that a new car is often the second most expensive purchase in your life (after a home), the pressure to make the right decision is high. Surprisingly, according to a Moritz Research Survey, 45 percent of women said they enjoyed shopping for a vehicle, compared to only 36 percent of men.

The 'Net to the Rescue

The Internet has been the great equalizer in car buying, particularly when it comes to pricing. Thanks to online resources, women are now able to research prices, options and features before going to the dealership, making them



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savvier about getting the best deal.

On the Internet, women can research all aspects of the car buying process from car safety reports and current pricing to financing and warranty information. For example, Yahoo! Autos (www.autos.yahoo.com) has detailed and up-to-date information on every car model sold in the U.S., allowing consumers to compare cars from different manufacturers side by side. It is also the only site that offers access to many of the most respected authorities in the auto industry like *Kelley Blue Book*, *Edmunds.com*, *Consumer Guide* and *Consumer Reports*—all in one place.

Online automotive sites also help consumers figure out at their own pace what they really want in

a car. According to Jupiter Research, 52 percent of people online seek pricing information to prepare for negotiations with dealers, objective sites like Yahoo! Autos can help consumers by offering dealer invoice pricing, market values and even multiple price quotes from their local dealers—all free.

Auto dealers have already noticed the effect that the Internet has had on their interaction with female car shoppers. “Women are now much smarter about car buying,” said Debbie Stevens-Byrnes, an Acura dealer in Marin, Calif. “They’ve done their research and usually have information printed out from the Internet so they are more confident in negotiating a good deal. With all the information fully disclosed, women feel they can trust the dealer and that they are treated better—two very important factors that influence a woman’s decision to buy. The Internet has certainly been an equal opportunities provider in the world of car sales.”

So take a tip from the female car-buying consumer—use the Internet to be informed, educated, confident and empowered to negotiate when you hit the dealership. If you take advantage of all the tools available to you, you should walk away with the car of your dreams at a price you can afford.