

Press Release

DEKRA/Ipsos survey in China, the USA, Germany, and France

International trend: digitalization in the used car market

- Most people obtain information online and want digital contact with dealer
- High expectations concerning response time to digital inquiries
- The Internet is even more important in China than in the other three countries

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Used car sales are increasingly becoming a digital business – and this is true on an international level. According to a joint survey conducted by expert organization DEKRA and market research institute Ipsos in Germany, France, the USA, and China, online sources play a crucial role before the purchase is made in all four countries. Indeed, most used car buyers in these countries first found out about their current vehicle on the Internet. On the whole, China has moved furthest when it comes to digitalization in the used car market.

90% of Chinese used car buyers prefer to have digital contact with their dealership. As does a majority in the USA (71%), France (61%), and Germany (60%), although personal contact still plays a role for a considerable number of actual and prospective purchasers (Germany: 34%, France: 32%, the USA: 27%). Only 10% of respondents in China favor face-to-face interaction.

Using online resources to obtain information before buying a used car is standard practice for majorities in all four countries. While 75% of respondents in France, 78% in the USA, and 79% in Germany obtain information online, there is almost no one in China (97%) who does not do so.

Sales websites are used most frequently in all four countries and deemed the most relevant source by respondents (Germany: 47%, China: 38%, the USA: 30%, France: 27%). Car dealership websites rank second in terms of relevance in the USA (17%), France (17%), and Germany (12%), while dedicated used car apps come in second place in China (24%).

Most people come to know about used cars online

Digitalization in this market not only provides information with no strings attached – it also affects real sales. This is demonstrated by the answers given to the question of how used car owners first became aware of their current vehicle – a

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used car they actually bought. While well over half of respondents had already experienced this first contact with the vehicle on the Internet in France (57%), Germany (58%), and the USA (60%), the figure rises significantly to 89% in China.

Digital inquiries must be answered extremely quickly

Used car dealerships in all four countries must meet high expectations in terms of speed of response to online inquiries. A response within two hours is expected by 41% of respondents in Germany, 47% in France, 60% in the USA, and a striking 81% in China. Just 30 minutes is considered an appropriate response time by one third of respondents in China. The same figure is 14% in the USA, 8% in France, and 6% in Germany.

The importance of customer ratings varies widely across countries. When asked what influence ratings from other consumers or buyers have on their used car purchasing behavior, only 25% of respondents in the USA report that these ratings are somewhat or very influential. 37% in Germany and 47% in France say the same, whereas almost three quarters (73%) of Chinese respondents take this view.

To the extent that actual and prospective used car buyers still obtain information offline, the majority in France (50%), the USA (58%), and Germany (58%) use the dealership as a point of contact. In China, on the other hand, conversations with friends, colleagues, or relatives are the most frequent option (76%).

Price is not always the deciding factor for buyers

Concerning the decision where they ultimately buy their vehicle, respondents in China (47%), the USA (43%), and France (41%) most frequently mention the sale price as a factor. In Germany, price is only the second most important criterion (30%), with a simple and straightforward purchase process coming in first.

For the online survey, Ipsos surveyed around 1,000 people in each of the four countries in May and June 2021 on behalf of DEKRA. Half these respondents had bought a used car within the last two years and the other half were considering buying a used car in the near future.

For more information and the option to order the full survey, please visit www.dekra.com/sales-study-2021.

About DEKRA

DEKRA has been active in the field of safety for almost 100 years. Founded in 1925 in Berlin as Deutscher Kraftfahrzeug-Überwachungs-Verein e.V., it is today one of the world's leading expert organizations. DEKRA SE is a subsidiary of DEKRA e.V. and

manages the Group's operating business. In 2020, DEKRA generated turnover totaling almost EUR 3.2 billion. The company currently employs around 44,000 people in approximately 60 countries on all continents. With qualified and independent expert services, they work for safety on the road, at work and at home. These services range from vehicle inspection and expert appraisals to claims services, industrial and building inspections, safety consultancy, testing and certification of products and systems, as well as training courses and temporary work. The vision for the company's 100th birthday in 2025 is that DEKRA will be the global partner for a safe, secure, and sustainable world. With a platinum rating from EcoVadis, DEKRA is now in the top one percent of sustainable businesses ranked.