

Dealer Principal Trendsetter Survey – Past Topics of Discussion

- 1997 Succession Planning Survey – The high response rate that year confirms the view that succession issues are one of the hottest topics of the industry today.
- 1998 Dealer Management Systems – Survey explores Canadian vehicle dealer principals and their views and experience with in-house computer systems.
- 1999 Strategic and Succession Direction – Despite all of the attention given to strategic and succession issues over the past few years, this year’s survey results bring to light the lack of proactive planning done by dealers when it regarding their future.
- 2000 Used Vehicle Market in Canada – This year’s efforts are focused on learning more about the used vehicle market in Canada and the role of new vehicle dealers across the country. Issue of dealers and internet are re-visited to provide ongoing analysis of the latest trends.
- 2001 Customer Satisfaction - The Trendsetter Survey series continues to explore a wide range of topics that impact the automotive retail sector in Canada. This year the survey focuses on learning more about dealer’s opinions of customer satisfaction programs across the country.
- 2002 Dealer Management Systems – Survey shows that Dealer Management Systems topic is an emotional one for most dealers where most dealers have strong opinions. In 1998 we first asked Canadian dealers about their DMS. Years later survey results still show much dissatisfaction while dealers still perceive they are not receiving full benefits from their technology investment.
- 2003 Innovation – Innovation is the theme of this survey touching on a number of area of innovation within automotive retailing. Survey also re-visits a number of topics from previous years to identify shifts in mood and opinion over time.
- 2004 Dealership Performance – In this survey we try to get opinions from Canadian dealers principals on operational and financial situations in their stores. Results shared are very interesting and indicate dealers are optimistic about their future yet about half are not having as much fun in the business as they used to.
- 2005 Dealership Profitability – Comparison is made between profitability of single-franchise and multi-franchise dealers. Variables such as capital expenditure, finance products, new vs. used vehicle sales, the accuracy of sales forecasts and satisfaction with DMS were taken into account.
- 2006 Dealership Profitability – This year’s survey obtains information and opinion from Canadian dealer principals on the level of profitability enjoyed by various aspects of their operations. Differences in profitability between different size dealers, length of time in business and brand of vehicle were all researched and tabulated.

- 2007 Multi-Dealer Groups, Lack of Partnership between Dealers and Factories – Four different themes are explored in this year’s survey. This survey was exceptionally well received allowing for truly astonishing findings. In addition to multi-dealer groups and lack of partnership the survey explores attitudes about running a dealerships and profitability once again.
- 2008 Investment in Facilities – This year’s survey explores the push by OEM’s to have their dealers build new facilities or renovate current facilities. Survey results indicate that dealers believe return on investment for making these upgrades in questionable.
- 2009 Profitability –Canadian dealer principals are asked questions surrounding profitability, valuation of dealerships, buy-sell intentions and dealer finance issues. The most interesting question was asking dealers to rate the most desirable and least desirable brands for acquisition.
- 2010 Chaos – This is year the survey looks at the topic of ‘chaos’ in the marketplace, opinions about new brands that may or may not be coming to Canada, and how well your factory understands your local market and sources for financing. Survey also explores the hot topic of what types of alternate fuel vehicles may or may not sell.
- 2011 Succession Planning – This year the topic of succession planning is revisited. The results reveal some surprises about how dealers are handling succession planning (or not?)and whether they have put into place key elements such as will planning, if family members have been included and how they have communicated their plans.