



This year's Online Car Sales Benchmark Analysis looks at various manufacturers and retail platforms as well as their strengths and weaknesses in their respective customer journey (photo: Porsche AG)

PRESS RELEASE

MHP Online Car Sales Benchmark Analysis 2025

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How online car sales can boost conversion rates

- Many car manufacturers and some online retail platforms fail to develop a consistent, transparent online customer journey
- Conversion drivers and blockers: transparency, technical functionality and clear structures are essential
- Deficits such as incorrect vehicle configurators and non-transparent processes lead to customers breaking off their purchase

Ludwigsburg – Digital automobile sales are becoming ever more important. And yet, while many new providers of electric vehicles can impress with clearly structured, intuitive websites, many established manufacturers and some online retail platforms are still struggling with weaknesses in their digital customer journey. The new Online Car Sales Benchmark Analysis from MHP sheds light on these challenges and also shows specific potential for optimizing online car sales.

The analysis examines the six crucial phases of the automotive customer journey – from the search for information to the vehicle handover – and provides a detailed evaluation of the status quo in the volume, premium, EV and platform segments. Here, key conversion drivers and blockers are identified which are crucial for determining whether interested parties actually complete a purchase or are lost to the competition. As a general rule, the following still applies: online sales are becoming more popular when it comes to cars: these increased by 144 percent between 2020 and 2023. In 2023, 22 percent of all persons surveyed had purchased a vehicle online.

Florian Langer, partner at MHP, says: "Our study clearly shows that the digital vehicle purchase is much more than a technical challenge – it is an opportunity to rethink the entire customer journey. The transition to digital sales models is irreversible. Manufacturers and retailers must develop their platforms strategically and align the entire customer journey to the needs of the customer, from the initial contact to vehicle handover, not to mention any after-sales services ... in a consistent way."

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Conversion drivers show potential for improvement

The increasing importance of online retail is also linked with new challenges for automobile manufacturers. Online purchasing doesn't just demand new digital sales solutions; it also requires optimized conversion pathways, or touchpoints, which accompany the customers during their purchase decision. Simple and intuitive navigation on the website, clear product information and transparent offers with regard to the available equipment features, as well as financing options, can all be assessed as positive.

In this regard, the Benchmark Analysis makes it clear that traditional manufacturers and retailers frequently fall below the expectations of the customer base. There are clear weaknesses, especially when compared to the new EV providers: many manufacturer websites appear cluttered, technical tools such as vehicle configurators do not work reliably, and the websites are often complicated and difficult for users to navigate. Chatbot features and the option for getting in touch are often not implemented adequately, or these are difficult to find.

On the other hand, many of the new EV manufacturers present themselves quite differently – their later entry to the sector meant that they were able to define their digital sales pathways from the very beginning. Their websites feature clear menus, minimalist design and a strict separation of information and purchase processes. These sorts of approaches foster trust, and contribute considerably to a high conversion rate.

"The benchmark for the online experience is no longer set by the automobile sector, but by the expectations of conventional e-commerce experiences which customers are familiar with from their everyday lives," explains Maurice Tennekes, Senior Manager in Customer Experience at MHP. "In addition, the customer wants to know what the individual processes before they receive their vehicle look like. Here, the following applies: the more they understand exactly what is involved in a digital car sale process, the more confident they feel with their decision to purchase their new vehicle completely online."

Solution approaches and proposals for action for the industry

The 18 experts from the automobile sector surveyed as part of the analysis are in agreement that there is potential for improvement in all phases of the automotive customer journey, especially in the sales consulting and purchase phase. A frequently cited challenge is the test drive. This is viewed as indispensable, but involves disruption, as it requires switching from the digital journey to the analogue one.

With regard to financing, 17 of the 18 experts surveyed see a backlog of demand. As well as the in-house banks of the manufacturers, external providers should also be taken into account, as their own group-affiliated banks (captive banks) often do not offer the best terms, which leads to potential buyers losing interest in the purchase.

In summary, the Online Car Sales Benchmark Analysis from MHP results in the following proposals for action for an optimized online customer journey:

- Ensure technical excellence: Vehicle configurators and other tools must work perfectly and must make the whole purchase process considerably more straightforward.
- Tailored solutions: Using so-called conversion pathways to focus the process is highly recommended in order to ensure a tailored solution and seamless transitions between the gates.
- Promote transparency: Clear information about prices, financing and processes creates trust and promotes a willingness to purchase.
- Uphold e-commerce standards: The customer journey should meet the high expectations that customers are used to from other sectors in online retail.
- Establish omnichannel strategies: Shaping the link between online and offline options can also offer real added value – and generate more comfort and customer loyalty.

Clemens Kohlsaas, Manager and Co-Lead of the Benchmark Analysis, highlights: "In order to be successful in digital sales, automobile manufacturers and retailers must align their online strategies to the needs of their customers in a consistent way. Only those who test and validate the online journey with customers on a continuous basis can close the gap between the automotive online experience and the high expectations of the e-commerce experience, and thus remain competitive in the long term."

About the methodology of the MHP Online Car Sales Benchmark Analysis 2025

The Online Car Sales Benchmark Analysis 2025 from MHP is a continuation of the established series of "Online Car Sales" studies and is based on an in-depth examination of the German market. The makes and platforms analyzed were selected following a structured, multi-layered process based on a scoring model. Firstly, categories were defined in order to show a representative cross-section of the industry. The team then analyzed statistics from the strongest selling makes on the German market.

In the next step, we checked whether the selected makes had a complete online sales process including purchase processing within their categories. The final selection of examined providers thus guarantees a representative and well-grounded analysis of the various market segments. To round it all off, 18 experts from the automobile sector were surveyed on key aspects of the examination. The anonymous appraisals came from specialists who are directly or indirectly involved with online sales and direct sales (e.g. agency model) in their everyday working lives. These statements contributed significantly to classifying and consolidating the results of the analysis.



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About MHP

As a technology and business partner, MHP has been digitizing the processes and products of its around 300 mobility and manufacturing sector customers worldwide for 28 years and providing support for their IT transformations along the entire value chain. For the management and IT consultancy, one thing is certain: digitization is one of the biggest levers on the path to a better tomorrow. This is why MHP, a Porsche AG company, provides both operational and strategic consulting in areas such as customer experience and workforce transformation, supply chain and cloud solutions, platforms and ecosystems, big data and AI, as well as Industry 4.0 and intelligent products. Headquartered in Germany, the consultancy operates internationally with subsidiaries in the USA, Mexico, the UK, Romania, and China. More than 5,000 MHP employees are united by their pursuit of excellence and sustainable success. It is this aspiration that will continue to drive MHP – today and in the future.

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