

Car Purchasing Process - UK - May 2012

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“The much expected recovery of the new car market following the recent recession has failed to materialise. Cautious consumers have in many cases opted to delay the purchase of a vehicle or buy used. For manufacturers and dealers, the result is ever more intense pressure to ensure that they fully understand the needs and desires of buyers.”

– Neil Mason, Head of Retail Research

In this report we answer the key questions:

- Will new car sales return to 2006 levels?
- What interplay do new car sales have with the used sector?
- Are mass-market brands in long-term decline?
- Can car purchasing be made more enjoyable?
- What future for dealers?

This report investigates the car-buying process and the retailing of cars to private individuals. It includes both new and used car sales. It is exclusively focused on passenger vehicles, and therefore excludes any discussion of the market for light commercial vehicles or fleet vehicles.

The report specifically excludes sales to businesses or operators of company car fleets although sales data for sales to all three markets are included where necessary.

The buying and selling of cars can take place through a number of distribution channels:

- Franchised new car dealers – those under contract to specific car manufacturers
- Multi-franchise new car dealers – those with contracts that enable them to sell the products of more than one manufacturer
- Independents – dealers that sell used vehicles from various manufacturers, some of which specialise in nearly-new or pre-registered cars
- Car supermarkets – large, out-of-town retail sites selling a wide variety of new, nearly-new, pre-registered and imported cars, usually in a no-haggle flat commission sales environment
- Used-casual sales – used cars sold through private parties.

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