CDK

SERVICE SHOPPER 5.0

CONNECTIONS THAT MOVE YOU

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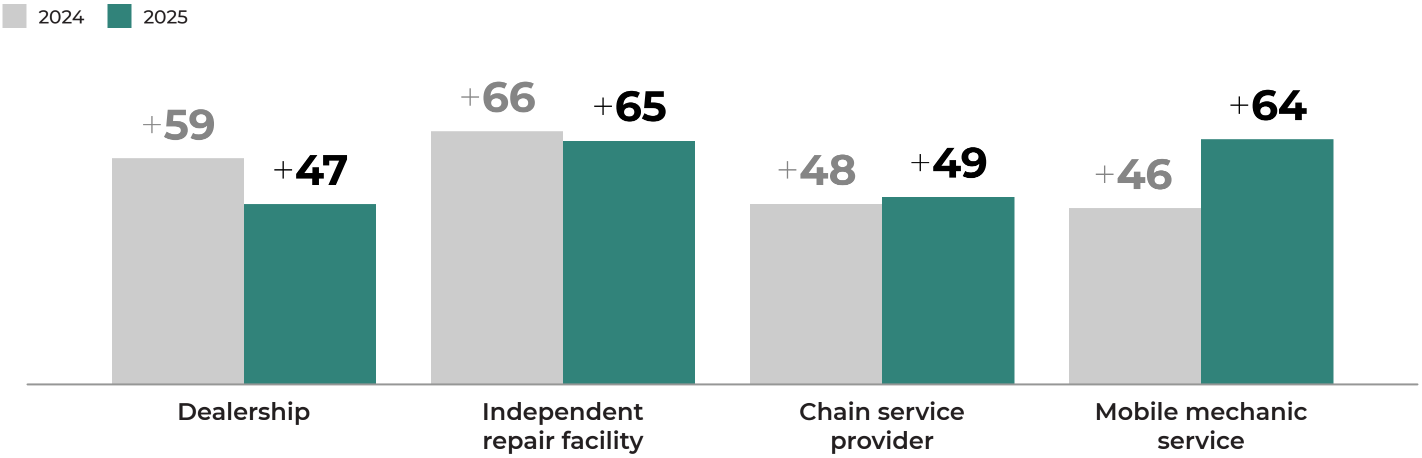
Overview

The automotive industry is entering yet another era of disruption as tariffs and the end of EV incentives cloud economic outlooks. This means that while new car sales may be hard to rely on, reliable profit generators like used sales, F&I and Fixed Operations come back to the forefront. CDK has tracked the sentiment and feedback of Service customers for the last five years to better understand where dealers stand against their competitors and how they can improve.

In last year's study there was a large spike in satisfaction scores for dealers. Unfortunately, this year those numbers swung back downward. **The Net Promoter Score (NPS) — a satisfaction score based on a customer's likelihood to recommend a business — is still higher than it was in 2023 and resides at the same level as our first study in 2021.**

Luckily, traditional competitors didn't gain much ground. Independent and chain service providers were essentially flat in 2025. Where there was a significant gain was among mobile service providers. And while we've only tracked this type of competitor for three years, there are clear indicators throughout this year's study that mobile service is on the rise.

Net Promoter Score by Service Provider



Demographics

2,051
respondents

Customers Surveyed

GENDER

Men	46%
Women	57%

AGE GROUP

Gen Z (18-25)	9%
Millennials (26-41)	19%
Gen X (42-57)	20%
Boomers (65+)	43%
Silent (6%)	9%

INCOME

Less than $50,000	37%
$50,001 to $100,000	44%
$100,001 to $200,000	17%
More than $200,001	2%

Vehicle

VEHICLE AGE

0-3 years	28%
4-7 years	30%
8-10 years	15%
More than 10 years	27%

WARRANTY STATUS

Never was	17%
Used to be	53%
Is currently	30%
I'm not sure	0%

MILES DRIVEN IN A YEAR

8K-12K	67%
12K-14K	13%
14K-20K	14%
20K-25K	3%
More than 25K	3%

FREQUENCY OF MAINTENANCE

Less than once a year	7%
Once a year	31%
Twice a year	39%
Three times a year	16%
More than three times a year	7%

Today's Service Shopper

Service shoppers who visit dealers still remain relatively loyal to where they purchased their vehicle. Nearly three out of four (76%) return to where they bought the car, and for those who bought a car without a warranty that number is still a strong 70%. When looking at demographics, the youngest car owner is significantly more loyal with 94% of Gen Z respondents returning — up from 88% last year.

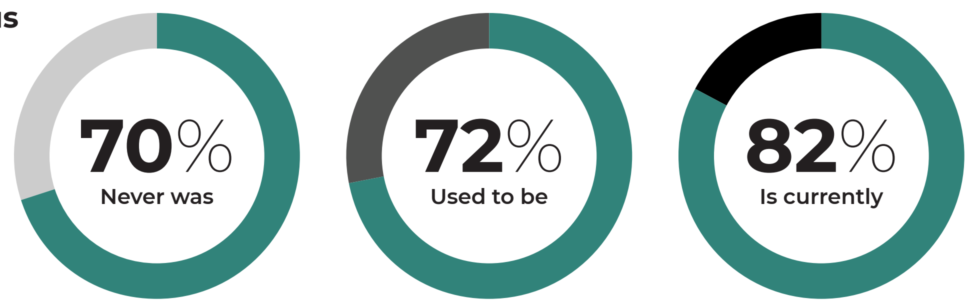
These high loyalty numbers are impressive and could lead to a virtuous cycle if the customer is treated well. Nearly nine out of ten (87%) of those who would recommend the dealership said they would also return to buy another car in the future.

Service departments — and General Managers — should reflect on the fact that a high percentage of buyers do return for service, and the happier they are with each Service experience the more likely loyalty will continue.

When asked to rank the reasons they chose a dealership for their Service business, respondents ranked the existing relationship born from the sale (or previous service) highest.

Customers who get their **car serviced** at the **same dealership** they bought from

Warranty Status

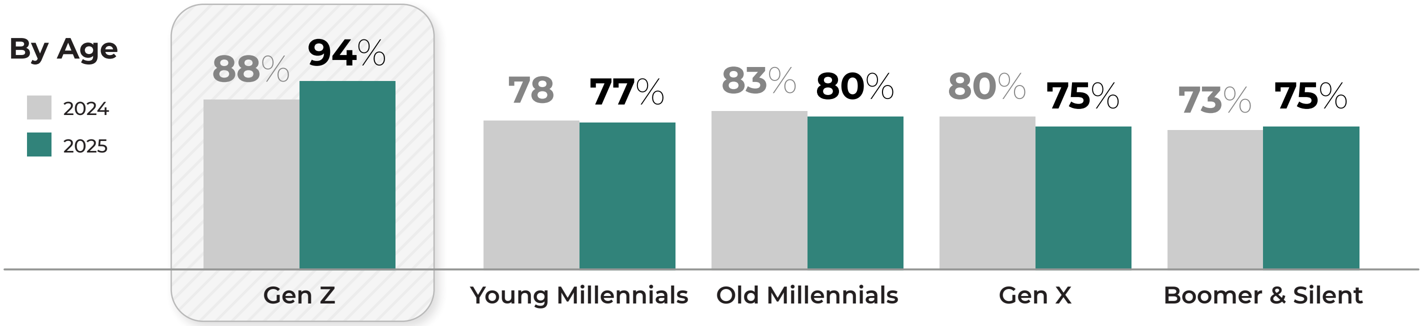


Year-over-Year

2024
78%

2025
76%

By Age



Likely to **purchase next vehicle** from same dealership

92%
Gen Z

81%
Young Millennials

82%
Old Millennials

74%
Gen X

73%
Boomer & Silent

Top Reasons
shoppers chose a service provider

Dealership
1. Existing relationship
2. Service staff knowledge
3. Good reputation
4. Easy scheduling process
5. Convenient location

Independent Service Provider
1. Good reputation
2. Convenient location
3. Existing relationship
4. Low price
5. Service staff knowledge

Chain Service Provider
1. Convenient location
2. Quick service
3. Good reputation
4. Low price
5. Existing relationship

Mobile Mechanic Service
1. Quick service
2. Good reputation
3. Easy scheduling process
4. Recommendations
5. Existing relationship

Online Reviews

When we look at the impact of online reviews, our results are a bit skewed by the large number of baby boomers in our respondent pool. The group, by and large, knows dealership service centers well and that's likely why very few (35%), said the online reviews were important when deciding on a service provider.

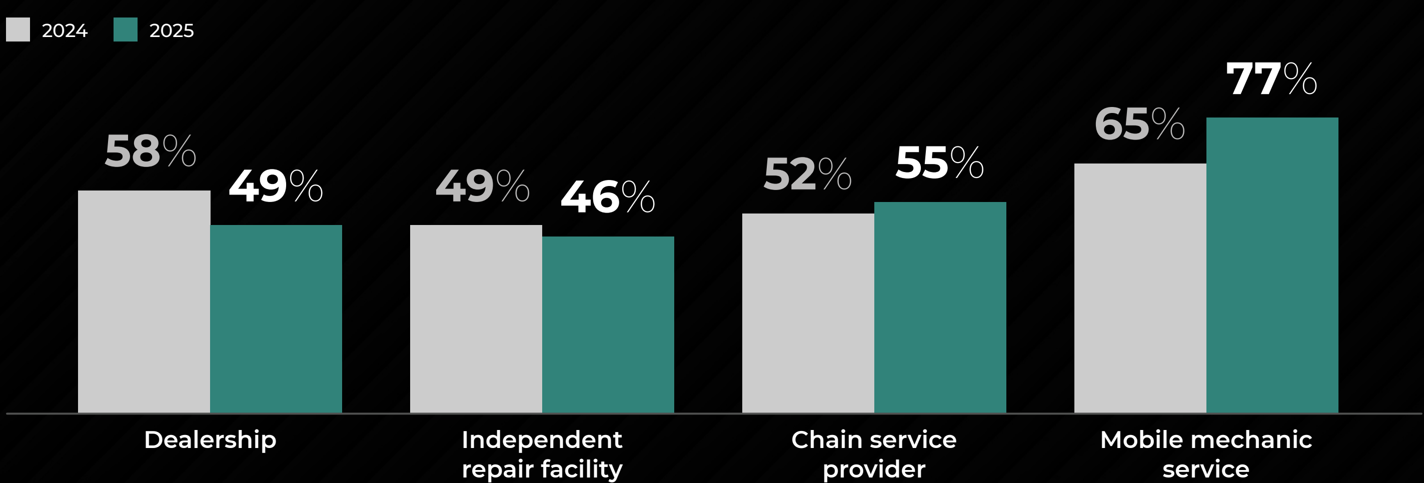
Focus should be on the significantly higher number of Gen Z and millennials — over 75%. Those are Service departments' future pipeline to add to the cycle mentioned above.

% of customers who said online **reviews and ratings were important** when deciding on a service provider

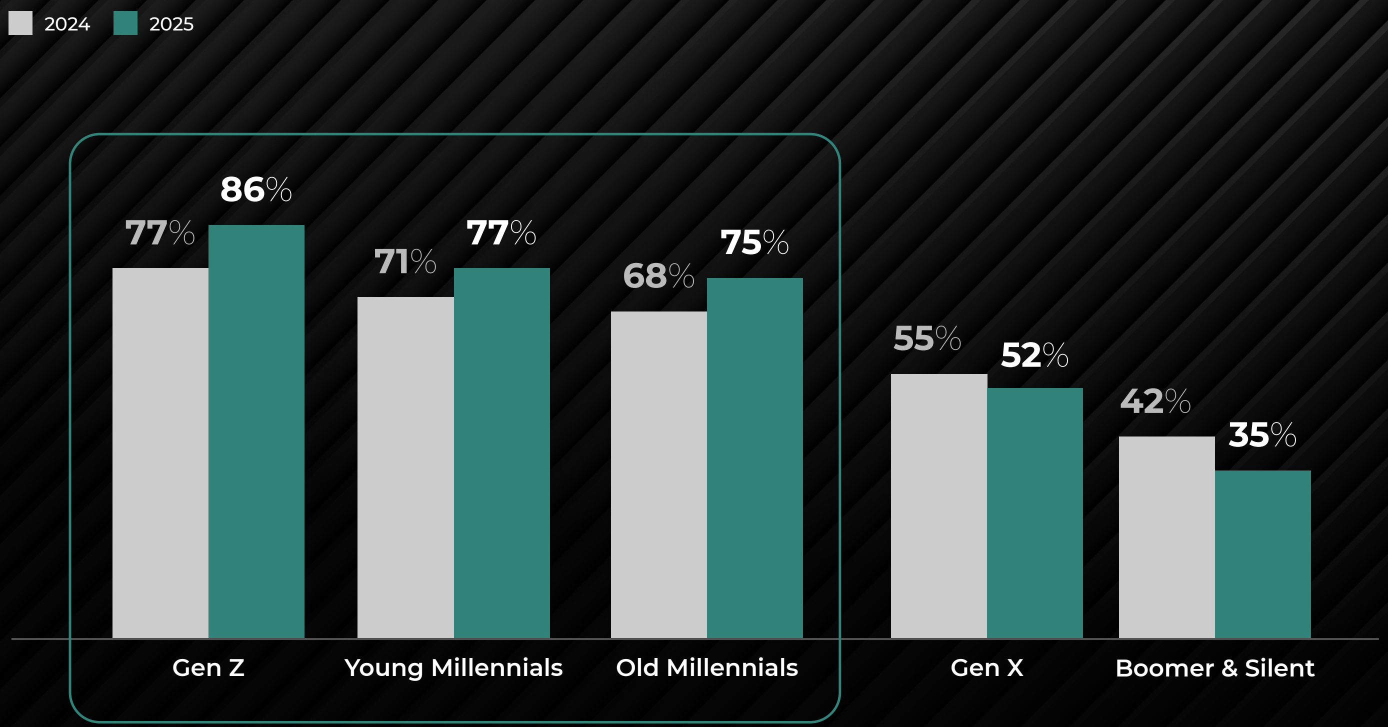
2024
54%

2025
51%

Importance of Online Reviews (By Service Provider Used)



Importance of Online Reviews (By Age)

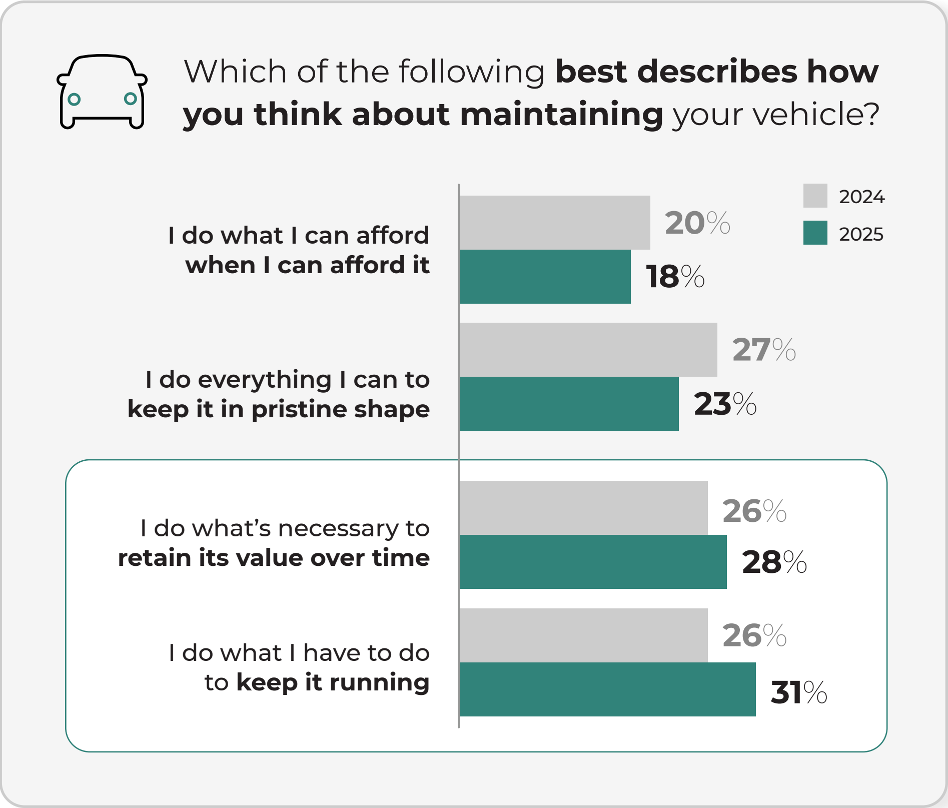


Service Products and Performance

The health of the overall economy is difficult to firmly establish, with some groups seeing stormy seas while others see clear sailing. Respondents in this study did seem to shift their habits for service, believing storm clouds are at least brewing.

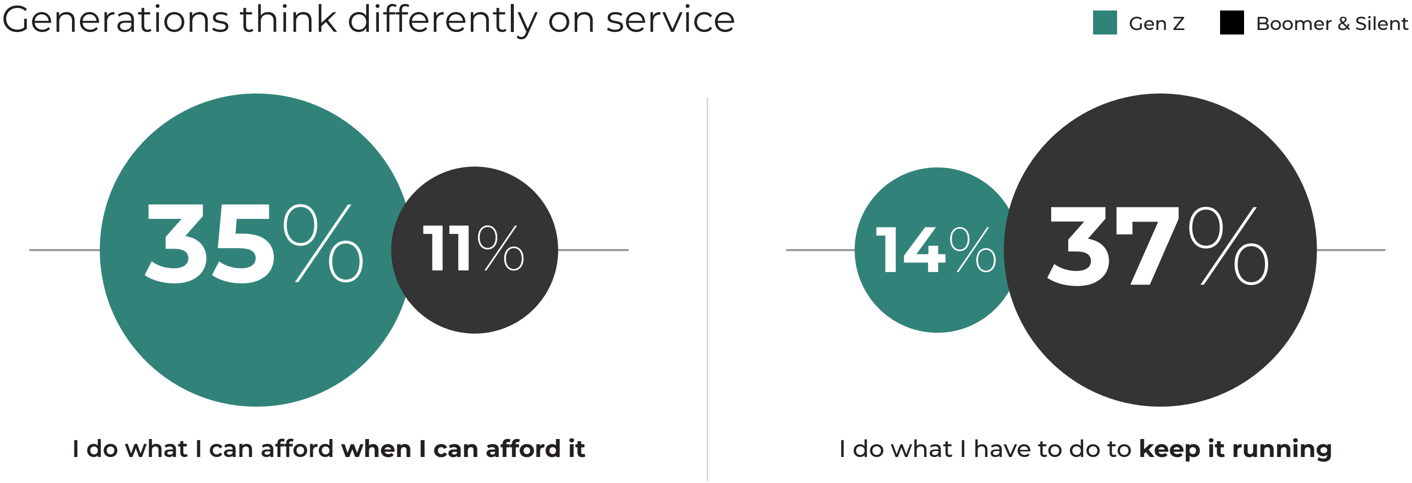
There were far more service shoppers who indicated they're doing everything they can to keep their car running than any other category. The 31% figure is also the highest it's been in the three years we've been asking this question.

The other group gaining ground is concerned with their car's resale value. It may be that uncertainty when it comes to interest rates and tariffs are keeping people on the sidelines, and while they're waiting they want to make sure they get the best deal for their eventual trade-in as they possibly can.



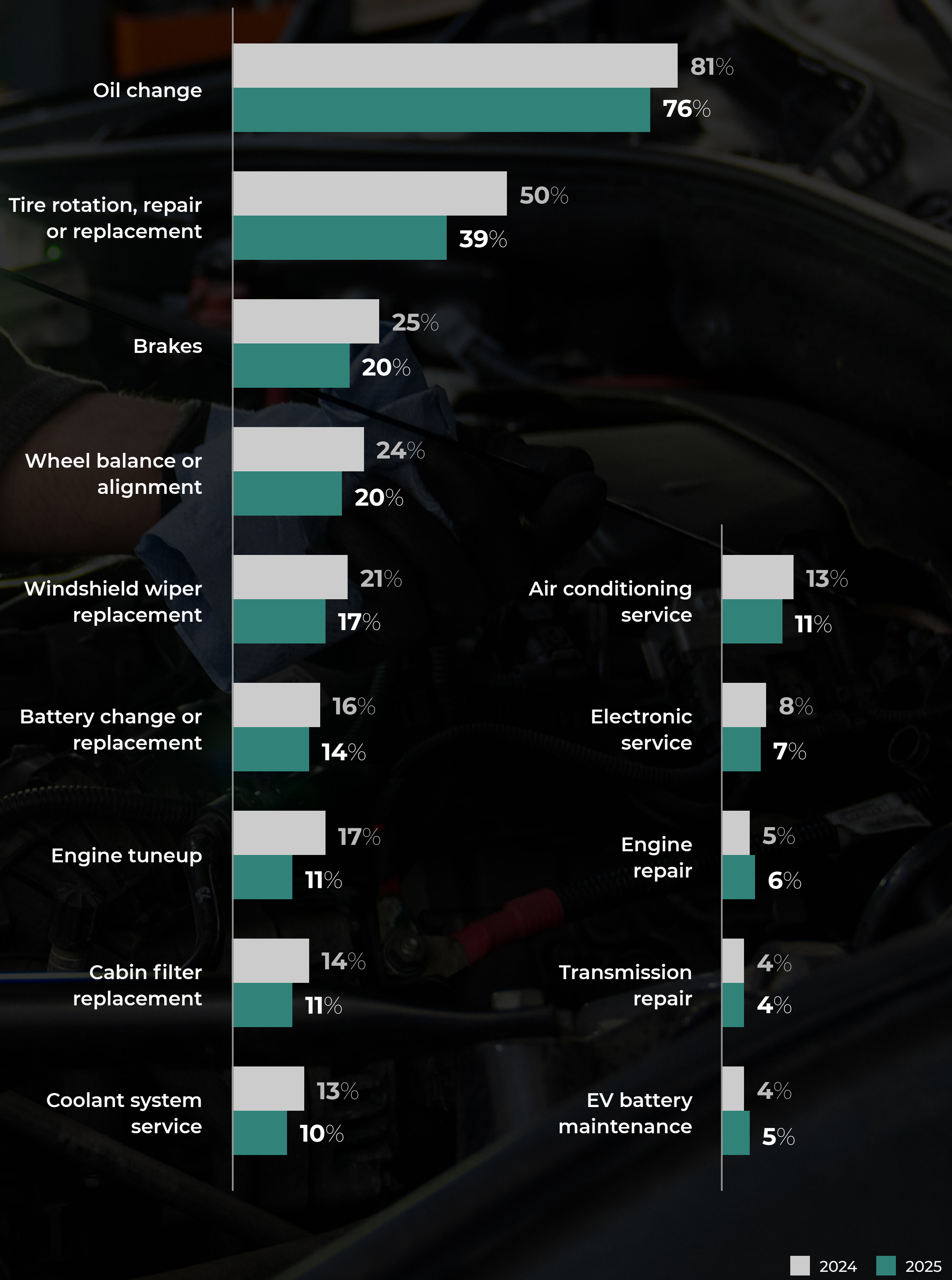
Young vs. Old

Generations think differently on service



Despite these two groups improving, there was far less maintenance being performed overall. And that's not because of EVs — only 3% of respondents said they owned one, up from just 2% last year. But when you looked at what was done by specific providers, dealership customers had far more oil changes and tire rotations than their competitors, although it was very close when it came to oil changes performed at chain service providers (80% versus 78%). Besides cabin filter replacements, dealership service did not top competitors in any other category, winning out in just three out of 15.

Most Services Saw Drops in 2025

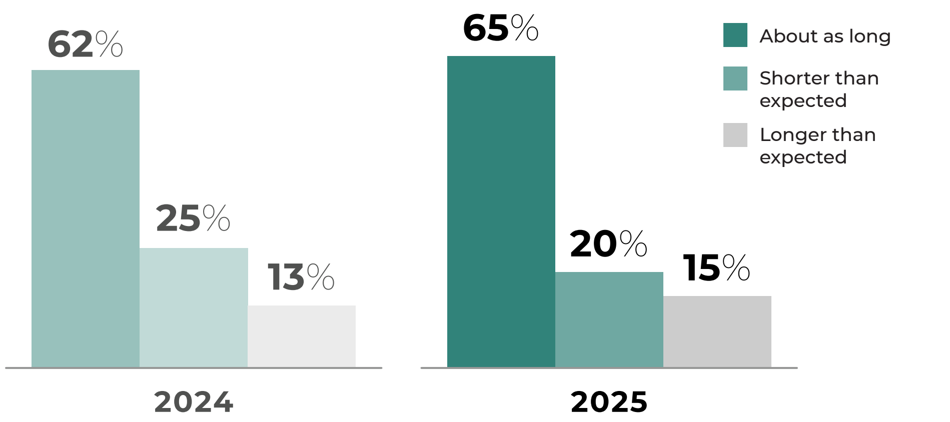


Completion Time

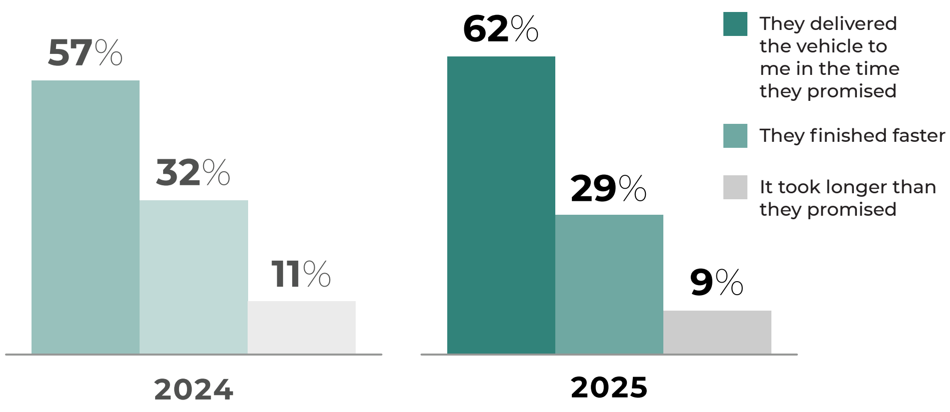
Once the services are sold, shoppers are generally seeing them completed in the time they expected and slightly more said the work was done in the time promised by the Service Advisor or faster. And not surprisingly, the faster the work is done, the higher the NPS score.

These results, which showed only small improvements versus 2024, don't suggest the need for Service departments to find ways to accelerate their work. Instead, it highlights the benefits delivered when you can deliver an accurate time estimate based on past work, which should all be discoverable through historic data.

Was your vehicle serviced and delivered to you in the time you expected?



Was your vehicle serviced and delivered to you in the time you were promised?



NPS by **time expectation**

+72
shorter than expected

+54
same time expected

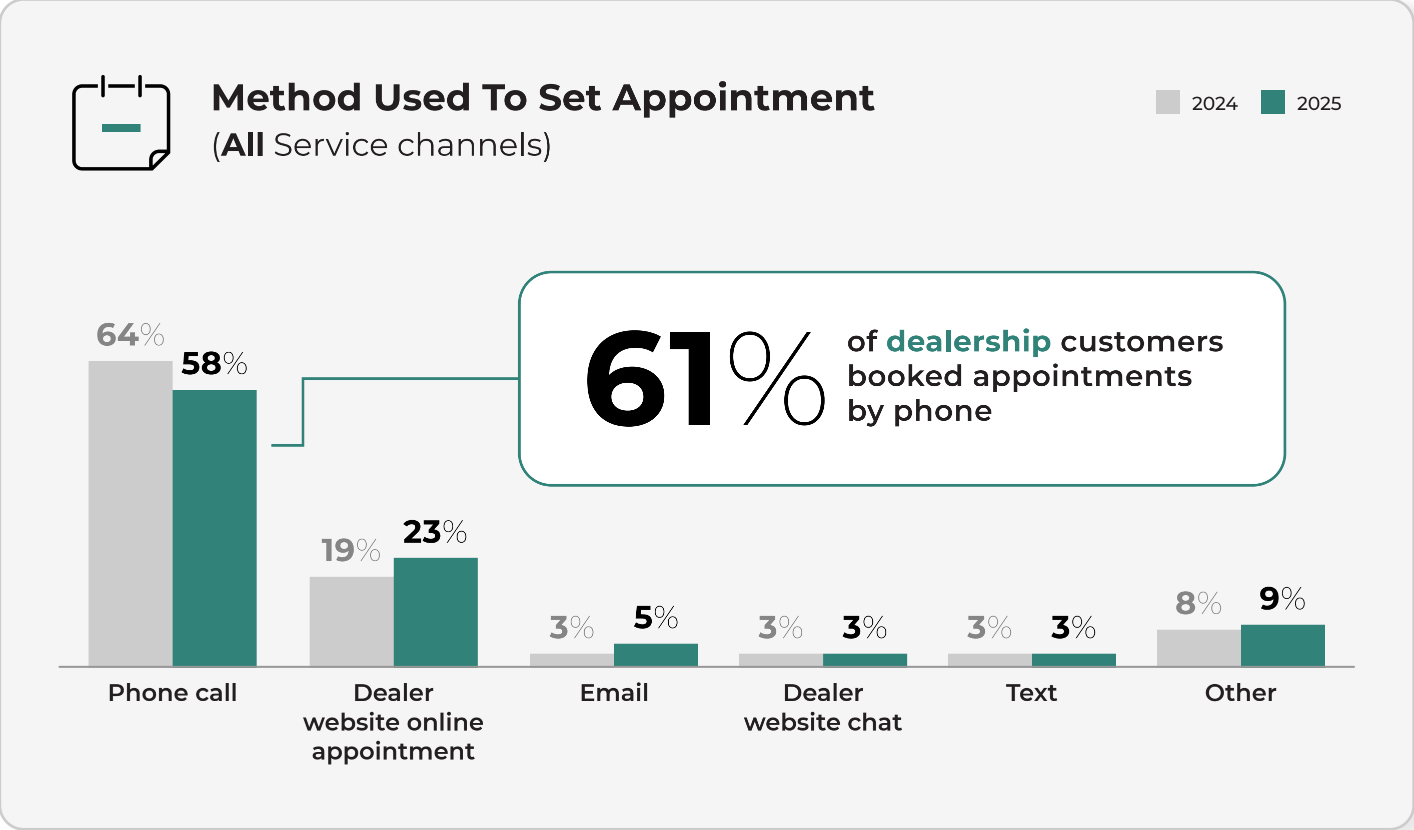
+29
longer than expected

Appointment Setting

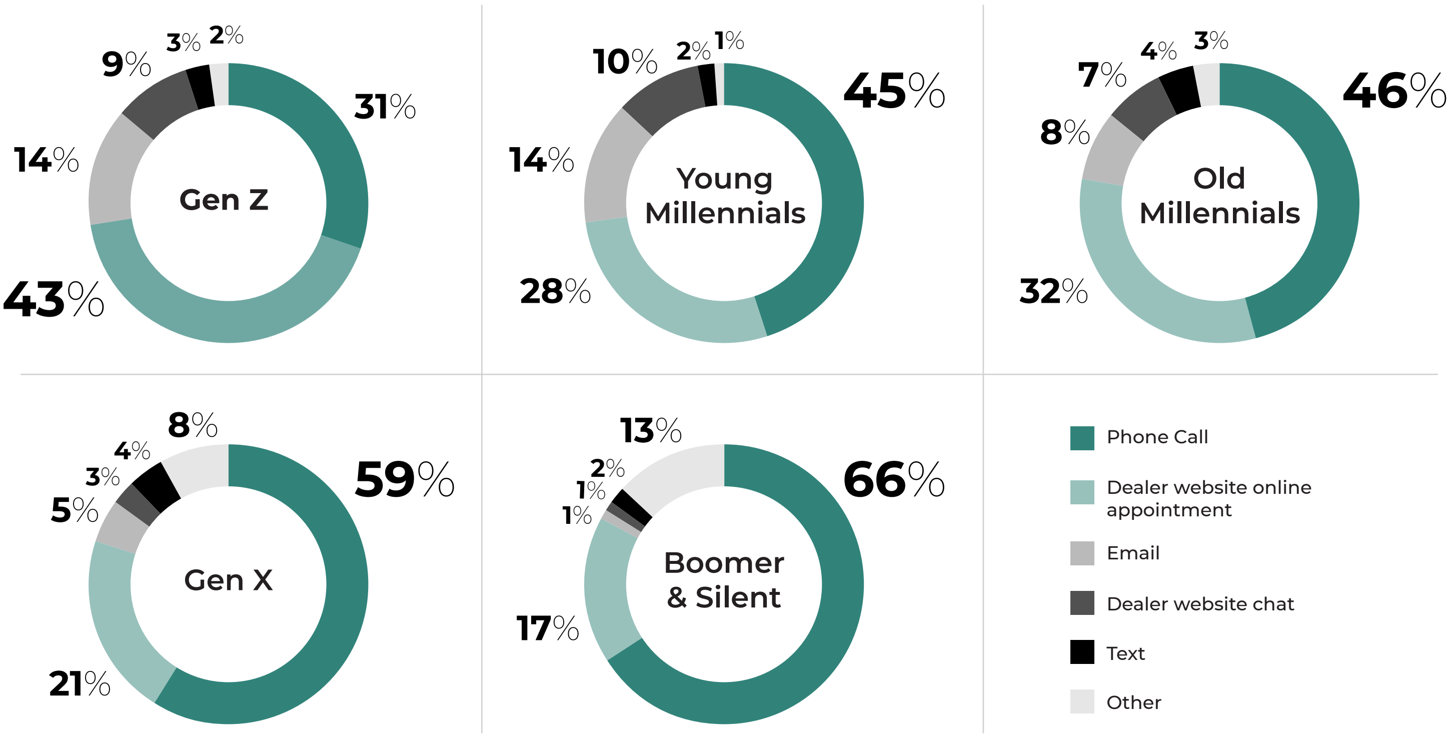
To get more services scheduled and improve on this year's results, appointment scheduling is integral. It's also often a sore point for Service Managers dealing with high volumes of calls during and after hours. The phone is still the overwhelming way most service shoppers set an appointment but it's trending down by age. Again, the heavy cohort of boomers among respondents tip the scales toward the phone. The majority of Gen Z (43%) is using the service provider's website to make appointments.

Fewer use Service department chat agents, but those numbers are growing among younger age groups compared to last year. More Gen Z (9%) and young millennial (10%) shoppers are using this option, compared to last year's result of 4% and 6%.

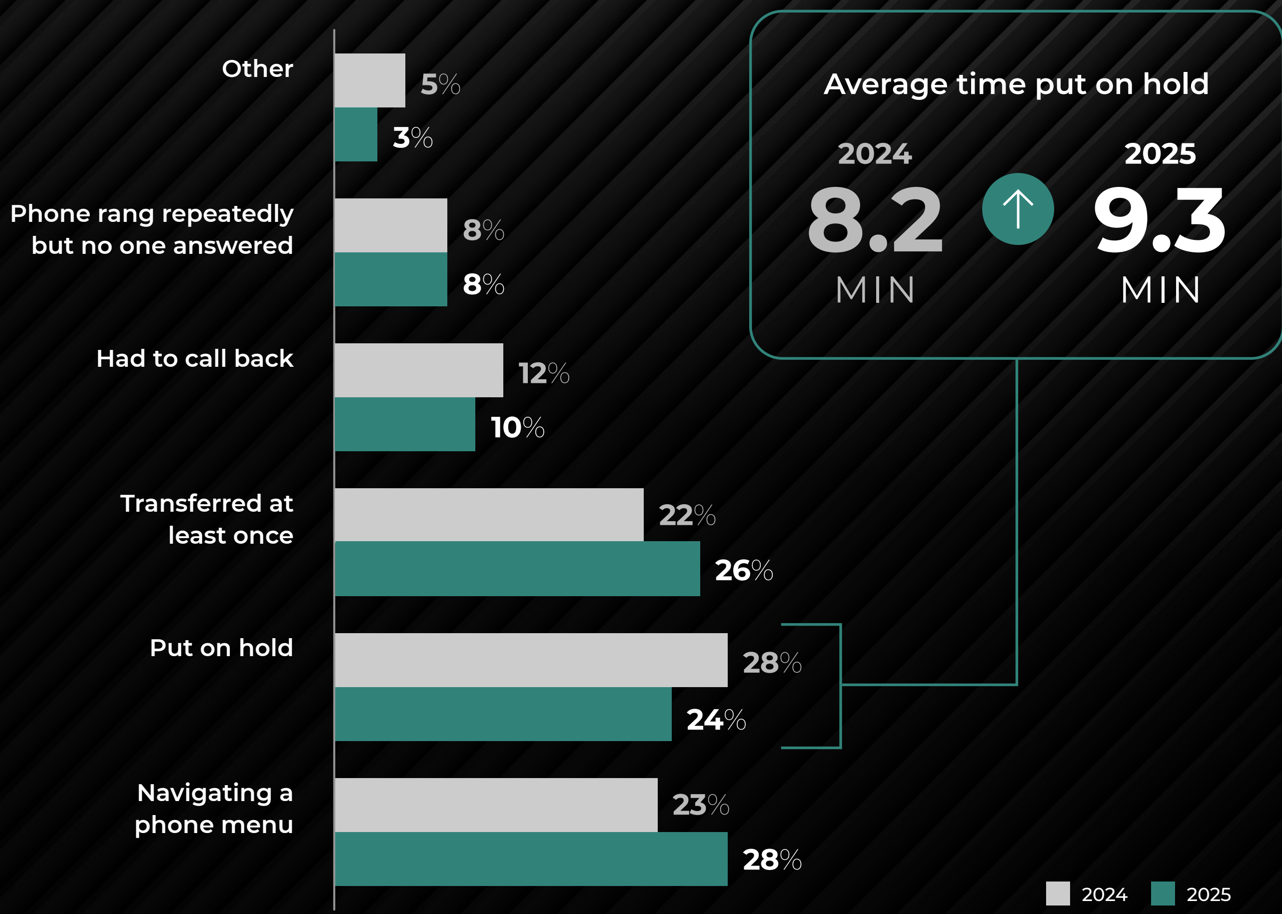
This year saw a marked improvement among the number of callers encountering issues. That number fell from four out of 10 to three out of 10 (29%). While that was an improvement, there was still a lot of friction among this group. Those who were put on hold (24%) were sitting on the line for over nine minutes — a full minute more than last year.



Method Used To Set Appointment at Dealership (By Age)



Phone **Friction Points**



Method Used To Set Service Appointment

Car dealership

65% Phone call
61% Phone call

Online appointment
24% 26%

Other
4% 5%

Independent service provider

73% Phone call
70% Phone call

Online appointment
7% 10%

Other
9% 10%

2024 2025

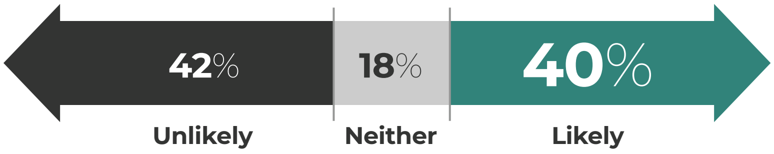
The Rise of Mobile Service

You can't spend much time talking about the future of service without hearing about the move to mobile repairs. More dealers are offering the option and more are sharing the success they're having with it. This year twice as many respondents said they used a mobile service provider (which wasn't distinguished between dealers or an alternative) but that was still just 6% of the total.

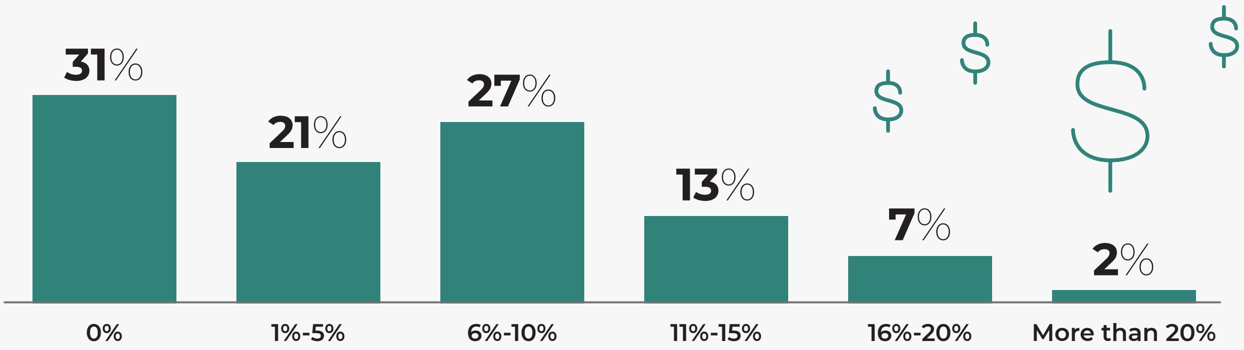
When we asked all respondents if they'd pay more for the convenience of having mobile service, an impressive 40% said they would. The majority of respondents (48%) said that they were willing to pay less than 10% more.

The important thing for dealerships considering this route is that mobile service scored far higher in terms of NPS at 64 compared to traditional dealership Service departments at 47. This number is also encroaching on independents (65). This may be an opportunity to boost loyalty and retention in Service.

How likely are you to **pay more for the convenience** of having a mechanic come to you?



How **much more** are you willing to pay for **mobile mechanic service**?

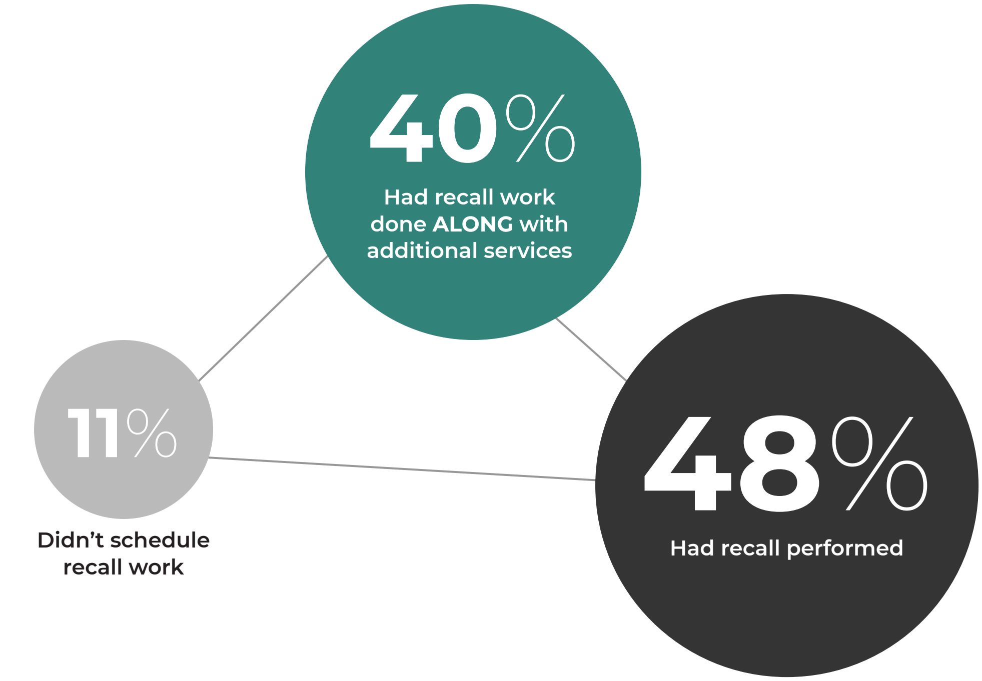


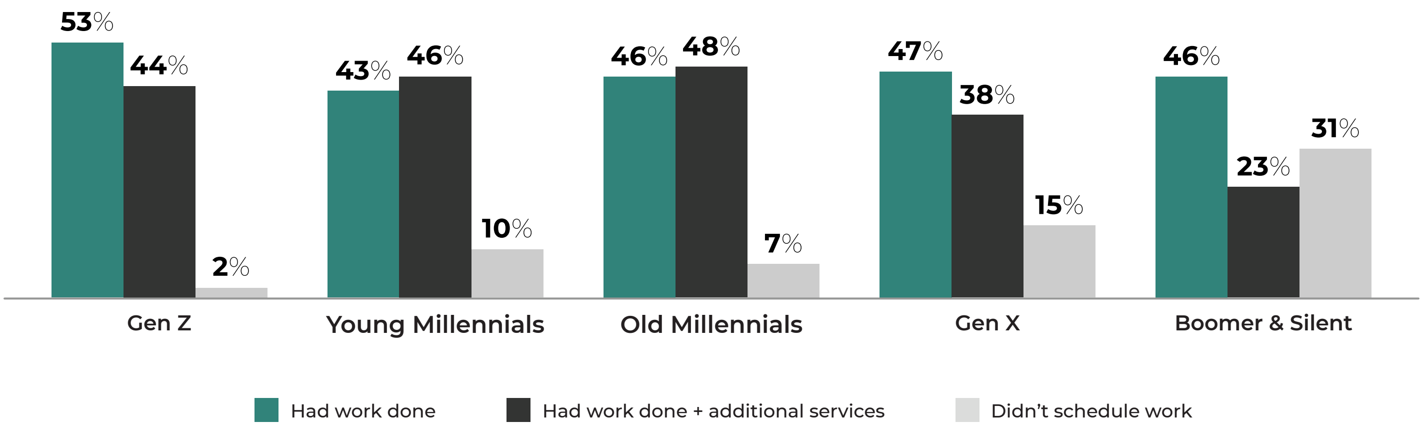
Recalls

Whether more car owners are focused on maintaining their vehicles or not, recalls provide a steady stream of business. Dealers may have opposing takes on recalls in terms of the impact to their overall Service department's performance but all will likely benefit from understanding how shoppers view this essential fix.

More than a third (35%) of those surveyed received a recall notice in the previous six months. In what may be a surprise, only 11% of that group didn't get the recall work done. Nearly half (48%) had the work done at the dealership or via mobile service. And, most importantly, the remaining 40% had additional service work done in addition to the recall.

What did you do about your recall?





Why **didn't** you get the recall work done?

30% Didn't see it as **necessary**

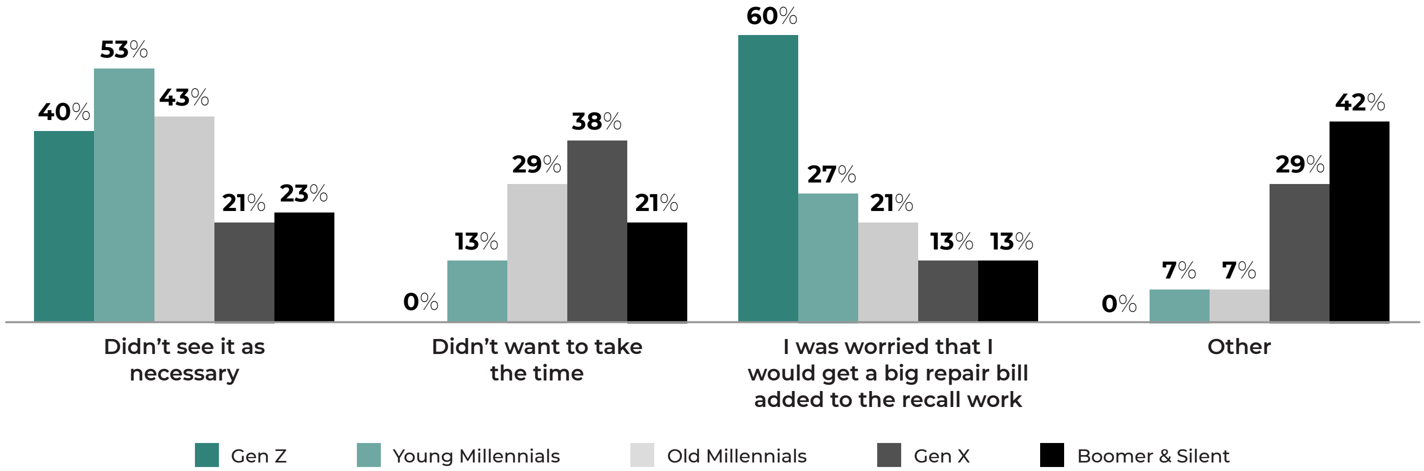
24% Didn't want to take the **time**

18% Worried about added **repair bill**

28% Other

Younger customers were more likely to opt for additional products. Ironically, it was also the youngest customers who were most likely to opt out of recall work due to the fear they'd have to pay for additional work. That suggests there's still a considerable amount of education to be done on the importance of recalls and maintenance overall for younger service customers.

Why **didn't** you get the recall work done?



Taking Action

This report showcases a number of areas to focus on — from recalls and appointment setting to delivering service in the time promised. Elevating the Service experience should both raise NPS scores and drive more customers. While satisfaction fell, the number of people who are open to coming to a dealership for service is going up among the most important groups. Consider any improvements to the Service department as future-proofing for these potential customers.

Make the Most Out of Recalls

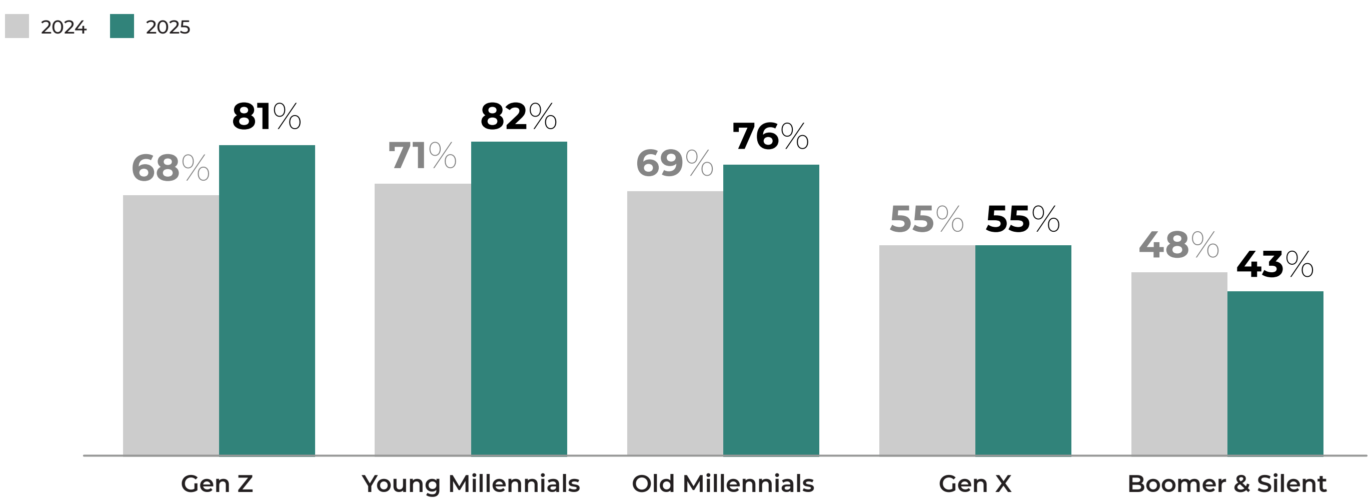
The old adage of making lemonade out of lemons is proven true when it comes to those adding recall services. Knowing that Gen Z and millennials are most likely to opt for added services, customize your outreach around recalls to those specific customers. However, when following up on delinquent recall customers, don't focus on additional work as it's likely the reason they're hesitating.

Focus on Phones

There's no clearer data point in this study than the negative impact of friction points when it comes to appointment calls. In the past year, a flurry of vendors have come on the scene to try and answer this issue. Yet, CDK has already been delivering an AI service called AIVA that works. More customers are becoming accustomed to interacting with AI voice and chat agents and some even prefer it to interacting with an actual human.

Most importantly, AI ensures customers don't miss scheduling an appointment due to unanswered calls or hold times. If a customer disconnects during the AI interaction, the system immediately flags the event, identifying who hung up and at what point in the process, so the dealership can follow up promptly.

I'd visit a dealership in the future for a service appointment

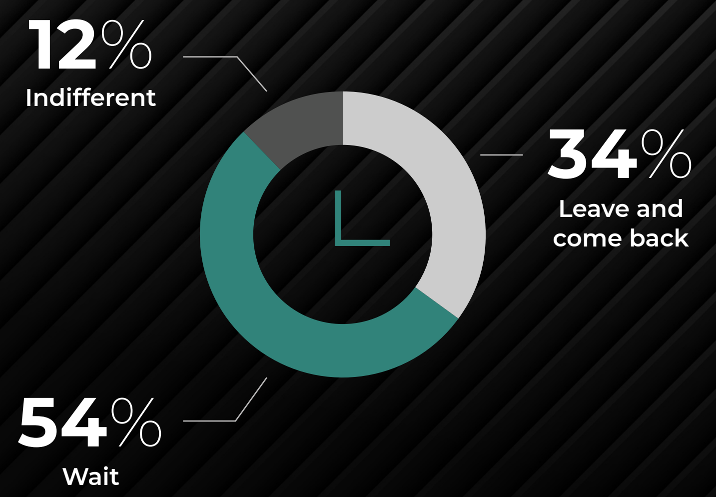


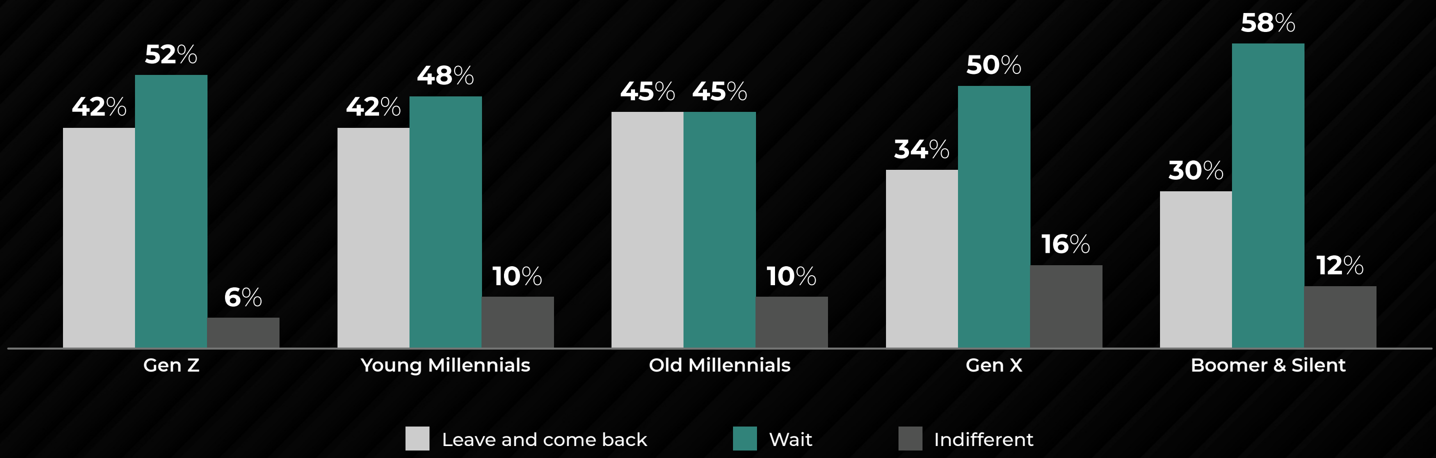
Take the Sting Out of Waiting

Once service is scheduled the majority (54%) want to wait at the dealership. This applies to all the age groups and not just boomers. A comfortable lounge is the number one preferred amenity these customers want from their service experience, and that hasn't changed greatly over the years.

A comfortable lounge is also something most independents and chain service providers generally lack. Younger customers are also driving the demand for work areas as white-collar jobs allow them to work from almost anywhere. This gives more flexibility for customers to schedule service any time of the day, not just the first or last appointment of the day.

For same-day service, would you like to **wait at the facility**?





Preferred Service **Waiting Area Amenities**

71% Comfortable lounge

47% Work areas

46% Snacks/ beverages

28% Restaurant/ bar close by

About This Study

CDK continues to connect dealerships with the broader retail ecosystem as well as car shoppers and owners. The Service department remains one of the linchpins of any dealership's operation and CDK endeavors to surface meaningful insights to better inform store leadership.

Rohini Tripathi

Study Lead Researcher

Rohini is a senior market research analyst at CDK. She has nearly 10 years of experience in research with global organizations spanning different industries such as media and entertainment, CPG and automotive retail. At CDK, Rohini works on various research initiatives for the Product, Technology and Marketing teams and provides insights and analysis to help make business-related decisions.

Devika Bernale

Study Lead Researcher

Devika is a market research analyst at CDK where she works on a variety of research initiatives across thought leadership and the Product Technology and Marketing teams. Her research bridges the gap between end customers, dealerships and CDK. Devika holds a mastevr's degree in marketing intelligence from the University of San Francisco.

David Thomas

Study Lead Author

As director of Content Marketing, David champions thought leadership across all platforms, connecting CDK's vast expertise to the broader market and trends driving our industry forward. David has spent 20 years in the automotive world as a product evaluator, journalist and marketer for brands like Autoblog, Cars.com, Nissan and Harley-Davidson.

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