



Replacing Used Cars: A Nationally Representative Multi-Mode Survey Results

Overview of Methodology

Consumer Reports fielded a nationally-representative survey of 2,178 Americans to explore what Americans do with the vehicles they already own when they purchase or lease new vehicles; the ways in which they dispose of the used vehicles, if they do; and what relates to satisfaction with different aspects of the process of disposing of the used cars. The results are based on interviews conducted November 18-26, 2019.

The survey was administered by NORC at the University of Chicago through its AmeriSpeak® Panel to a nationally representative sample. Interviews were administered both online (n = 4,773) and by phone (n = 424). A total of 5,197 Americans completed the initial screener ("In the last two years, have you purchased or leased a vehicle?"). Those who had were asked whether it was a replacement for another vehicle; 2,178 people replaced a vehicle and were eligible for the rest of the survey. Final data are weighted by sex, age, education, and race/ethnicity. All interviews were in English.

TOPLINE RESULTS

The questions presented below were shown to respondents in order. Where appropriate, question verbiage, response answer choices, or direction of scales were randomized or rotated and those instances are noted below.

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Q1. [SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTION TEXT: "BY 'VEHICLE' WE MEAN A MOTORIZED, FOUR-WHEEL MACHINE YOU OFTEN USE FOR TRANSPORTATION, SUCH AS A CAR, TRUCK, SUV, MINIVAN, STATION WAGON, SPORTS CAR, ETC. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT MEAN MOTORIZED BIKES, MOTORCYCLES, BOATS, SCOOTERS, TRACTORS, ETC."]

In the last two years, have you purchased or leased a vehicle?	
	Total
	%
Yes, one vehicle	49
Yes, two or more vehicles	11
I have not purchased a vehicle in the past two years	39
Base: Respondents who completed screener	5,197

Note: Respondents who said they had not purchased or leased a vehicle in the last two years or did not answer the question were dropped and not shown any subsequent questions.

Q2. [RESPONSE OPTIONS SHOWN IN THIS ORDER: NEW FROM DEALER; USED FROM DEALER; USED FROM PRIVATE PARTY; USED FROM OTHER ORGANIZATION; OTHER.]

Please tell us more about the vehicle you purchased or leased most recently. Was it . . .	
	Total
	%
Used, purchased or leased from a dealer	42
New, purchased or leased from a dealer	35
Used, purchased from a private party	20
Used, purchased from any other organization (not a private party or dealership)	2
Other, please specify:	1
Base: All eligible respondents (purchased or leased a vehicle in the past two years)	3,032

Q3.

Was the vehicle you purchased or leased most recently a replacement for another vehicle?	
	Total
	%
Yes	68
No, I kept the vehicle I already owned or leased	22
I did not already have a vehicle when I purchased or leased this one	9
Base: All eligible respondents (purchased or leased a vehicle in the past two years)	3,039

Note: Respondents who said they did not already have a vehicle or did not answer the question were dropped and not shown any subsequent questions.

Q3K. [SHOW IF Q3 = "NO, I KEPT THE VEHICLE I ALREADY OWNED OR LEASED." SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTION TEXT: "FOR EXAMPLE, DID YOU TRY TO SELL OR DONATE IT FIRST?"]

Did you try to do anything else with this vehicle first, before you decided to keep it?	
	Total
	%
Yes	14
No	86
Base: Respondents who kept the vehicle they already owned or leased	
	609

Q4. [QUESTION TEXT DISPLAYED AS "PLEASE TELL US ABOUT THE VEHICLE YOU REPLACED." TELEPHONE RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED, "COULD YOU PLEASE SHARE THE MAKE, MODEL, AND YEAR OF THE VEHICLE THAT YOU REPLACED?" WHILE INTERNET RESPONDENTS SAW DROP-DOWN LISTS TO SELECT MAKE, MODEL, AND YEAR, WITH FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS: "IF YOU DO NOT SEE THE MAKE, MODEL, AND YEAR OF YOUR VEHICLE, PLEASE WRITE IT IN HERE." BRANDS WITH 100 OR MORE RESPONDENTS ARE SHOWN. YEARS ARE COMBINED INTO FIVE-YEAR CATEGORIES FOR EASE OF DISPLAY.]

Brand of Replaced Vehicle	
	Total
	%
Chevrolet	24
Ford	21
Toyota	19
Honda	15
Dodge	11
Nissan	10
Base: Respondents who replaced their previous vehicle. Only showing brands with 100 or more respondents.	
	1,224

Model Year of Replaced Vehicle	
	Total
	%
2000 to 2004	25
2005 to 2009	26
2010 to 2014	24
2015 to 2019 + 2020	26
Base: Respondents who replaced their previous vehicle.	
	2,098

Q5. [SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL TEXT: "IN OTHER WORDS, IF THERE WERE MULTIPLE PEOPLE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD, WERE YOU THE ONE WHO USED IT MOST OFTEN, REGARDLESS OF LEGAL OWNERSHIP? (IF YOU ARE THE ONLY PERSON IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD, IT WAS PRIMARILY YOUR VEHICLE.)"]

Was this primarily your vehicle?	
	Total
	%
Yes, it was primarily my vehicle	81
No, it was primarily someone else's vehicle	14
No, there are multiple people in my household but we all used the vehicle about equally	5
Base: Respondents who replaced their previous vehicle	2,173

Q6. [RANDOMIZE. HOLD "OTHER" AT END OF LIST.]

When you bought or leased your new vehicle, what did you do with the vehicle it replaced?	
	Total
	%
Traded it in	40
Sold it	26
Nothing; the new vehicle replaced one that had been stolen or damaged	9
Gave it to a friend or family member	8
Turned it in (leased vehicles only)	7
Paid a salvage yard to take it	4
Donated it to a charity	3
Abandoned it (left it on the side of the road, in a parking lot, in a vacant lot, etc.)	<1
Other, please specify:	3
Base: Respondents who replaced their previous vehicle (including those who wrote in what they did)	2,205

Note: Respondents who said they abandoned the vehicle or that the vehicle had been stolen or damaged were dropped from the rest of the survey, as were people who did not answer the question.

Q7. [SHOW IF RESPONSE TO Q6 = "SOLD IT."]

When you sold this vehicle, did you...?	
	Total
	%
Sell it to an individual or dealership	85
Sell it for parts/scrap	15
Base: Respondents who sold the vehicle they replaced. Write-ins included when specific enough (e.g. "sold for scrap" included; "sold" not included).	
	534

INSTRUCTION. [SHOW TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE VALID INFORMATION FOR MODEL AND MAKE AS: "FOR THE REST OF THIS SURVEY, WE'RE GOING TO ASK YOU ABOUT THIS VEHICLE— THAT IS, THE [YEAR MAKE MODEL] THAT YOU REPLACED." FOR RESPONDENTS WHO WROTE IN THAT INFORMATION, SHOW AS "FOR THE REST OF THIS SURVEY, WE'RE GOING TO ASK YOU ABOUT THIS VEHICLE—THAT IS, THE [WRITE IN] THAT YOU REPLACED." FOR RESPONDENTS MISSING THAT INFORMATION, SHOW AS "FOR THE REST OF THIS SURVEY, WE'RE GOING TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE VEHICLE THAT YOU REPLACED."]

Q8. [SHOW UNLESS Q6 = "TURNED IT IN (LEASED VEHICLES ONLY)." WORDING PIPED IN RESPONSES TO Q6 AND GAVE EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVES—SEE TABLE BELOW.]

Did you try to do anything else with this vehicle (such as donate it) first, before you decided to . . . ?	
	Total
	%
Yes	6
No	94
Base: Respondents who replaced their previous vehicle, except those who turned in a leased vehicle	
	1,830

If the respondent said they then Q8 read:
Traded in a vehicle	Did you try to do anything else with this vehicle (such as donate it) first, before you decided to trade it in?
Sold a vehicle	Did you try to do anything else with this vehicle (such as donate it) first, before you decided to sell it?
Gave a vehicle to a friend or family member	Did you try to do anything else with this vehicle (such as donate it) first, before you decided to give it to a friend or family member?
Paid a salvage yard to take a vehicle	Did you try to do anything else with this vehicle (such as donate it) first, before you decided to pay a salvage yard to take it?
Donated a vehicle to a charity	Did you try to do anything else with this vehicle (such as sell it) first, before you decided to donate it?
Other, please specify:	Did you try to do anything else with this vehicle (such as donate it) first, before you decided to [whatever they wrote they did with it]?

Q9.

Counting from the time you first took any action to get rid of your vehicle, how long did it take until you were no longer in possession of it?

	Total
	%
Less than one day	32
At least one day but less than four days	17
At least four days but less than one week	10
At least one week but less than ten days	11
At least ten days but less than two weeks	7
At least two weeks but less than three weeks	5
At least three weeks but less than one month	5
At least one month but less than two months	6
Two months or more	8
Base: Respondents who replaced their previous vehicle	
	1,999

Q11. [SHOW IF Q6 = "SOLD IT" AND Q7 IS NOT "SELL IT FOR PARTS/SCRAP". SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTION TEXT: "PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY." ROTATE DETAILED/GENERAL MAINTENANCE/INSPECTED, HOLDING "DID NONE OF THESE THINGS" AT END. "DID NONE OF THESE THINGS" WAS EXCLUSIVE.]

Before you sold the vehicle, did you do any of the following to help it sell more quickly or for a higher price?

	Total
	%
Did none of these things	43
Have general maintenance done	38
Get it detailed	38
Get it inspected	15
Base: Respondents who sold the vehicle they replaced (excluding write-ins of "sold")	
	466

Q12. [SHOW IF Q6 = "SOLD IT." SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTION TEXT: "PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY." RANDOMIZE. HOLD "NONE OF THE ABOVE" AT END. "NONE OF THE ABOVE" IS EXCLUSIVE.]

Below is a list of actions people commonly take before selling their vehicles. Which, if any, of the following did you do?

	Total
	%
Posted it online	47
Asked people I know if they're interested in buying it	41
Put a for sale sign in the window of the car	21
Got it appraised by CarMax	5
Got it appraised by a used car dealership (not CarMax)	5
Got it appraised by a new car dealership	5
Placed an ad in a physical newspaper	4
None of the above	15
Base: Respondents who sold the vehicle they replaced (excluding write-ins of "sold")	
	522

Q13. [SHOW IF Q6 = "SOLD IT." ONLY SHOW PRINT NEWSPAPER, FOR SALE SIGN, ONLINE POSTING, SOMEONE I KNOW, AND NONE OF THE ABOVE IF THOSE WERE SELECTED IN Q12.]

How did you ultimately sell the vehicle?

	Total
	%
An online posting	39
Someone I know	28
A used car dealership (not CarMax)	6
A "for sale" sign in the car window	5
A new car dealership	4
CarMax	3
An ad in a print newspaper	2
None of the above	12
Base: Respondents who sold the vehicle they replaced (excluding write-ins of "sold")	
	521

Q14. [SHOW IF "POSTED IT ONLINE" SELECTED IN Q12. SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTION TEXT: "PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY." RANDOMIZE. HOLD "OTHER" AT END.]

On which, if any, of the following websites did you list the vehicle?	
	Total
	%
Craigslist	54
Facebook Marketplace	46
Auto Trader	5
Car Gurus	3
Cars.com	3
Ebay Motors	1
Other, please specify	14
Base: Respondents who sold the vehicle they replaced (excluding write-ins of "sold") and posted it online (Q12_3=1)	
	246

Q15. [SHOW IF Q13 = "AN ONLINE POSTING" AND Q14 IS NOT MISSING. ONLY SHOW EACH RESPONSE OPTION IF IT WAS SELECTED IN Q14. RANDOMIZE. HOLD WRITE-IN "OTHER" RESPONSE AT END.]

Through which site did you ultimately sell your vehicle?	
	Total
	%
Craigslist	44
Facebook Marketplace	39
Auto Trader	2
Cars.com	<1
Ebay Motors	<1
[Response to Q14_7]	14
Base: Respondents who sold the vehicle they replaced online (excluding write-ins of "sold")	
	201

Q10. [SHOW IF Q6 IS NOT "TURNED IT IN (LEASED VEHICLES ONLY)." SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTION TEXT: "PLEASE SELECT UP TO 3 RESPONSES." RANDOMIZE. WORDING PIPED IN RESPONSES TO Q4 AND Q13—SEE TABLE BELOW.]

When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to do it this way?	
	Total
	%
To minimize hassle	46
To get the vehicle off my hands as quickly as possible	38
To make as much money as possible	23
Preferred not to work with individuals I don't know	10
To not have people contacting me	8
To help a person I know (only shown to people who gave to a friend or family member)	8
Tried another method and wasn't satisfied	7
To help a cause (only shown to people who donated)	2
Other, please specify	17
Base: Respondents who replaced their previous vehicle, except those who turned in a leased vehicle	
1,819	

If the respondent said they . . . then Q10 read:	
Traded in a vehicle	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to trade it in?
Gave a vehicle to a friend or family member	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to give it to a friend or family member?
Paid a salvage yard to take a vehicle	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to pay a salvage yard to take it?
Donated a vehicle to a charity	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to donate it to a charity?
Sold a vehicle through a website	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to sell it through an online posting?
Sold a vehicle through someone they knew	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to sell it through someone I know?
Sold a vehicle through a used car dealership (not CarMax)	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to sell it through a used car dealership (not CarMax)?
Sold a vehicle through a "for sale" sign in the window	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to sell it through a "for sale" sign in the car window?
Sold a vehicle through a new car dealership	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to sell it through a new car dealership?
Sold a vehicle through CarMax	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to sell it through CarMax?
Sold a vehicle through an ad in a print newspaper	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to sell it through an ad in a print newspaper?
Sold a vehicle through a different method	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to sell it through . . . ?
Got rid of a vehicle through a different method	When deciding how to get rid of your vehicle, why did you choose to [whatever they wrote they did with it]?
Make and model of the vehicle were piped in from a respondent's earlier answers if the respondent provided that information (Q4). What is written here as "your vehicle" displayed as, e.g., "your 2002 Toyota Camry" or "your 2017 Jeep Grand Cherokee." If the response to Q4 was written in, the question used what the respondent had written. If Q4 was missing, the question displayed as "your vehicle."	

Q16. [SHOW IF Q6 = "SOLD IT." SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTION TEXT: "SELECT ALL THE RESOURCES YOU CHECKED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOUR VEHICLE WAS WORTH." RANDOMIZE. HOLD "OTHER" AND "I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING" AT END.]

How did you figure out what your vehicle was worth before selling it?	
	Total
	%
Kelly Blue Book	55
I used my own judgment	43
Looked at similar listings	34
Dealer told me	9
Edmunds.com	9
I didn't do anything	5
Consumer Reports	3
Other, please specify	4
Base: Respondents who sold the vehicle they replaced (excluding those who wrote in "sold")	
	522

Q17. [FULL QUESTION WORDING INCLUDED "...COMPLETE (I.E., YOU WERE NO LONGER IN POSSESSION OF THE VEHICLE)?" ROTATE RESPONSE SCALE.]

How satisfied are you with how long it took from when you decided to replace your vehicle to the transaction being complete?	
	Total
	%
Completely satisfied	39
Very satisfied	30
Somewhat satisfied	19
Somewhat dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	4
Completely dissatisfied	4
Base: Respondents who replaced their previous vehicle	
	1,994

Q18. [SHOW IF Q6 IS NOT "TURNED IT IN (LEASED VEHICLES ONLY)." SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTION TEXT: "PLEASE RESPOND ONLY FOR THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH YOU ULTIMATELY GOT RID OF THE VEHICLE, NOT THE PROCESS OF GETTING THE NEW ONE." ROTATE RESPONSE SCALE.]

Overall, how satisfied are you with the convenience of the process of getting rid of the vehicle you replaced?	
	Total
	%
Completely satisfied	36
Very satisfied	31
Somewhat satisfied	19
Somewhat dissatisfied	6
Very dissatisfied	4
Completely dissatisfied	5
Base: Respondents who replaced their previous vehicle, except those who turned in a leased vehicle	
	1,817

Q19. [SHOW IF Q6 IS "SOLD IT" OR "TRADED IT IN." SHOW WORDING AS "HOW MUCH MONEY YOU GOT FOR YOUR VEHICLE" FOR RESPONDENTS WHO SOLD IT AND "WHAT YOUR TRADE-IN WAS WORTH" FOR RESPONDENTS WHO TRADED IT IN. ROTATE RESPONSE SCALE.]

Overall, how satisfied are you with how much money you got for your vehicle/what your trade-in was worth?	
	Total
	%
Completely satisfied	19
Very satisfied	25
Somewhat satisfied	29
Somewhat dissatisfied	15
Very dissatisfied	8
Completely dissatisfied	5
Base: Respondents who replaced their previous vehicle by selling it or trading it in (excluding write-ins of "sold" or "traded in")	
	1,412

Q20. [SHOW IF Q6 IS NOT "TURNED IT IN (LEASED VEHICLES ONLY)". OPEN-ENDED QUESTION.]

Now that you've told us about your experience, is there anything you would like to add?

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