



# Consumers in the Micro-Moment: What it Means for Auto Brands

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Mobile has changed the auto purchase journey. From researching brands while on a lunch break to comparing prices on the dealership lot, mobile has an impact every step of the way. Here we show examples of how real people behave in the five key auto micro-moments and what it means for your brand.

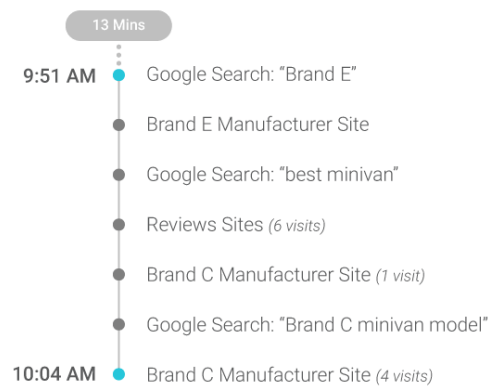
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## Which-Car-Is-Best Moments

Did you know that six out of 10 car shoppers enter the market unsure which car to buy?<sup>1</sup> But consumers often turn to mobile at the start of their purchase journey to discover new brands or help narrow down their choices. Take one consumer, Stacy, for example:<sup>2</sup>

### Stacy's which-car-is-best moments

One of Stacy's mobile search paths



Stacy's Google searches:  
"best minivan"  
"best car for families with car seats and dog"

You can see one of her mobile which-car-is-best search paths includes review site comparisons and visits to two manufacturer's websites. For Stacy—and other consumers like her—the brands that are there in these moments at the beginning of the car buying journey are the ones likely to become a part of the final consideration set when it comes time to buy.

## Is-It-Right-For-Me Moments

For many auto shoppers, the dealership has moved online. Consumers lead busy lives, so they are increasingly turning to mobile to perform preliminary auto research—to find out if a vehicle will suit their lifestyle and needs without having to visit the lot. In fact, these days, the average car shopper makes just two visits to dealerships.<sup>3</sup>



Here, we see Glori at the pool waiting for her child to finish a swim class. She uses her smartphone to research vehicle features—which consumers traditionally used to go to the dealership to do. If you want to reach people like Glori, make sure your mobile site is optimized so shoppers can continue their research and easily find the answers they are looking for when they have a few spare moments.

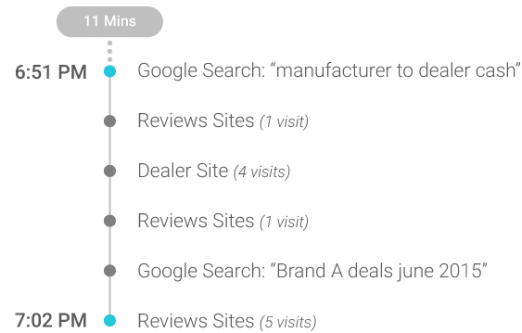
## Can-I-Afford-It Moments

There are very few consumers out there who are able to buy a car without considering the financial consequences, and for this large majority mobile is their new BFF. For today's auto shopper, 70% of searches for car MSRP

and list prices are done on mobile.<sup>4</sup>

## Stacy's can-I-afford-it moments

One of Stacy's mobile search paths



### Stacy's Google searches:

- "Brand A price"
- "best car lease deals"
- "get out of Current Brand lease early"

Revisiting Stacy's journey, we can see that in one of her mobile can-I-afford-it search paths, she investigated multiple review sites and would have been exposed to many brands.<sup>5</sup> What if your brand isn't showing up in these moments? You might lose a potential consumer not because they can't afford your vehicle, but because they couldn't find the information they were looking for.

## Where-Should-I-Buy-It Moments

We're not quite at the stage of making auto purchases straight from our smartphones. So, if you want to be one of the few dealership visits consumers make when they're ready to buy, it's critical that they can

find you through mobile. One in three car shoppers, who use their mobile devices as part of the car purchase process, locate or call a dealer on their mobile device.<sup>6</sup>



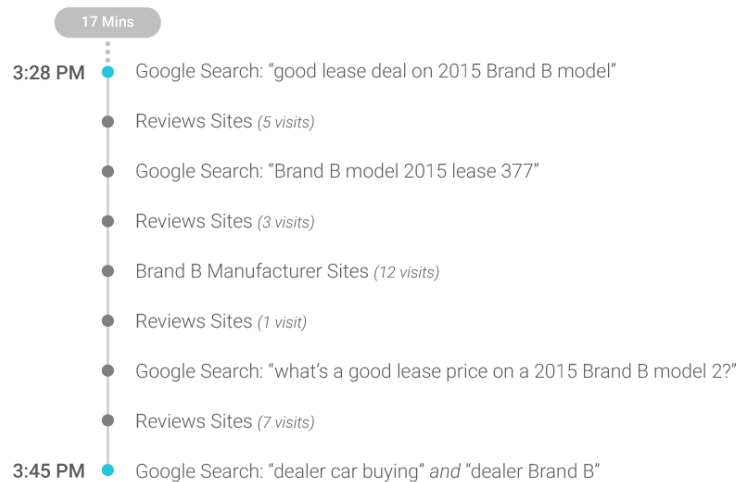
Thanks to mobile, consumers like Garrett can fuel their research process right in the moment. In this instance, Garrett used his smartphone to locate and call a dealer, because he spotted a car he fell in love with. But he just as easily could have given up entirely and put the car sighting down to a pleasant memory, or turned to another dealer that did provide the information he was looking for.

## **Am-I-Getting-A-Deal Moments**

Okay, so the consumer is on the lot. You're getting ready to close the sale . . . but they keep looking at their smartphone. That's because searches for competing dealers occur more often when at the dealership.<sup>7</sup>

## Stacy's am-I-getting-a-deal moments

One of Stacy's mobile search paths



### Stacy's Google searches:

"what's a good lease money factor"

"what do you pay for Brand D make/model lease"

As you can see from one of Stacy's am-I-getting-a-deal search paths, even when consumers have decided on a vehicle and are on the lot ready to buy, they still want real-time advice that they're getting the best value.<sup>8</sup>

## What can your brand do?

**Be there:** One in four car purchasers turn to mobile every day to research vehicles.<sup>9</sup> Go through the moments above and ask yourself: Is my brand showing up? Make sure you're there at every step so you don't miss out on being part of the consideration set when the consumer makes the decision to buy.

**Be useful:** Help consumers say "Yes!" to your brand by giving them the content they need, when they need it—whether that be videos and images of your cars, dealership locations, pricing and inventory, or anything in between. Optimize for mobile, so people can research on the go.

**Measure what matters:** Know the impact of being there in micro-moments by making sure your digital campaigns get the offline credit they deserve. Tools such as Google [store visits](#) or [store sales](#) can help. For example, [store sales](#), leveraging its partnership with Oracle Data Cloud, can help auto manufacturers automatically attribute car registration details without data uploads. By understanding the makes, models, regions, devices, and keywords that drive the most purchases, you can be there and be useful in the micro-moments that win consumers' minds (and wallets).

## Sources

- 1,6,9 Millward Brown Digital and Polk, "Automotive Shopper Path to Purchase," September 2015.
- 2,5,8 Google partnered with Luth Research. Luth analyzed the digital activity of its opt-in panel participants. This article details the cross-device clickstream data of one individual named Stacy over a period of three months.
- 3 Google/TNS, Auto Shopper Study, 2016, United States. Consumer Barometer n=526.
- 4 Google Internal Data, September 2015, United States.
- 7 Aggregated anonymized internal data from a sample of US users that have turned on Location History. Queries were considered as being "from" a location if they occurred within one hour of a user visit to a car dealership. September 2015.