

# THE FUTURE OF AUTO

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Engaging tomorrow's car buyer  
in the experience-led economy



# AUTO IS CHANGING

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The experience economy has changed how and when people spend their money. With outright ownership of physical products declining, and consumer appetite for services and experiences growing, how do auto brands fit in?

The BIO Agency recently surveyed over 1000 people in the UK to find out what customers think about the auto buying experience. The findings showed interesting behavioural shifts and some rather contrasting results, which add up to a complex picture of opportunity for auto brands.

Our research suggests customers use a wide range of sources to get themselves to a decision and to make the purchase itself. Forums, blogs, word of mouth and motoring websites all play a role that, when combined, influence customers more than a single auto brand website. The opportunity for auto brands is to create frictionless, omnichannel experiences that understand and respond to customers' preferences, wherever they're established.

*- Peter Veash, CEO at The BIO Agency*

First, some good news for car makers

50%

of consumers  
depend on  
auto brands  
for **knowledge**

... and car dealerships are still top of the list



1 in 3 customers think car dealerships are the most important **information source** for choosing a new vehicle

But are they

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doing  
enough?

to survive in  
the experience-led economy



# THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN'

Only

**17%**

of consumers plan to buy a new car in the next 2 years

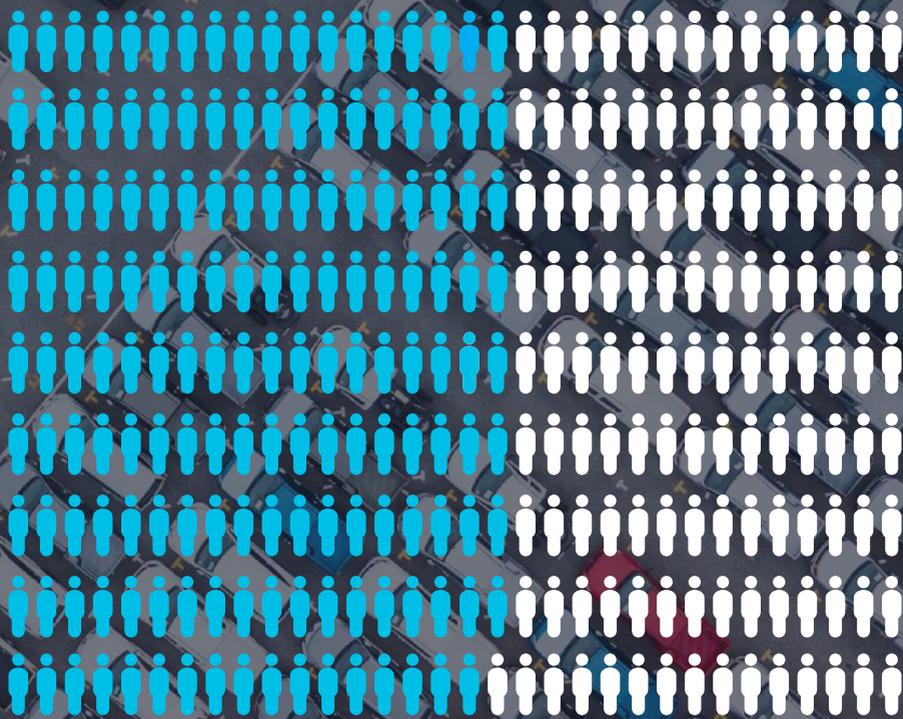
**51%**

do not plan to purchase a new car

**7%**

do not intend to ever own a car

# Consumers don't like visiting dealerships



# 56%

said feeling  
under pressure  
to buy would stop  
them visiting

Because their needs are not being met in the showrooms...

41%

said **being kept waiting** too long would be a big issue when visiting showrooms

The traditional sales process no longer works – customers don't want to feel under pressure, but also demand what they want here and now.

## ... or digital environments

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As little as

# 17%

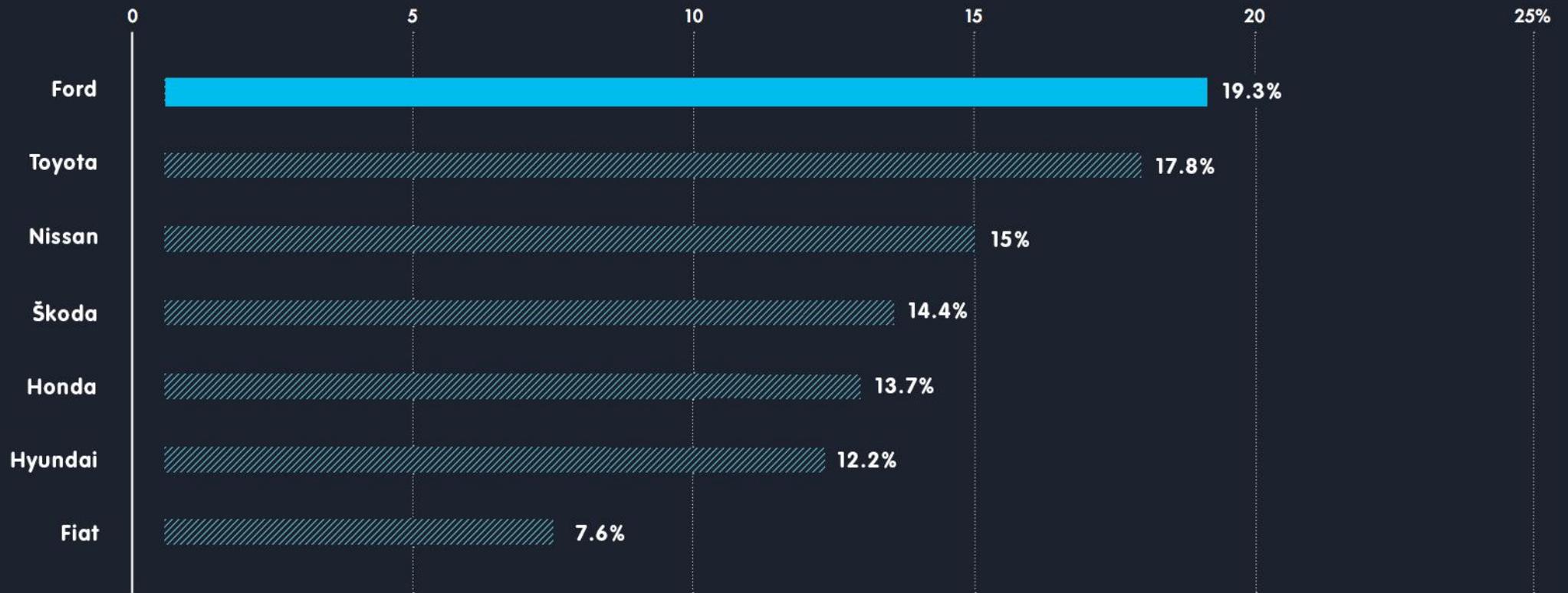
of customers think car  
brand websites **are useful**

But nearly

# 40%

expect to **buy a car online** in  
the near future

# Regardless of how consumers rate your brand...



Q: Which of these car brands do you think is the most progressive?

\* 863 respondents

# THEY FEEL IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

47%

would appreciate  
a [whole-day test drive](#) option

46%

of car buyers use [smartphones](#)  
during the purchase decision-making process\*

And over

20%

crave [personalisation](#) and  
want a car configurator that  
knows their preferences

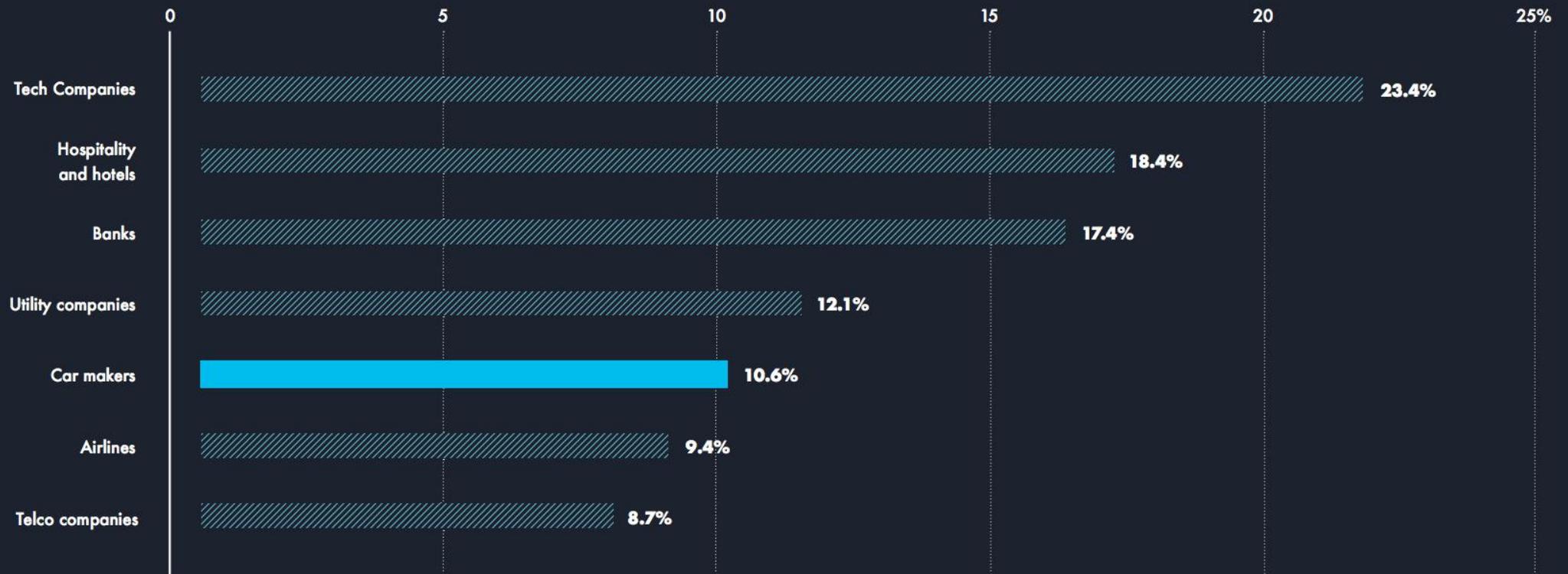
## Appetite for new tech is growing

33% would like to use VR for car spec visualisation or even for test driving their future cars



# And auto is still way behind

Auto brands are ranked 5th when it comes to delivering services that meet customer needs



Q: Which of these industries is the best at delivering a service that meets your needs?

\* 1432 respondents

// Our research shows that basic needs of auto customers are not being met. We're seeing a massive shift in the way people approach a car purchase. They don't feel comfortable in hard sales environments anymore (were they ever?) Auto brands have an ambitious journey ahead of them, one that requires a transformative approach. But to truly respond to the behavioural shifts in the sector, autos need to consider the entire end-to-end journey. We need to see more innovative solutions not only when it comes to product development, but enhancing the customer experience all the way from pre- to post-purchase stages //

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Melanie Pittham, Creative Innovation Director at the BIO Agency

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# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

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Our survey indicates that customers are looking for innovation, but auto brands and dealerships are not yet meeting their needs. Solutions such as VR test drives, AR views of car specs or AI-based knowledge hubs have potential to fill gaps and blend the physical and digital worlds to deliver best-in-class experiences.

User-centred product and service design must be integrated into the next generation buying process. Whichever tool auto brands choose, here are three things they must do:



Cater for a fragmented decision-making process – with omnichannel delivery of frictionless experiences at any stage of the customer journey, and seamless transition between various touchpoints.

# 2

Deliver tools that enhance showroom environments and revolutionise the traditional sales experience – whether turning dealerships into digital knowledge hubs or driving loyalty with tools that decrease the time and effort customers spend on research and evaluation stages.

# 3

Implement a data-driven transformation programme that is capable of tracking changes and iterating to deliver genuine results – something we work hard to do at B!O by combining powerful data analytics with behavioural science.

# SO, WHAT NOW?

We're a customer-focused digital transformation agency building market-leading experiences for global brands.

We believe customer experience is the key to unlocking growth and delivering value for customers – and that it is driving automotive trends.

The world is changing.

Auto is changing.

It's what car brands do right now that will help [capture the imagination, and custom, of the next generation of car buyers.](#)

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