

Story from GRIFFIN-FORD

How to find the best deals on a new car

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Learn tips to get the cheapest prices when auto shopping



(Photo: Getty Images/Stockphoto)

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Finding the best deals on a new car involves researching, driving, timing and finding competitive options. Buying a car is a major purchase. In 2016, the average transaction price of a new vehicle was \$34,077 – which is expected to increase to \$35,000 in 2017 according to Edmunds.com. However,

savvy car shoppers can save thousands of dollars when you follow car buying tips from car buying insiders.

Budget first

There are hundreds of car models available, to help decide which model to buy, you'll need to know how much you can spend.

"Figure out your budget before shopping so you know what you can afford," says Jeff Ostroff, editor-in-chief of CarBuyingTips.com. He recommends keeping a folder and a spreadsheet of costs to keep track of your car buying process.

Before stepping into a car dealership, you can check your credit score and get financing quotes. You should also check with your Department of Motor Vehicles to see what fees car dealerships can charge.

Ostroff's brother-in-law recently bought a car. When it came time to sign the paper work, it showed expensive "dealer" fees that he was able to reduce greatly by knowing what fees were allowed.

Car price research

"Research online for current prices and to see what others are paying for the same model, with the same options," says Patrick Min, senior industry insights manager for ALG, a division of TrueCar.

You can also check the value of your current car online to know what kind of trade-in value you can receive. However, Ostroff suggests that selling your car yourself will net you more money.

Competitive test driving

After you know your budget and the possible car models that match your price range, you should test drive them.

"To get the absolute best deal, it helps not just to decide on one vehicle but to also test drive the similar vehicles in a class," says Gregg Fidan, founder of RealCarTips.com.

For example, a popular German automaker's luxury vehicle may have a competitor in the same class that will give you more features for much less. It could be a \$5,000-\$20,000 difference or 20% off the MSRP.

Fidan suggests that car reviewers are often race car drivers or look for high-performance features. For most commuters, or someone who is just driving in regular traffic to run errands, there may be little difference between the models – except for pricing.

Timing and contacting

"The best times to buy cars are typically, the end of the month, the end of the year, late summer and early fall," says Min. Dealerships have to meet monthly and yearly quotas for incentives. In the late summer and early fall, they are motivated to move out the previous year's models.

After you have decided on your vehicle choices, both Ostroff and Fidan suggest contacting multiple dealers and getting itemized prices by email. You can find local dealers through car buying websites and the manufacturers' website.

"Your local media outlet or newspaper may show some great discounts," says Fidan. "Make sure you either email or call the dealership to confirm that that deal is available at that rock bottom price, and you qualify for all the discounts."

By contacting multiple car dealerships, you may find a high-volume, low mark-up dealership or one that needs to sell just one more before getting a large bonus from the manufacturer, says Fidan.

Before you sign

Because you have done your homework and research, you will know if the deal you're offered is a good one – but you still have to check a few things.

"Check every line of the contract for fees, calculations and add-ons that were promised such as floor mats, cargo nets and cargo covers," says Ostroff. "Don't give a cash deposit, you can dispute a credit card charge if there is an issue."

Check it out



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Check the vehicle to make sure the mats, accessories and everything listed on the window sticker is present on the vehicle. Most new vehicles come with two electronic key fobs. A lost key fob can be very costly to replace.

Finally, check the vehicle for damage. For example, say there was a hail storm recently, the paint could be damaged, says Ostroff.

"Don't sign the contract until you're absolutely happy with the deal and the vehicle, because there's no way of getting out of it once you're done," says Ostroff.

Stop by a Griffin Auto Group dealership and test drive a new car today! Visit us online at griffinchevy.com, griffinford.com or griffinshubchryslerjeepdodge.com to see the new inventory and find the car that best suits your needs.

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- Griffin Ford, 1940 E. Main Street, Waukesha [262-542-5781](tel:262-542-5781)
- Griffin's Hub Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge RAM, 5700 S. 27th Street, Milwaukee [414-325-3333](tel:414-325-3333)

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