86% would pay more for a better customer experience. This survey is not indicative of the consumer ready to buy now. We all say we want a better experience and would pay more. As a customer I would pay more until I am prepared to make the decision, then it comes down to whoever has me when I give up. Whichever salesperson has taken the fear out of the priced I pay will earn my business. I worked as a Manager at a metro dealership; we taught our salespeople a script we called “Teach a Shopper to Shop.” We used this to combat dealers in our area who would advertise a truck for sale without the manufacturer's destination charge included in the price. Clearly, dishonest and against the law. We could not match the internet price without losing money or being dishonest. We used our script to educate. Almost every customer said, “If that is true, they are lying, and we will walk out.” Few did. Most just said, “They matched your price, so I bought it from them.” We kept our ethical standards high, slept well at night, they sold the car. Over the years, this business created the perception for customers that we did not play by any fair rules, so neither do they need to. Excellent customer service had little effect on the first sale. To be fair, we won more than we lost. Customers did come back. It just did not involve great service.

The real money in the automotive industry does not get the attention that driving new business does. The real money, least expensive per deal comes in repeat and referral business. Excellent customer service plays a role in this. Many of my customers did not buy their first vehicle from me. Take care of them after the sale, whether you sold them or not. All the high performers in this business know this secret. Find your way.