US Automotive Insights

‘Pickup’ the Competition

Insights that help you understand the path to purchase and how top-selling pickup trucks are ranked and searched against competing models

October 2021

Quantcast

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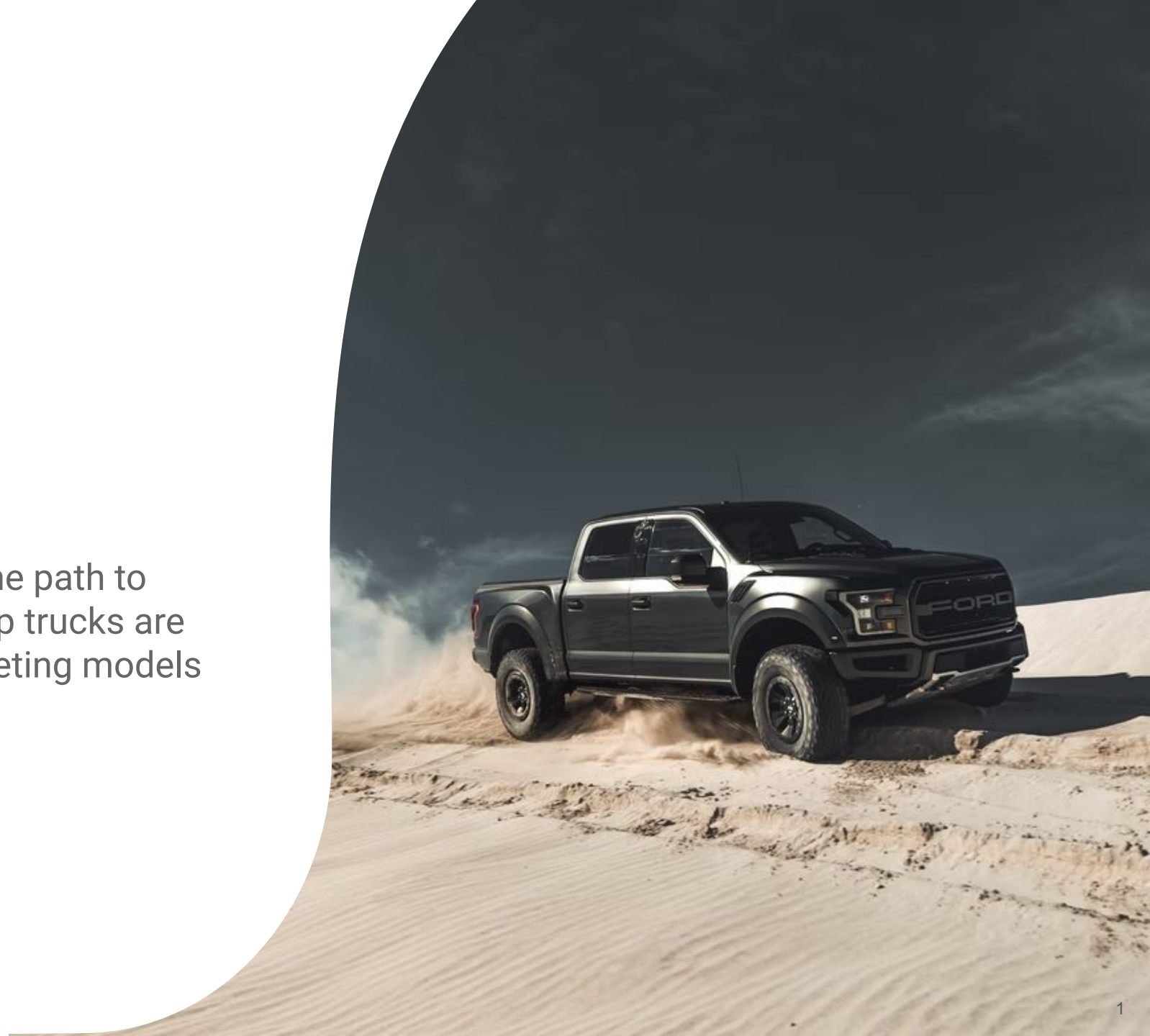

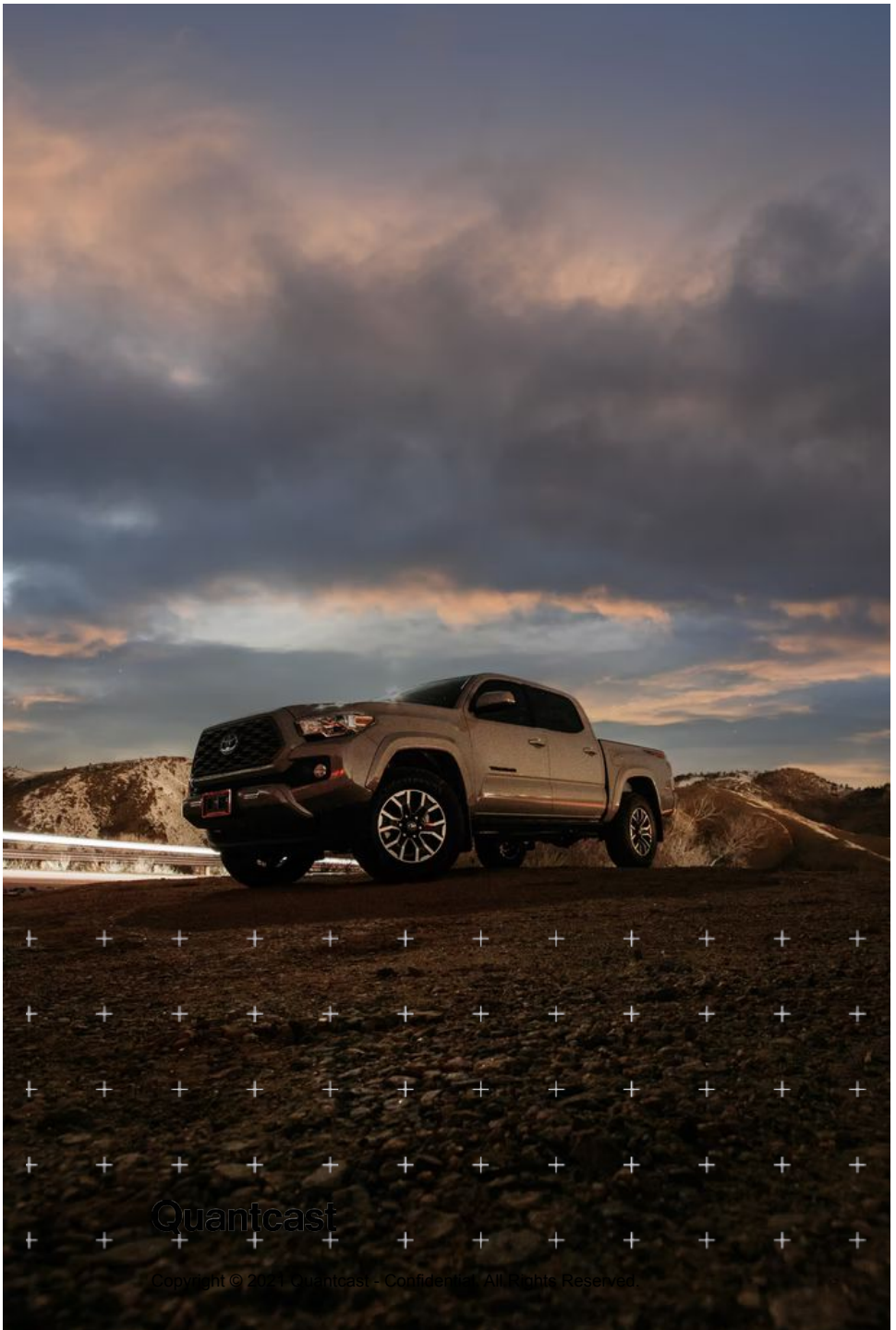

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Trucking Ahead

With the microchip shortage impacting car availability,[1] there has been an increased urgency for buyers to make a decision before getting sidelined. Dwindling access to supply has **significantly decreased the time it is taking for a user to contact the dealership**, with pickup truck buyers who considered payment options taking **3 fewer days** before contacting a dealership.[2]

Knowing that this customer journey is happening more quickly, it's never been more important to tap into audience insights to:

- **Understand the "pickup path to purchase"**
  Today's pickup truck buyers have specific triggers and paths to purchase. Know who this audience is and how they buy.
- **Learn where you rank with competitors**
  Through Quadrant Segment Mapping, understand how your car brand ranks among pickup truck competitors.

Sources: 1. Forbes, Computer Chip Shortage Hurts September Auto Sales, Drives Many Shoppers To The Sidelines September 2021
2. Quantcast Measure, comparing pre-period: September 2020 - December 2020 vs post-period: June 2021 - September 2021

Pickup Path to Purchase

Today's pickup truck buyers have specific triggers and paths to purchase

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The automotive customer journey has four key touchpoints

What does the online journey look like for pickup truck buyers in recent months?

Model Search

Users browse for model-specific content (specs, gallery, inventory)

Promotions

Users view pages on current offers and incentives

Payment Estimator

Users calculate their financial payments

Contact Dealership

Users contact a dealer representative / book an appointment

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Demographics: **Aspirers versus Intenders**

Pickup trucks, like many other car segments, attract aspirational buyers as well as core in-market intenders, with this reflected in the demographics at each buyer stage. Intenders who have contacted a dealership skew mid-life (ages 30-44) compared to the aspirational site visitor who is age 21-29. This younger audience shows higher interest in promotions and payment estimator tools, highlighting that it could be a more complicated financing process for this group, and so they may be receptive to sales and financing flexibility.

Model Search

Gender: Neutral
Age: Neutral
Income: Neutral
Education: Neutral
Kids: Neutral

Promotions

Gender: Neutral
Age: 21-29 (104)
Income: $100k+ (106)
Education: Neutral
Kids: Neutral

Payment Estimator

Gender: Neutral
Age: 18-34 (110)
Income: less than $50k (105)
Education: Grad School (110)
Kids: Neutral

Contact Dealership

Gender: Neutral
Age: 30-44 (107)
Income: Neutral
Education: No College (107)
Kids: Neutral

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Source Quantcast Measure, US, June 2021 - September 2021,
Indices based on the average pickup truck site user for the same time period.
Devices outside of tablets, mobile/app, and desktop were excluded

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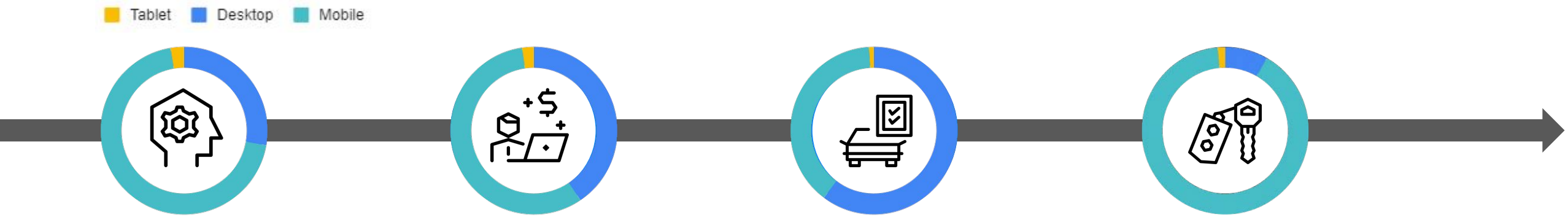
Devices: **Most digital research happens on mobile, but financing decisions move to desktop**

General model searching is predominantly done on mobile devices,
but payment estimating skews more to desktop,
likely because it is a more time-intensive research exercise.



Model Search

28% desktop
70% mobile
2.64% tablet

Promotions

40% desktop
57% mobile
2.29% tablet

Payment Estimator

60% desktop
39% mobile
0.95% tablet

Contact Dealership

8% desktop
90% mobile
1.5% tablet

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Source Quantcast Measure, US, June 2021 - September 2021,
Indices based on the average pickup truck site user for the same time period.
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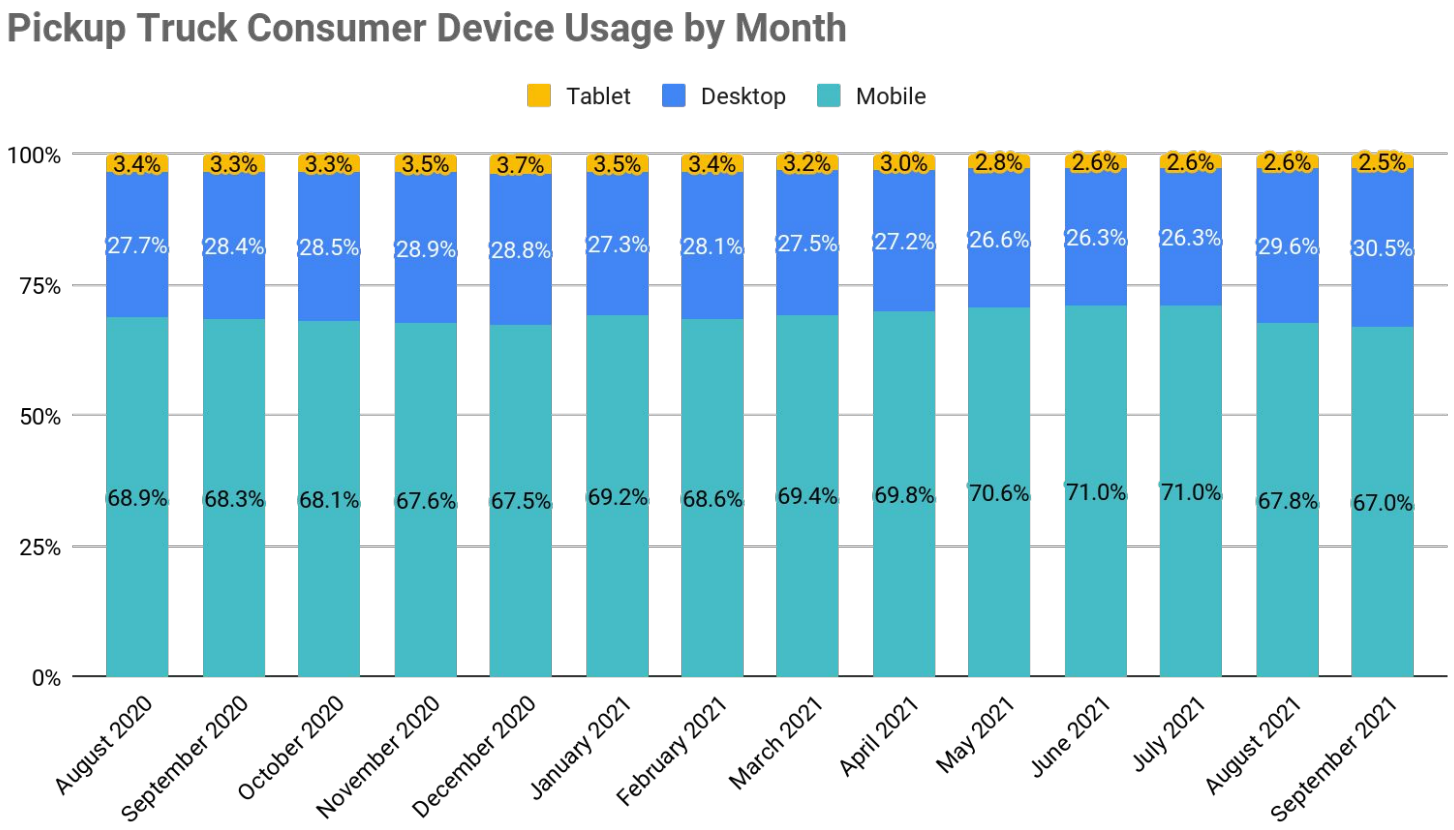
Devices: **While mobile phones are most widely used, desktop usage increased in recent months**

Similar to macro trends, tablet usage is declining for all audience groups, and mobile phones continue to remain the most preferred device type.

Quantcast data and research show that **users aged 45+ prefer laptops and desktop for online search activities,** indicating a preference for larger screen experiences versus accessing information quickly using a handheld mobile device.*



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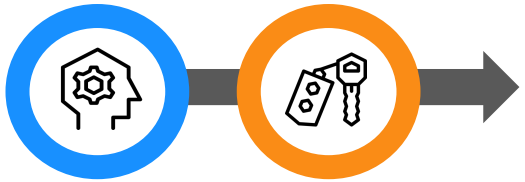
Source Quantcast Measure, US, August 2020 - September 2021
Devices outside of tablets, mobile/app, and desktop were excluded
* Deloitte, Digital usage & COVID-19, September 2021

There are two primary paths to purchase for buyer types

Typical Auto Buyer

The majority of all test drive bookers (62%) head straight to contacting the dealership from the model info page, taking an average of 2 days.

Model Search > Contact Dealership



62.3%
of all test drive bookers in 2021

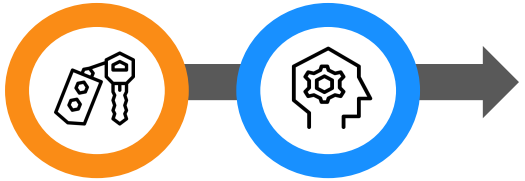
3 day
pathing duration in 2020

2 day
pathing duration in 2021

The Comparison Shopper

31% of test drives lead consumers to do a same day model search, highlighting that digital research tools are used to make a final decision on make and model.

Contact Dealership > Model Search



31.2%
of all test drive bookers in 2021

0 day
pathing duration in 2020 and 2021

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Source Quantcast Measure, US, September 2020 - December 2020 and June 2021 - September 2021
Pathing based on first site visit and subsequent page visits before booking the first test drive

Adding financing as a step translates to a longer decision process

The Window Shopper

Pickup truck buyers **who look at financing options last** often take much longer before contacting the dealership, with an average of **11 days** to schedule a test drive.

Model Search > Contact Dealership > Payment Estimator

1.6%
of all test drive bookers in 2021

13 day
pathing duration in 2020

11 day
pathing duration in 2021

The Price-Conscious Buyer

When price is a key factor in choosing a vehicle, it takes longer for a pickup consumer to contact a dealership, with an average of **15 days** to schedule a test drive.

Model Search > Payment Estimator > Contact Dealership

1.6%
of all test drive bookers in 2021

18 day
pathing duration in 2020

15 day
pathing duration in 2021

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Source Quantcast Measure, US, June 2021 - September 2021
Pathing based on first site visit and subsequent page visits before booking the first test drive

Learn Where You Rank with Competitors

Through Quadrant Segment Mapping, understand how your car brand ranks among pickup truck competitors.

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What is Quadrant Segment Mapping?

Understanding consumer consideration in relation to close competitors is key to growing the brand and ultimately sales. Quadrant Segment Mapping methodology allows for car brands to understand their appeal and uniqueness. These two measures are a great way to understand the car buyer mindset, honing in on make and model favorability, set against the number of competitors in a given segment.

Mass Appeal score

Measures the likelihood of the car model audience to attract the average segment buyer.

Ranging from “niche” to “popular,” a higher score suggests higher favorability with the segment audience.

Uniqueness score

Measures the likelihood a user would consider competitors when making a purchase decision.

Ranging from “competitor” to “champion,” a higher uniqueness score suggests a car model with less online competition.

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How are makes and models mapped on a quadrant?

Using a combination of Quantcast interest and demographic data, we have mapped **pickup truck models** in quadrants based on their **appeal and uniqueness score**. Each make and model audience group is created from Quantcast's real-time keyword interest data aggregated across publisher and tagged sites.

Mass Appeal Score

Popular Competitor

High cross-search activity with other in-segment models means cars in this quadrant have relatively more online competition than others.

Popular Champion

Broadest appeal among different in-segment car buyers and least likely to be cross-searched with other models. This quadrant tends to include sales market leaders.

Niche Competitor

Appeals to a focused audience. Newer entrants to the segment usually start off in this quadrant before growing a stronger and more loyal audience base.

Niche Champion

Dominant in its market to a more focused audience base, whether it be age, gender, or luxury appeal.

Uniqueness Score

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See appendix for more information on score methodology

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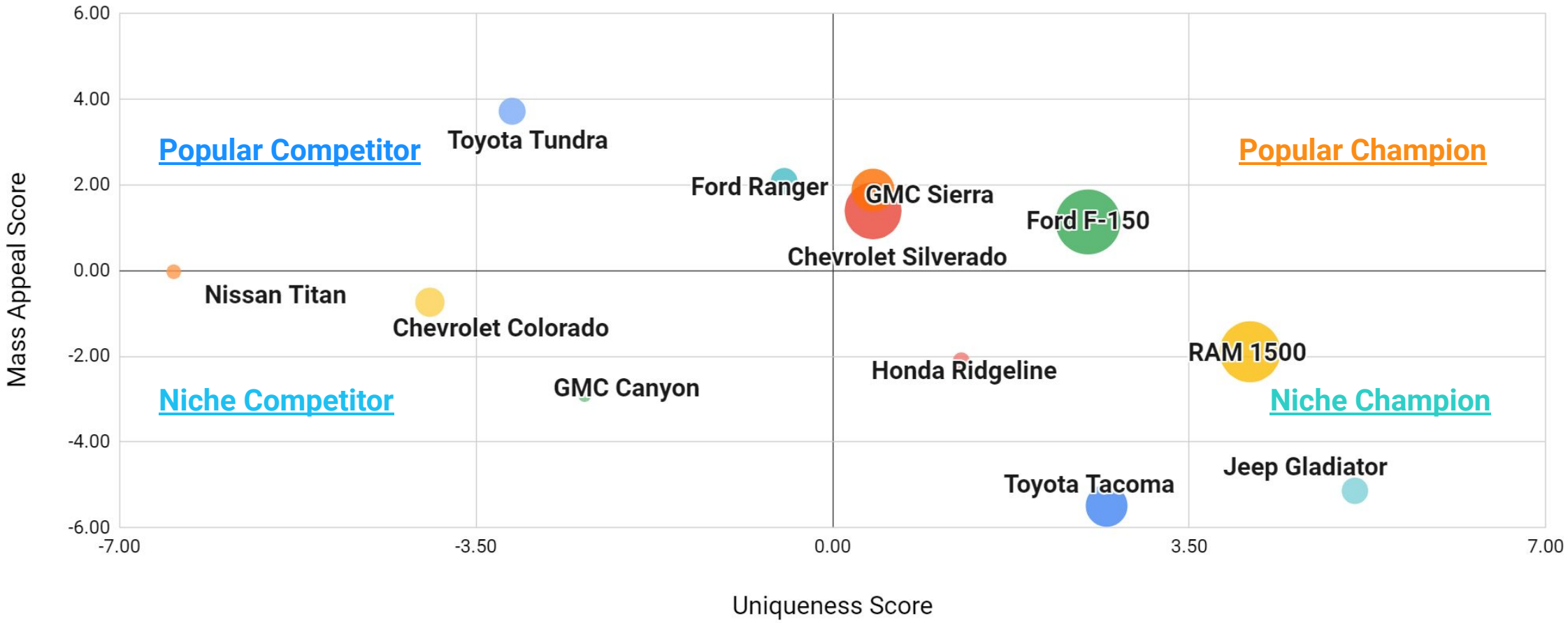
The Data: **Pickup Truck Rankings Against Competing Models**

US Pickup Truck Segment - Quadrant Mapping



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Source Quantcast Measure, US, August 2020 - September 2021, bubble size represents monthly sales volume in US for 2021 according to GoodCarBadCar sales data
Each model audience group is created from Quantcast's first-party search interest data aggregated across publisher and tagged sites
See appendix for more information on score methodology

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Learnings: **Key competitive segment takeaways**

Buying American

The Chevrolet Silverado, GMC Sierra, and Ford F-150 are the standard bearers within the US pickup truck market. US OEMs are the first stop for consumers interested in pickup trucks. Trucks produced by Japanese manufacturers display relatively low sales volumes and cater to a more niche audience.

RAM Defies Rules

While the RAM 1500 ranks lower in appeal and appears more niche than its main competitors (Silverado, F-150, Sierra), it displayed the second highest monthly sales volume, only beaten by the Ford F-150. The RAM 1500 also ranks as the #1 truck by several publications (Car and Driver Magazine, MotorTrend, and CarMax).

Mid-Size Mainstream

On average, light-duty trucks showcase a higher uniqueness score, while mid-size trucks display a higher average mass appeal. This means that mid-size trucks are deemed more “mainstream” within the overall pickup truck market.

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Source Quantcast Measure, US, August 2020 - September 2021, bubble size represents monthly sales volume in US for 2021 according to GoodCarBadCar sales data
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What is a cross-search indices?

It is a way for you to understand the consideration set for your specific vehicle, highlighting not only what other brands are also being searched with yours, but also how they rank in that search process.

Benefit

This provides an invaluable competitive advantage, allowing you to customize benefits messaging to highlight the key differentiators compared to the top competitive brands searched.

Calculation

Cross-search behavior for each model is analyzed to understand the percentage of users who also searched competing models. More users who searched competitors of model X, while also searching for model X, represents higher cross-search activity for model X.

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The Data: **Pickup Truck Cross-Search Indices**

Model	Toyota Tacoma	Chevy Silverado	Ford F-150	GMC Sierra	Dodge RAM 1500	Ford Ranger	Toyota Tundra	Honda Ridgeline	Chevy Colorado	GMC Canyon	Nissan Titan	Jeep Gladiator
Toyota Tacoma		19	20	11	9	75	91	44	76	53	60	16
Chevrolet Silverado	17		28	100	25	18	34	17	46	23	38	12
Ford F-150	16	25		19	24	46	29	29	17	20	41	13
GMC Sierra	8	79	17		17	7	30	9	18	40	27	0
RAM 1500	7	21	22	18		12	23	17	11	10	37	11
Ford Ranger	28	7	21	4	6		11	10	38	19	23	9
Toyota Tundra	29	12	11	13	10	10		15	11	7	59	8
Honda Ridgeline	6	3	5	2	3	4	7		9	11	10	5
Chevrolet Colorado	10	7	3	3	2	13	5	8		49	9	5
GMC Canyon	4	2	2	4	1	4	2	6	31		2	0
Nissan Titan	4	3	4	3	3	4	13	5	5	2		2
Jeep Gladiator	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	0	2	

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Source Quantcast Measure, US, August 2020 - September 2021

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Learnings: **Key competitive cross-search takeaways**

Light-duty truck buyers consider all brands in the segment

A high level of cross-searching takes place between the smaller truck models. Consumers interested in light-duty trucks (Ranger, Tacoma, Colorado, Canyon) all have relatively higher interest among one another.

Brand loyalists consider all class options within a single preferred OEM

Pickup trucks of different classes (light-duty vs. mid-size) but from the same OEM have a high likelihood of cross-searching. The high indices seen between the Toyota Tacoma and Tundra , Ford Ranger and F-150, and Chevy Colorado and Silverado are examples of this.

Jeep buyers are loyal and don't cross search

The Jeep Gladiator is the least cross searched vehicle within the trucks segment, making it the most unique vehicle overall.

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Source Quantcast Measure, US, August 2020 - September 2021

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Actioning on Insights

Review your car brand and model within Quantcast's quadrant segment and cross-search indices

Understand who is searching for your model–is where you are placed within the quadrant in line with your marketing strategy? If you are aiming to reach a wider audience with specific models, Quantcast data can help you understand any gaps you have to reach your audience goals.

Understand where you stand with competitors

Getting a deep understanding of your main competitors can help you identify threats from those who share similar audience profiles with your brand. Mapping out where specific models stand amidst competing brands can help you develop more targeted ad strategies that drive more visits to your brand or dealership's website and encourage more conversions.

>95% of car purchases happen at the dealership, but start with an online search*

Using the Quantcast Platform to understand car-buying trends, as well as certain keywords your audiences are searching for, can help you adjust your campaign tactics and get your brand in front of your prospects when they are ready to buy. Layering your digital marketing strategies with compelling in-store offers will help you maximize your customer reach, both online and offline.

Source: Auto Industry Service Statistics

Work with Quantcast to action on insights

Tap into the power of unique real-time data to drive brand and performance outcomes for your automotive campaigns.

Get in touch with us today at:
https://www.quantcast.com/contact-us/

Appendix

Quadrant Segment Mapping Methodology

Mass Appeal Score

Euclidean Distance of Demographic Variables
The distance of each demographic variable (indexed to the national average of the same time period the demographic variables were pulled) from the national average is calculated using the Euclidean distance formula.

The demographic variables are:
Female, Male, Age: 18-20, 21-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65+, Income levels: <50k, 50k-100k,100k-150k, >150k

Calculation:
Let 'p' represent the model and 'q' represent the average car segment buyer.

$$d(\mathbf{p},\mathbf{q}) = \sqrt{(p_1 - q_1)^2 + (p_2 - q_2)^2 + \cdots + (p_i - q_i)^2 + \cdots + (p_n - q_n)^2}.$$

*Note that equal weighting was given to the 3 main demographic categories: gender, age, and income, despite each category having different numbers of cohorts.

Normalizing Score
The mass appeal score is the demographic distance T-score in the segment population.

Uniqueness Score

Cross Search %
Cross search behavior for each model was analyzed to understand the percentage of users who also searched competing models. More users who searched competitors of model X, while also searching for model X, represents higher cross-search activity for model X.

Normalizing Score
The uniqueness score is the cross search % T-score in the segment population.

Units Sold

Size of the bubble is from 2020 US car sales figures.[22]

Source
Each model audience group is created from Quantcast's first-party search interest data aggregated across publisher and tagged sites

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