UX Playbook

Vehicle Search Results Page (SRP)

Cox Automotive
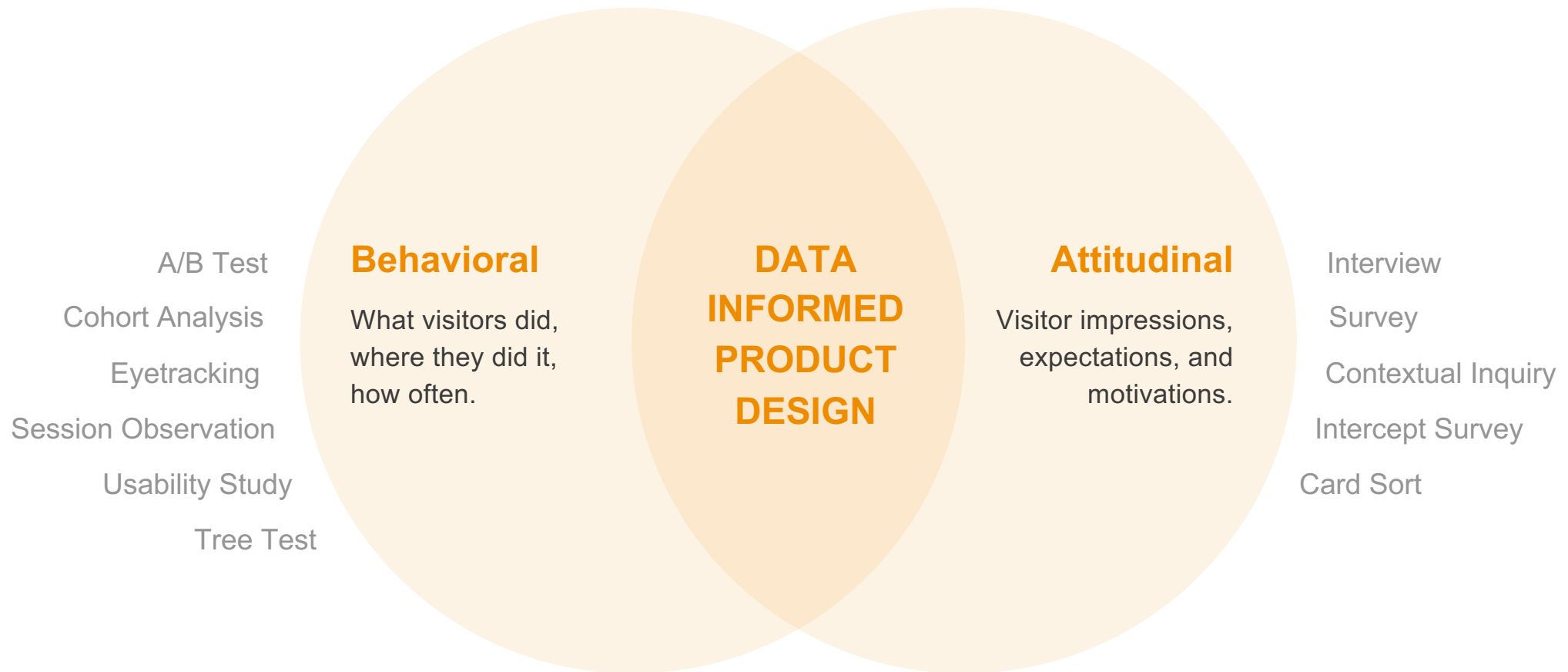
DEALER.COM

About the UX Playbook

What is the UX Playbook?

The UX Playbook is a set of **data-informed recommendations** aimed at providing a **positive experience** for the dealership website visitor.

What is "data" in UX?

A/B Test

Cohort Analysis

Eyetracking

Session Observation

Usability Study

Tree Test

Behavioral

What visitors did, where they did it, how often.

DATA INFORMED PRODUCT DESIGN

Attitudinal

Visitor impressions, expectations, and motivations.

Interview

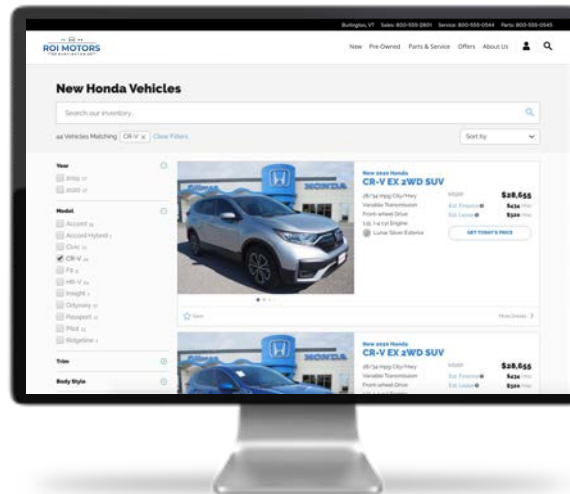Survey

Contextual Inquiry

Intercept Survey

Card Sort

Areas of Focus: Shopper Workflow

The UX Playbook focuses on three critical paths of the dealership website: the homepage, search results page, and details page.
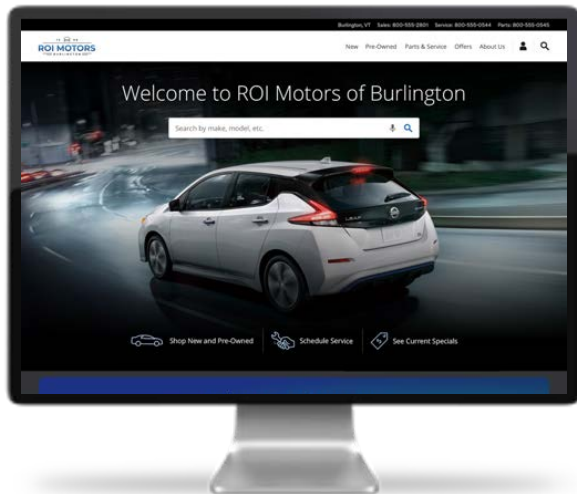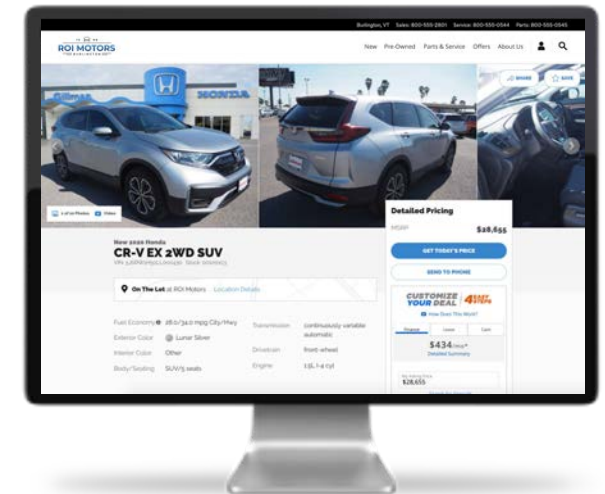

Homepage
Brand impressions and starting point for discovery.

Search Results Page
High level vehicle comparisons.

Details Page
Specific considerations and next steps.

Areas of Focus: Devices

UX Playbook recommendations apply across devices unless otherwise noted.

62%
Mobile

3%
Tablet

35%
Desktop & Laptop

Search Results Page

SRP by the numbers...

45M

SRP visits per month

63M

total (including bounces) SRP visits per month

75%

of visitors see the SRP

66%

see a homepage

45%

see a VDP

23%

of visitors enter on the SRP at least once

64%

enter on homepage

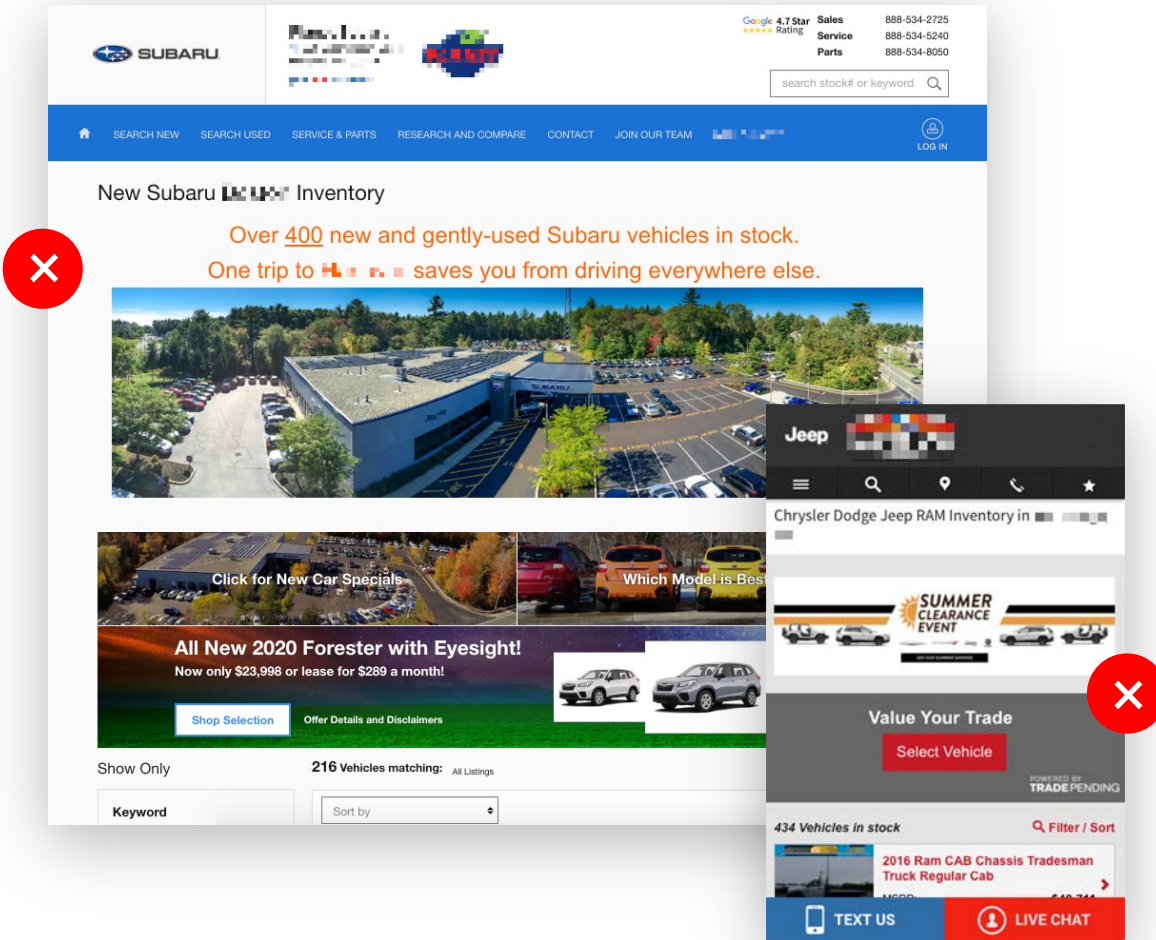**Top three actions:**

32%

select facet(s)

23%

engage photos

9%

free-form search

# Reduce content above listings as much as possible.

Rationale

When entering a search results page, visitors expect to see facets and listings featured prominently. Consider that most visitors are viewing on a mobile device and, of desktop visitors, half are viewing on a browser size <800px height. Adding content above the facets and listings can push the primary content out of view, creating confusion. Use discretion when adding content above the listings, paying close attention to the vertical height.

We recommend at most just one banner and no SEO text content above the listings.

Source: Viewport Analysis. November 2019. Dealer.com User Experience Team.
Source: SRP Usability Studies. Q3-Q4 2019. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

Use actual vehicle photos, not stock photos.
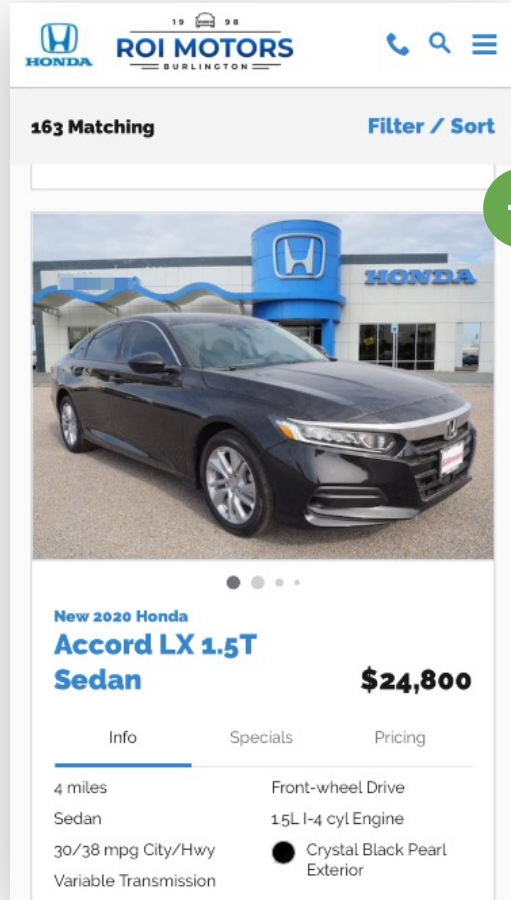
Rationale

Visitors visiting websites with >65% of inventory using actual photos have ~5% longer visit time, see ~20% more VDPs, see ~5% more SRPs compared to websites with stock photos.

New vehicles with actual photos were **30% more likely to receive at least one lead** in a seven day period. **Used and certified vehicles** were **40% more likely**. This suggests that used/certified vehicles are impacted more greatly by stock photography than new vehicles.

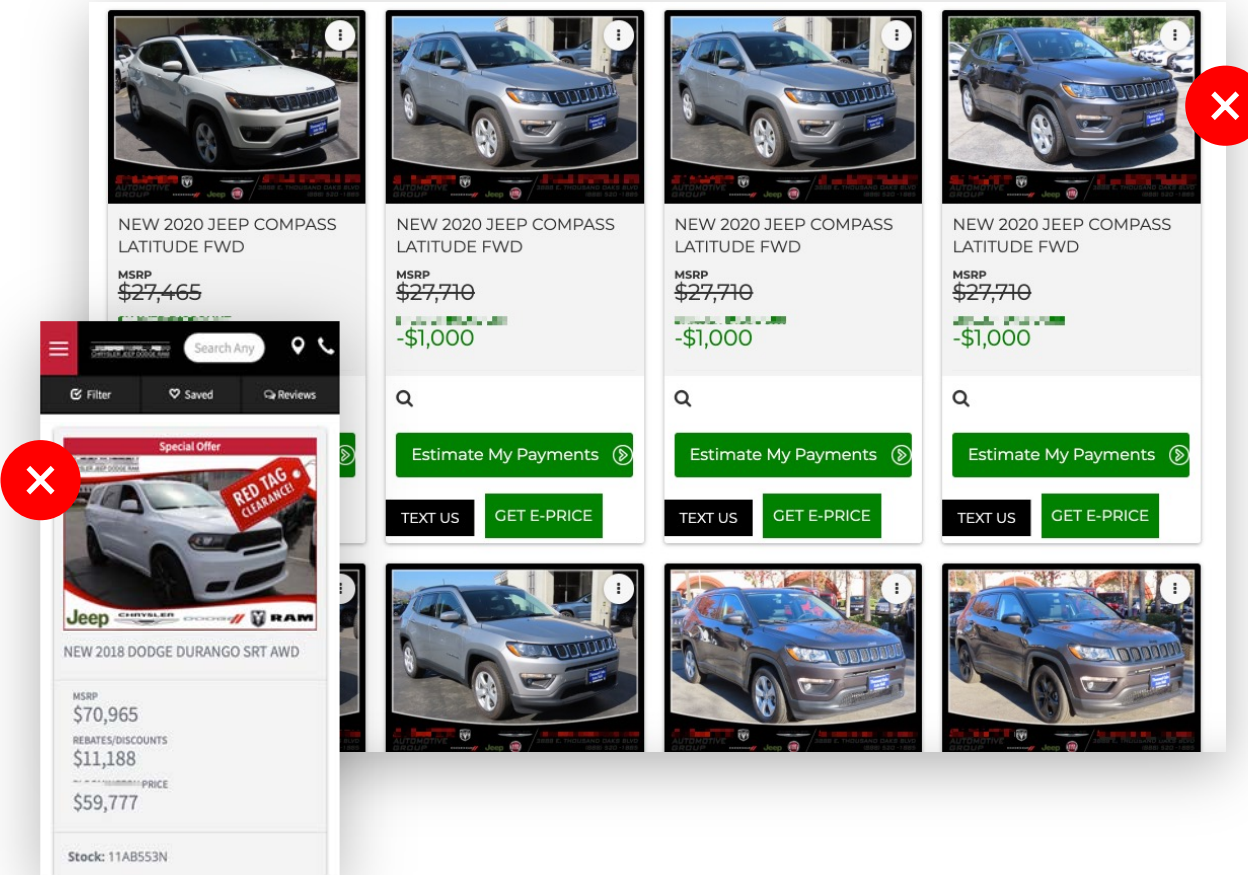Source: Stock vs. Actual Photo Comparison. June 2019. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

Voice of the Customer

"So these [stock] pictures I always find really confusing, I don't feel like I need to see what the car should look like. I want to see what the car actually looks like."

- Mobile Study Participant

# Do not embed branding in vehicle photos.

Rationale

There are several disadvantages to embedded or overlay content in vehicle photos:

- On mobile devices, text embedded in the photo can be hard to read.

- When multiple vehicles containing overlays are side-by-side on a page, as in vehicle recommendations on the homepage or the SRP, the page can become harder to scan and creates a perception of clutter.

- Overlays featuring the dealership name and contact information are redundant with information found in the website header and on the page.

Source: VDP Usability Studies. Q3-Q4 2018. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

Feature a photo carousel in the listing.
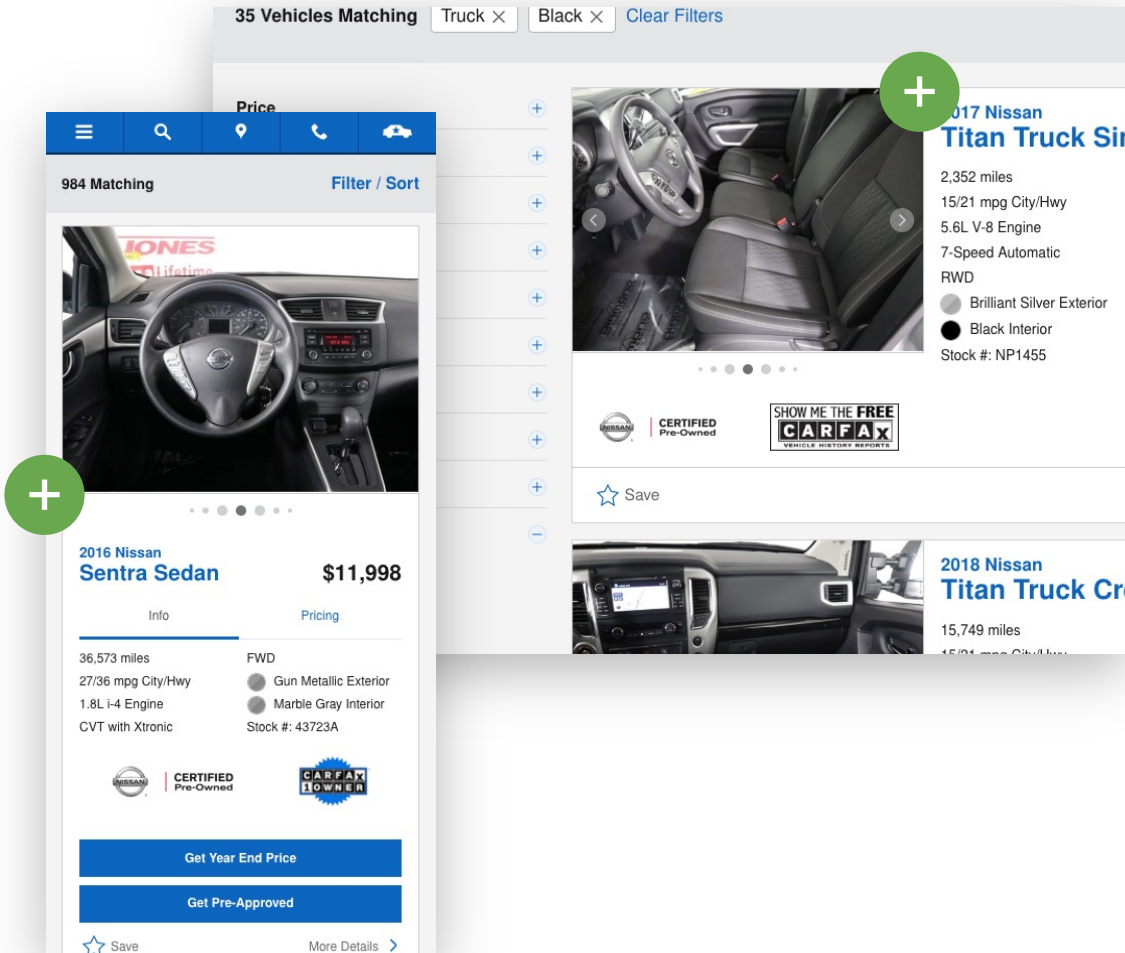
Rationale

Many eCommerce sites allow visitors to view additional product photos within the product listing via hover or by clicking through a photo carousel.

In testing we found car shoppers expected similar functionality on dealership websites as viewing photos on the SRP helps shoppers compare vehicles before visiting a VDP.

27% of mobile visitors engage the SRP carousel.

-24% mobile VDP view rate when carousel included.

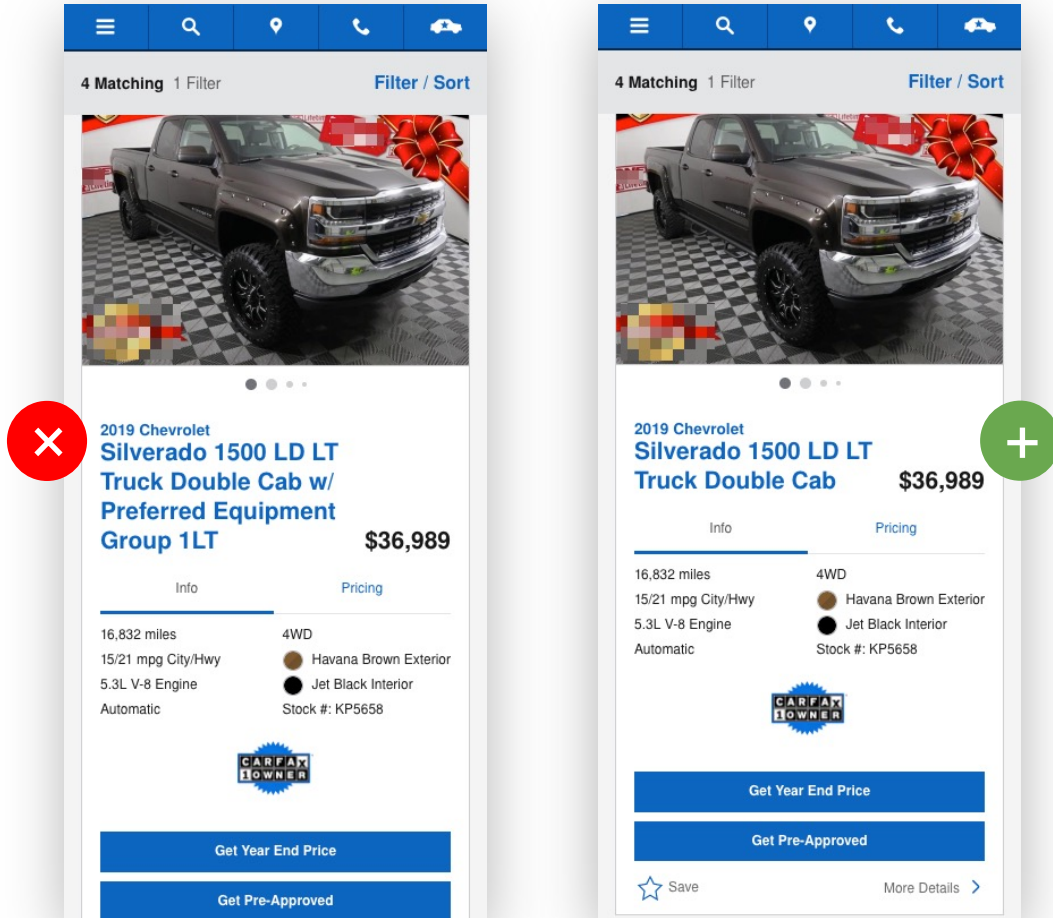**9% of desktop visitors engage the SRP carousel.**

-4% desktop VDP view rate when carousel included.

Despite a decrease in VDP views, leads were not impacted.

Source: SRP Usability Studies. Q3-Q4 2019. Dealer.com User Experience Team.
Source: SRP vs. VLP A/B Test. May 2021. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

# Include only Year, Make, Model, and Body Style in title.

Rationale

Visitors use the SRP to do high level comparison of vehicles and decide what vehicles are worthy enough to dive into additional detail (VDP view). Year, Make, Model, and Body Style provide enough vehicle information to do comparisons without being overwhelming. Including more granular information such as packages, options, and engine in the title reduces scan-ability of the results, making it hard for visitors to conduct quick comparisons before deciding what to do next.

Furthermore, including more granular information in the title causes wrapping on smaller devices increasing the amount of scrolling needed to view vehicles in the listings. Using only Year, Make, Model, and Body Style should prevent the title from wrapping more than 2-3 lines.

Source: SRP vs. VLP A/B Test. May 2021. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

Include standard vehicle specs, packages, and options as secondary info in the listing.
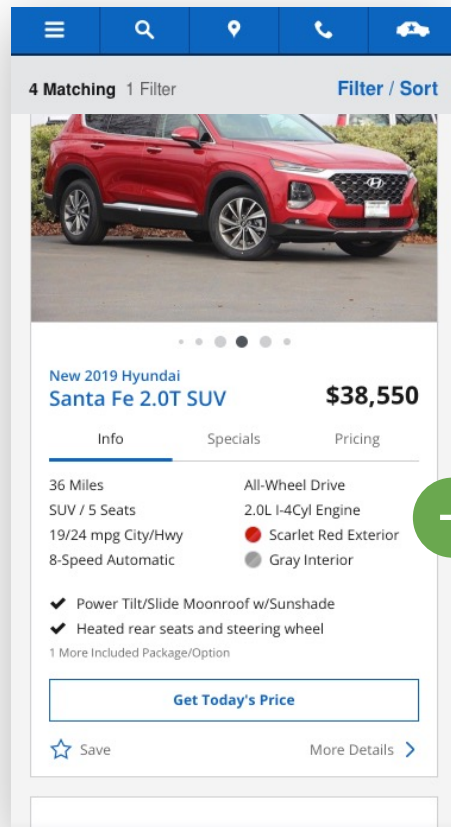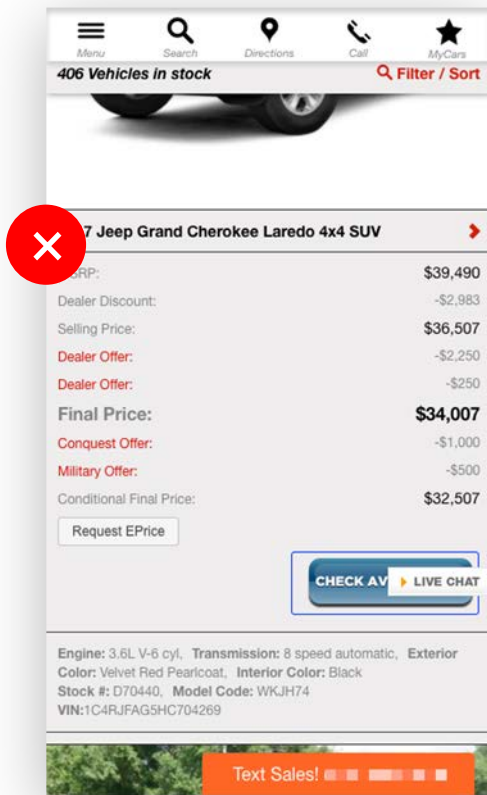

Rationale

While granular vehicle information like engine and packages are not recommended in the listing title, this information can provide value when included in the listing as secondary information. The advantage of including this information in the SRP listing, as opposed to only the VDP, is it allows visitors to do comparisons directly on the SRP and make informed selections sooner in the shopping process.

We recommend including the following vehicle information in the listing: Odometer (for used), Body Style, Seats, Fuel Economy, Engine, Transmission, Drive Line, Exterior Color, Interior Color, and Packages/Options. If helpful for internal dealership use, include VIN and Stock# last in the list.

Simplify pricing. Use no more than 3 prices in stack. For example: MSRP - Discount = Dealer Price.

Rationale

Some visitors appreciate the detailed disclosure of discounts and incentives in listings, but a majority of visitors find it too overwhelming. Stacked pricing is especially problematic on mobile devices where space comes at a premium. Visitors use the SRP for high-level judgements. Showing a MSRP, total discount (including incentives and other discounts but not including conditional offers), and final price is a nice middle ground.

We recommend displaying a more detailed pricing breakdown on the VDP.

Source: SRP Usability Studies. Q3-Q4 2019. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

# Minimize number of button calls to action in listing.

Rationale

There are three disadvantages to vehicle listings CTAs that are styled as buttons:

- They add clutter (especially on mobile devices) thereby increasing the difficulty of making high-level vehicle comparisons.

- They typically ask for contact information which reinforces the negative stereotype of aggressive sales tactics dealers use.

- They link to other pages, taking the visitor further away from a VDP where detailed information is disclosed, commitment to buy increases, and contacting the dealer is described as a logical next step.
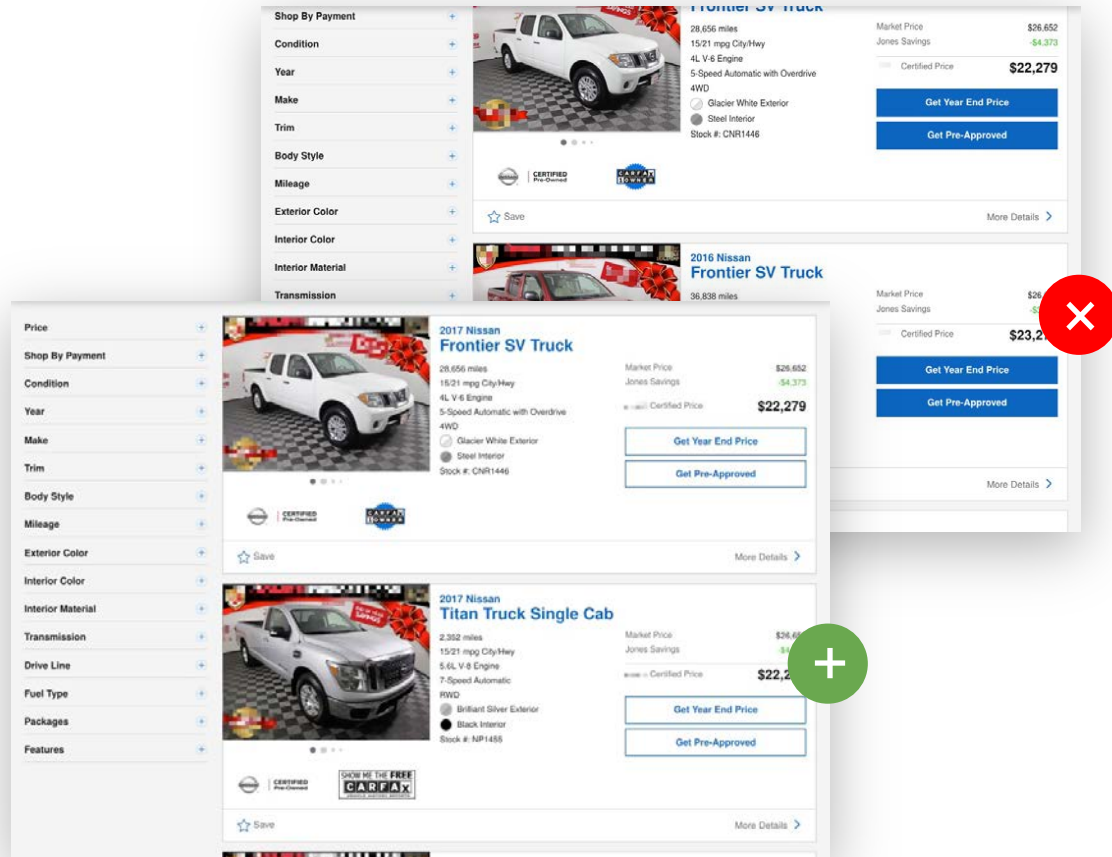
We recommend at most two CTA buttons in the listing.

See VDP playbook for additional CTA recommendations.
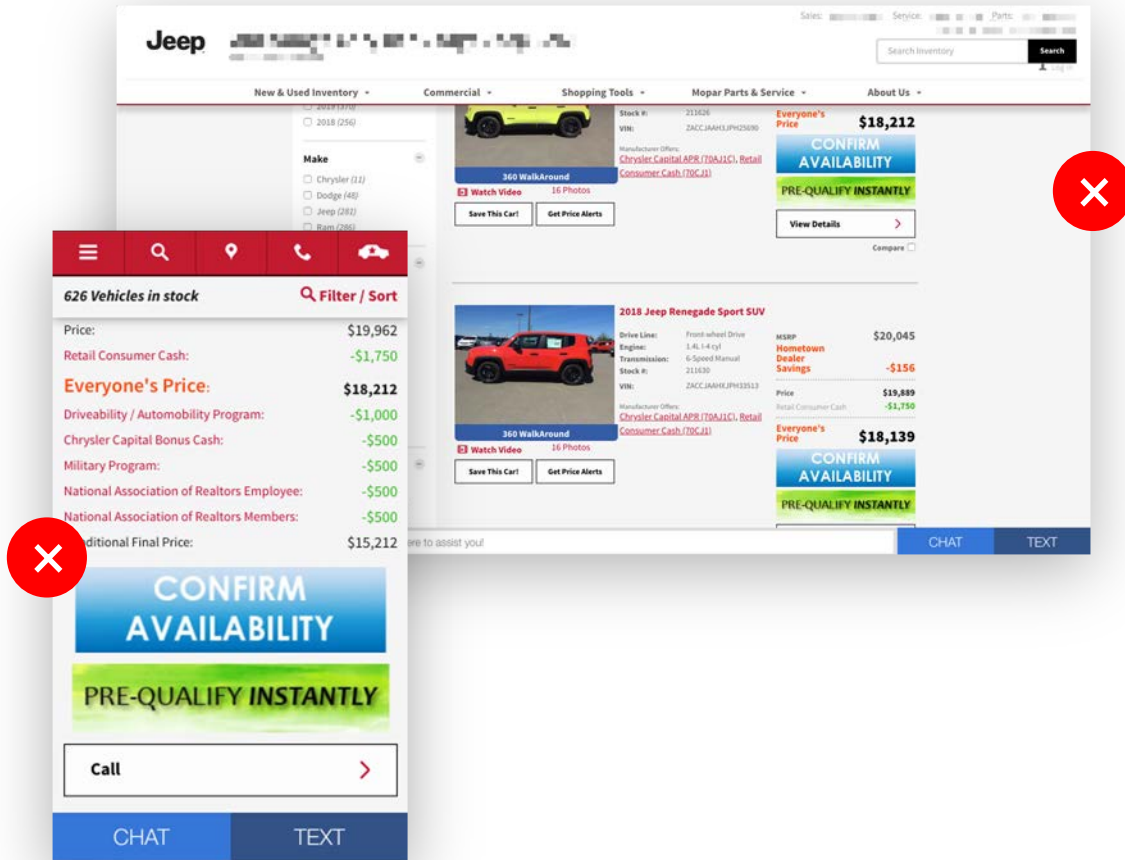
# Use a lower contrast button style for listing CTA.

Rationale

A/B testing has shown **low contrast (secondary) CTAs in listings are just as performant as high contrast (primary) CTAs**. Using low contrast CTAs helps reduce clutter, especially on desktop and tablet where multiple listings are shown on screen, and allows for faster scanning of vehicle listings, making vehicle comparison easier.

Source: Primary vs. Secondary CTA Style A/B Test. August 2020. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

Include a "View Details" link (not button).
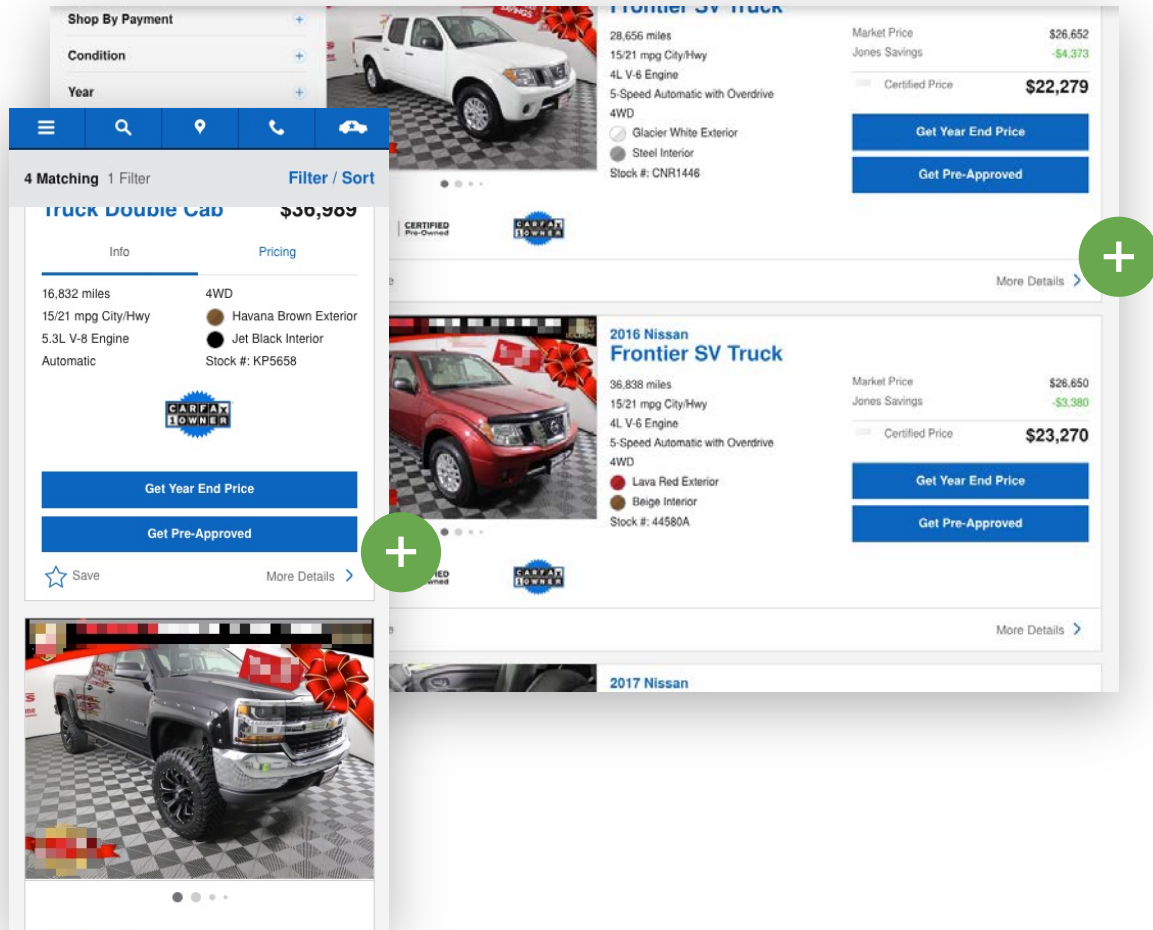
Rationale

Consider that most visitors are viewing on a mobile device and, of desktop visitors, half are viewing on a browser size <800px height. A "View Details" or "More Details" link at the bottom of the vehicle listing provides a clear path to the VDP after the photo and title of the vehicle have scrolled out of view.

Using a link instead of a button provides a clear call to action without being too overwhelming and creating clutter.

7% of mobile visitors and 3.5% of desktop visitors use the "View Details" link to visit the VDP.

Source: SRP Usability Studies. Q3-Q4 2019. Dealer.com User Experience Team.
Source: SRP Engagement Analysis. Q1 2020. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

Be transparent with pricing.
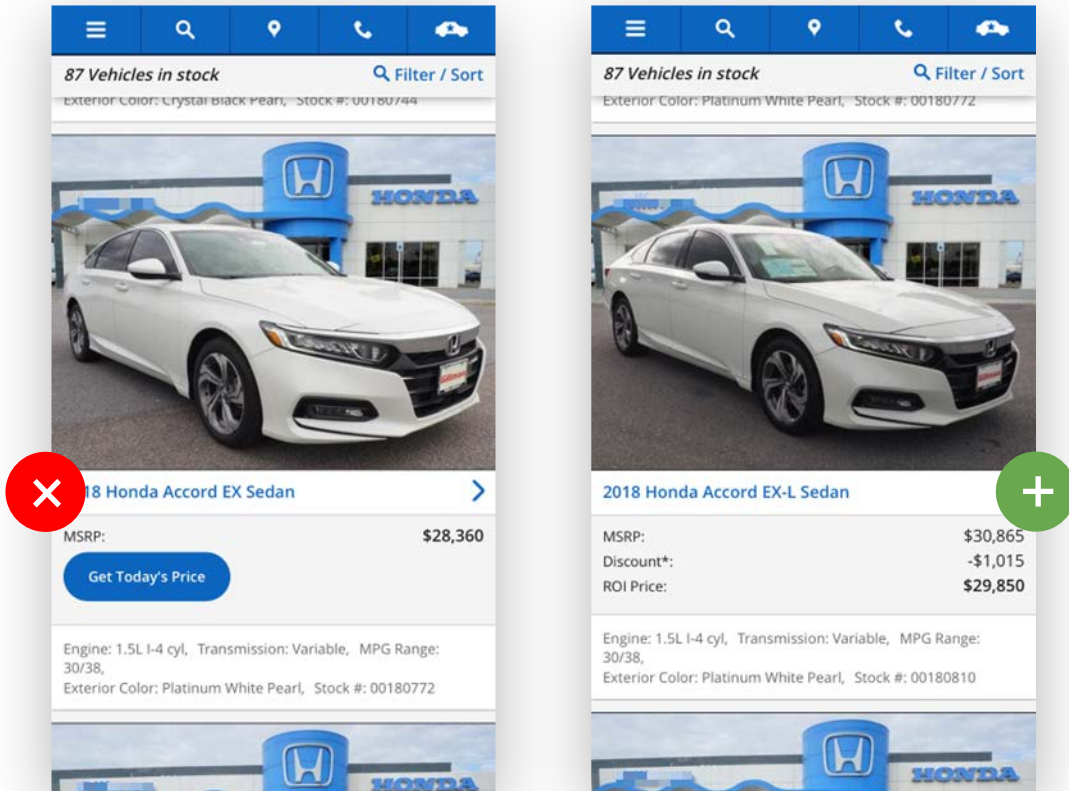
Rationale

When a visitor sees a button promising an updated price or discount they imagine pressing that button will get them some special lower figure. Instead they are shown a contact form. This bait and switch tactic dilutes trust and reinforces the visitor's preexisting negative stereotype of car dealers. If you insist on collecting contact information before showing the final price, consider a feature like Instant ePrice that immediately shows discounted pricing for the remainder of the visit after information is submitted.

Source: Shopping Experience Studies. 2012-2021. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

Display many facets.
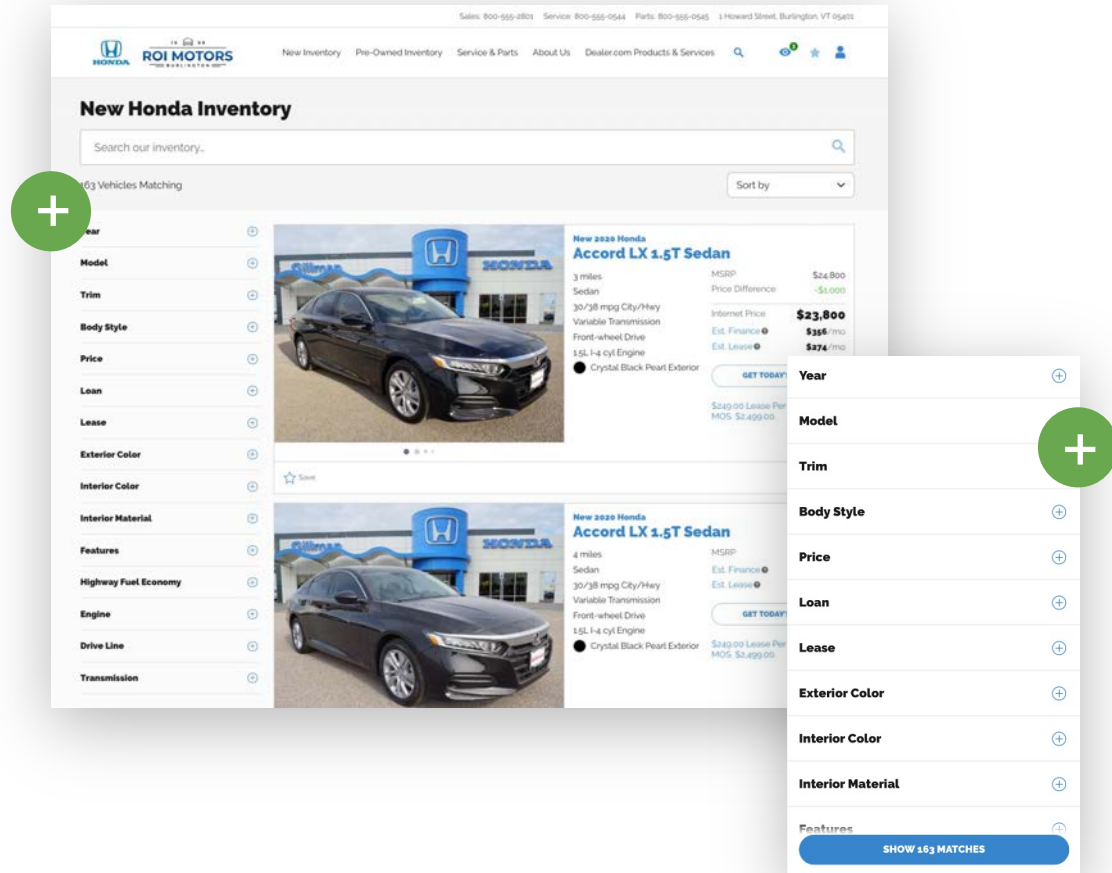
Rationale

Providing visitors with facets allows them to refine vehicle lists quickly and efficiently. At a minimum include the following: Condition (combined new/used listings only), Year, Make (pre-owned or multi-brand listings only), Model, Trim, Body Style, Price, Payments, Mileage (pre-owned listings only), Exterior Color, Interior Color, Interior Material, Transmission, Driveline, Features, and Packages.

In addition, allow visitors to select multiple facet values.

Collapse facets and order by engagement and context.

Year
Model
Trim
Body Style
Price
Loan
Lease
Exterior Color
Interior Color
Interior Material
Features

SHOW 163 MATCHES
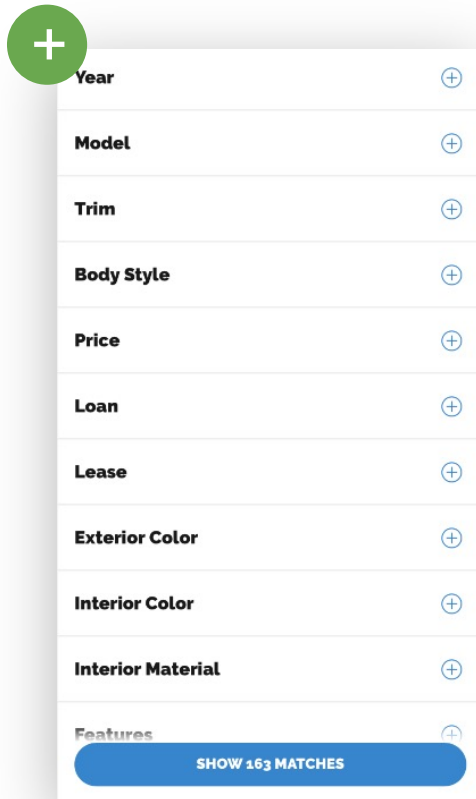
Behavior

To reduce the amount of scrolling needed to locate desired filters, collapse facets and order them by engagement:

1. Year/Make/Model/Body Style (YMMB) facets receive the most engagement (**>40%** usage) and should be prioritized at the top.

2. Price and Payments are not as frequently engaged but visitors commonly expect these facets to be prioritized near the YMMB facets.

3. Facets that receive **<10%** usage should follow YMMB and Pricing facets. This includes Mileage, Interior/Exterior Color, Packages, etc.

If needed, it's fine to expand one of the higher engaged facets, but having them all collapsed keeps things consistent and tidy.

Source: VLP Facet/Sort Analysis. October 2018. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

Suggested Order

Location (for group inventory)
Condition (when combining new, used)
Year
Make
Model
Trim
Body Style
Price
Payments
Odometer (for pre-owned only)
Exterior/Interior Colors
Interior Material
Features
Packages
Hwy/City Fuel Economy
Fuel Type
Engine
Drive Line
Transmission

Include free-text search with autocomplete suggestions.
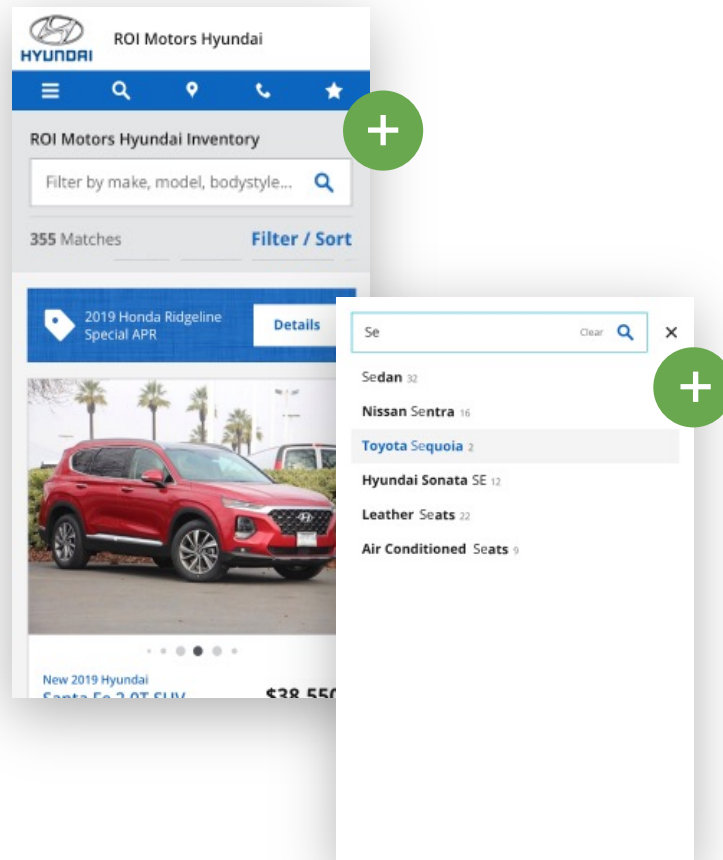
Rationale

When filtering results on mobile, we observed half of visitors gravitate towards engaging free-text search for simple filtering (combinations of make, model, body style) followed by facet search for more complex filtering (price, features, etc.).

Free-text search should feature autocomplete suggestions. These suggestions not only speed up the search process but also guide the user, helping them avoid typos and select the right vehicle filters to search within.
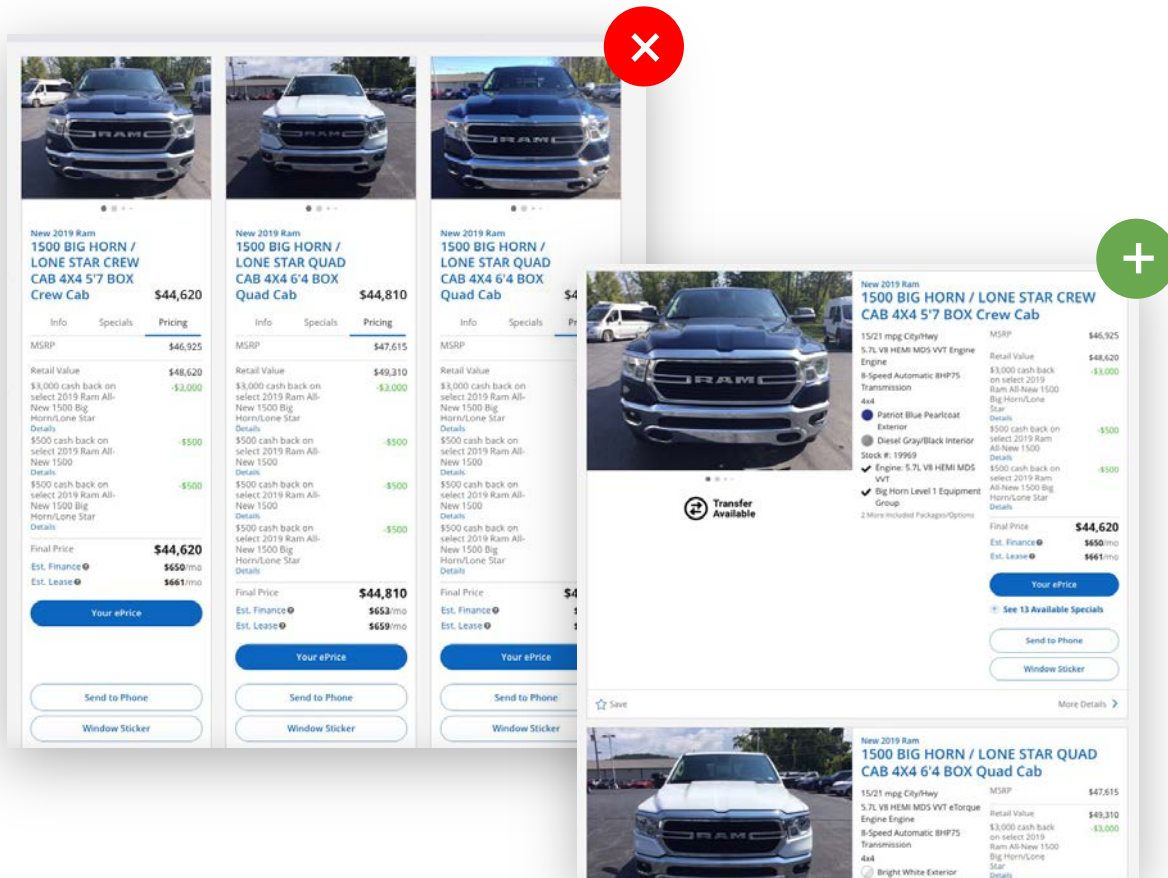
53% of mobile visitors select an autocomplete result.

21% of desktop visitors select an autocomplete result.

Source: SRP Engagement Analysis. Q1 2020. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

On desktop, only use a "grid" or "tile" layout when vehicles have minimal price details, badges, and CTAs.

Rationale

A "grid" or "tile" layout for vehicle listings provides visitors with improved ability to compare vehicles side-by-side. However, when vehicle listings contain too much information, specifically detailed pricing stacks including granular discounts, multiple badges, and/or multiple CTAs, the layout becomes too overwhelming.

A standard "stacked" listing of vehicles is recommended for vehicle listings containing detailed pricing, multiple badges, and/or multiple CTAs. This layout provides space for additional information without crowding the page.

Source: SRP Usability Studies. Q3-Q4 2019. Dealer.com User Experience Team.

SRP Recommendations

Recommendation	Impact	Metric of Interest
Reduce content above listings as much as possible	High	Brand perception, bounce rate
Use actual vehicle photos, not stock photos	High	Visit time, VDP view rate, SRP view rate
Do not embed branding in vehicle photos	Medium	Brand perception
Feature photo carousel in the listing	Low	Visit time, VDP views, photo engagement
Include only Year, Make, Model, and Body Style in title	Medium	Visit time, VDP views
Include standard vehicle specs, packages, and options as secondary info in the listing	Medium	Visit time, VDP views
Simplify pricing. No more than 3 prices in stack (ex. MSRP - Discount = Dealer Price)	Medium	Visit time
Include a "View Details" link (not button).	Low	Visit time, VDP views
Minimize number of button calls to action in listing	High	Visit time
Use a low contrast button style for listing CTA	Medium	Visit time
Be transparent with pricing	High	Brand perception

SRP Recommendations

Recommendation	Impact	Metric of Interest
Display many facets	High	VDP views
Collapse facets and order by engagement	Medium	Visit time
Include free-text search with autocomplete	Medium	Visit time
On desktop, only use a "grid" or "tile" layout when vehicles have minimal price details, badges, and CTAs	High	Visit time, VDP views

Thank You

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