

Randi
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What Our Reader Research Says About You

I am often asked, "What inspired you to start *African Americans On Wheels (AAOW)*?" My answer is always the same. "I was responding to a major void in automotive news and information in our community."

Going on six years now, AAOW has been a supplement to major Black newspapers in top U.S. cities and to several major dailies in Black communities. Just as the readers of other targeted publications do, African Americans trust news that represents their interests. To get a true glimpse of what African-American car buyers think, Black newspapers are a good starting point. Recently, we conducted our own independent study of readers of AAOW. The results were astounding and dispelled many myths about the statistics of our buying habits and the brand of vehicles that are more popular in our community.

The AAOW subscriber study, which was conducted by RFC&P Market Research, was geared around the opportunity to win a BMW mountain bicycle, and was completed on December 1, 2000. More than 1,000 surveys were mailed to our readers and 50.3 percent responded before the deadline. Future issues will disclose the results.

Although the mean income of African-American families in 1999 was \$27,910 and the national household income was \$40,816, our readers' income averaged \$62,300 annually, a staggering difference.

The perception of what vehicle brand we buy more of is Toyota, according to current studies. Our study reveals the most popular brands for our readers are Ford 16 percent, Chevrolet 10 percent, Honda seven percent, Dodge six percent and Toyota six percent.

And 85 percent of us are more likely to own rather than lease. Over 50 percent of Black car owners purchased their vehicles new. That is definitely something to write home about.

More than 83 percent of AAOW readers said we are a credible source of information on the automotive industry and 80 percent look forward to reading and sharing it with family and friends. They told us that about three other people read it, which gives us a total readership of about 2.5 million. Now, that is something to boast about.

Although the goal of the survey was to help us better serve our readers, it should give the auto industry more ammunition in targeting African-American car buyers.

The industry is currently experiencing a drop in vehicle sales and African-American consumers have never seriously been looked at as a way to increase new car sales.

Another myth is that African Americans are not interested in motorsports. Yet, five percent attended a NASCAR event in the past year and 40 percent watched televised races.

This is a powerful message to racing leagues who have done little to get more African-American spectators and for the sponsors who don't see the value in backing Black racers.

Our readers are computer literate as well. More than 84 percent have access to a personal computer and 88 percent are accessing the Internet. Additionally, 46 percent of our readers say they used a computer to purchase an automobile in the past year.

The most important satisfaction that came from this survey is that 47 percent of those who read AAOW don't read any other automobile magazines.

What started as a dream now fills what had been a void in our community.

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