



The Motor Ombudsman finds a generation gap in 'Car Confidence'

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Generation gap in 'Car Confidence' amongst UK drivers revealed by The Motor Ombudsman...

They tell us:



(All words and images from The Motor Ombudsman).

- Ahead of the arrival of the second plate change of the year, research by The Motor Ombudsman has revealed a generational divide in the confidence of UK drivers when buying and owning a car
- Baby Boomers (55- to 77-year-olds) have emerged as generally being more self-reliant and comfortable than younger generations when it comes to splashing out on a car and maintaining it
- To help boost drivers' 'Car Confidence', The Motor Ombudsman offers a comprehensive library of resources on car buying and maintenance, and an online Garage Finder listing reputable accredited businesses across the UK
- The 'Garage of Mum and Dad' is becoming increasingly obsolete as cars rise in complexity, with garages and mechanics picking up the mantle to plug any gaps in confidence in maintenance 'know-how'



London, 13 August 2024

With the arrival of the new '74' vehicle registration just around the corner, a Censuswide poll of 1,000 UK drivers commissioned by The Motor Ombudsman has revealed generational differences in consumer 'Car Confidence' when it comes to buying and owning a vehicle. The latest findings have also been used to create a new series of Motor Ombudsman 'barometers' to highlight how the dial can shift on a yearly basis between age groups. (Please also see the 'infographic' at the end of this text).

With the growing choice of makes and models available to motorists, and with cars often being the second most expensive purchase after a home, going it alone, and navigating the car buying process solo from start to finish, may prove a daunting prospect for some. On this subject, the research showed that nearly three-quarters (71%) of Gen Xers¹ would be the most inclined to enlist the helping hand of others, followed by around 67% of Gen Z² drivers and Millennials (Gen Y)³, and 66% of Baby Boomers⁴, where the latter group may have more car buying experience under their belt versus their peers.

When it comes to knowing what fuel type would be right for them if they were to buy a car, 84% of Boomers would feel safe in the knowledge that a petrol or diesel-powered model would best suit their needs, compared to 76% of Millennials and 73% of Gen Z drivers. However, when acquiring an electric vehicle (EV), the tables turn, with Gen Yers and Gen Zers leading the charge in terms of being the most self-assured, where around 50% of respondents in these generational groups have the peace of mind that adopting pure battery power would be the ideal method of propulsion, albeit there is a little more hesitation in these groups with forgoing an engine. In addition, with this technology being relatively new to market compared to filling up at the pumps, confidence in getting behind the wheel of an EV falls to around a third (34%) for Gen Xers, and to about a fifth (21%) amongst those aged between 59 and 77.



In fact, taking the time to do research is a critical first step in the car buying process, and with Gen Z considered the 'digital natives' and 'iGeneration', they have a greater tendency to rely on social media to stay up to speed with the latest products, advice, and tips, to help decide 'what's hot' and 'what's not'. However, according to one in ten Gen Zers (10%), and 11% of Gen Yers in The Motor Ombudsman study, misinformation on digital platforms is negatively affecting self-belief when taking the plunge to buy a car. Conversely, with Boomers more akin to using traditional media to do their research, their confidence appears to be far less influenced by what is being published by users through these prominent online platforms, at just 2% of respondents in this generational group.

When asked to divulge other areas where confidence may be lacking when buying a car, 84% of respondents belonging to Gen Z, who are likely to be first-time owners after passing their test, would not feel confident to step up to negotiate on price with a salesperson, with the same applying to around two thirds of Gen Xers (68%) and Millennials (67%). This is in contrast to their older peers, where 39% of Baby Boomers would be happy to barter, to help drive an even better deal.

When quizzed about what would be top of their wish list to give their 'Car Confidence' a lift, almost a quarter (23%) of Gen Z drivers have called for more information to be available on the car buying process, and to help select the right car according to their needs (compared to just 5% and 8% for the over 59s). Furthermore, almost a fifth (19%) of Gen Z drivers said they needed help steering them in the right direction of a trusted retailer when compared to their older counterparts who require the least assistance to identify a reputable seller.

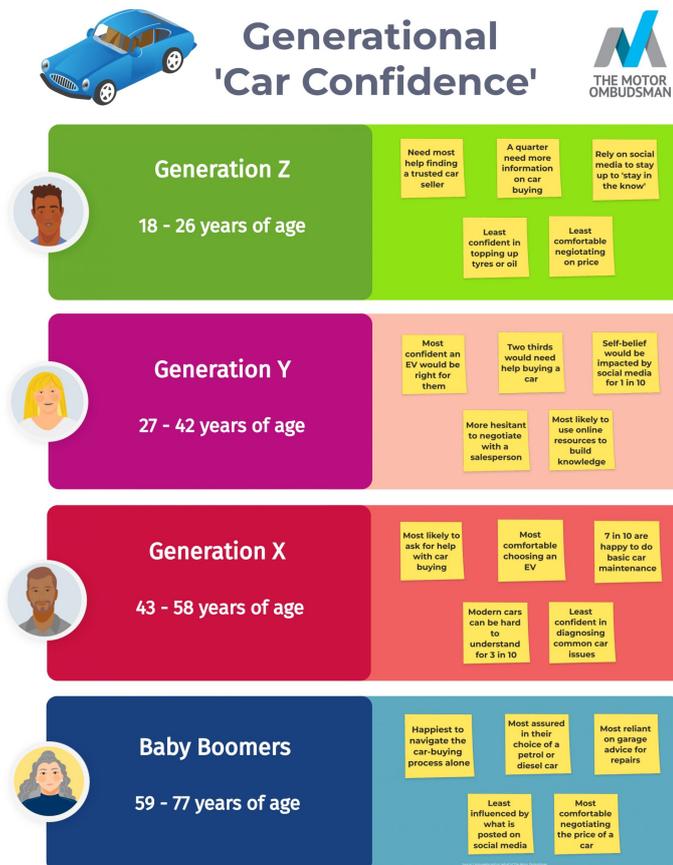


Beyond the car buying journey, the study equally revealed that basic car care skills were not as high up on the agenda amongst the young, as 66% and 71% of Gen Xers are happy to check the oil and air pressure in their tyres themselves, versus just 40% and 42% for Gen Z when it comes to these respective tasks. Given this lack of confidence when performing at-home car checks and tasks alone, Gen Z might be tempted to call the 'Garage of Mum and Dad' for help. However, The Motor Ombudsman's research found this resource is dwindling, as 89% of their parents' generation, Gen X, said they were not confident with diagnosing and troubleshooting common car issues, and almost a third (30%) of Gen Xers agreed that modern cars are becoming too complicated for the average driver to understand.

This puts the experts - garages and their mechanics, in the driving seat, amongst all generations, with Baby Boomers being the most reliant on their advice (57%), followed by Gen Xers at 47%. Furthermore, a third (33%) of Millennials, and 31% of Generation Z respondents, said they consult online videos and tutorials to 'be in the know', in contrast to perusing in-car manuals and documentation supplied by vehicle manufacturers (29% for Gen Yers and 21% for Gen Zers respectively).

Bill Fennell, Chief Ombudsman and Managing Director of The Motor Ombudsman, said: "Our research and 'Car Confidence Barometers' have revealed an insightful generation gap, with younger drivers, on the whole, tending to feel less self-assured in their car buying and ownership decisions compared to their older and sometimes more experienced counterparts.

It is clear that, while living in a world where so much information is at your fingertips, the sheer volume of content can be overwhelming. Helping to plug the generation gap with valuable motoring knowledge that will enable them to navigate their driving journey with independence and confidence is therefore crucial. On this note, anyone who feels that their 'Car Confidence' is in need of a boost, should actively seek out The Motor Ombudsman's comprehensive and impartial library of information covering the car buying and ownership experience, and call on the expertise provided by reputable accredited businesses in our growing



UK-wide network."



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