

Auto

GET THE BEST VALUE WHEN SHOPPING FOR A NEW CAR

You can do several things to ensure you get the best value possible when shopping for a new car. If you have a good relationship with a dealer, you're in great shape. Otherwise, here are some tips:

DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOUR OLD CAR BREAKS DOWN BEFORE SHOPPING FOR A NEW ONE

If you're desperate for a new car, you might not make the best decision. It's always best to allow yourself time to get exactly what you need.

BECOME INFORMED

There are many Web sites you can visit to get information, quotes, and prices for new cars. Autoweb.com, Vehix.com, and CarsDirect.com are just a few. Go to a search engine like Yahoo! or Google to find others. Then take a look at those sites to discover the features you want and what different cars cost. Visit dealers to check models and options. Knowledge is power, and the more you know the better choice you'll make.

BUY AT THE RIGHT TIME OF YEAR

In general, there are two times during the year that are the best to buy a new car. One is the last two weeks of December. With everyone out buying holiday gifts, attending parties, and traveling, the traffic at car dealerships is down. That motivates dealers to cut costs, and there usually are year-end sales records they're trying to break. Another good time is July to October, because that's when dealers clear out last year's models so they can sell the new model year.

SET A PRICE YOU CAN AFFORD AND DON'T PAY MORE

If you can remain firm in your price, you stand a better chance of paying the price you want. Dealers have many ways to make a deal profitable. Some you may never be aware of, such as factory-to-dealer incentives.

