

# Older drivers more likely to buy new vehicles

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Adults under 50 have long been the ideal target group for advertisers, but when it comes to buying new vehicles, older consumers may be a marketer's best bet, says a University of Michigan researcher.

Michael Sivak, research professor at the U-M Transportation Research Institute, examined the differences in the probability of [licensed drivers](#) purchasing a new light-duty [vehicle](#) (car, pickup truck, SUV or minivan) as a function of their age for the years 2007 and 2011.

He found that in 2011, the peak probability of buying a new vehicle per driver was among those between 55 and 64 years of age—a shift from four years earlier that peaked with the 35-to-44-year-old age group.

In 2011, one vehicle was purchased for every 14.6 [drivers](#) aged 55-64. By comparison, the rates for other groups of drivers were: 14.9 for ages 65-74; 15.0 for ages 45-54; 15.9 for ages 35-44; 19.7 for all age groups combined; 26.6 for age 75 and older; 34.9 for ages 25-34; and 221.8 for ages 18-24.

"There were substantial increases from 2007 to 2011 in the number of drivers 55 to 64 years of age and 65 to 74 years of age," Sivak said.

"This trend likely reflects the aging of the general population, coupled with the increased probability of older persons having a driver's license."

The largest number of vehicles are currently purchased by those aged 45-54 (26 percent of new buyers in 2011), followed by those aged 55-64 (23 percent).

In comparison to 2007, in 2011 there were proportionally fewer vehicle buyers for both the 35-to-44-year-old age group and the 25-to-34-year-old age group, while there were more buyers for all [age groups](#) 45 and older—including a 5-percentage-point rise for those aged 55 to 64.

"The findings suggest that marketing efforts that focus on drivers 55 to 64 years old should have the highest probability of success per driver," Sivak said. "The emphasis on this relatively older age group is further supported by the expected continuation of the graying of the population and the consequent continuation of the increase in the number of older licensed drivers."

**More information:** [hdl.handle.net/2027.42/97760](http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/97760)

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