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DEALER SURVEY 2025

# Dealer Insights Report 2025

Find out what dealers really think. Uncover trends that can help shape smarter strategies—from inventory management to lead generation and margin protection.

# Find out what's driving **dealer strategies** this year.

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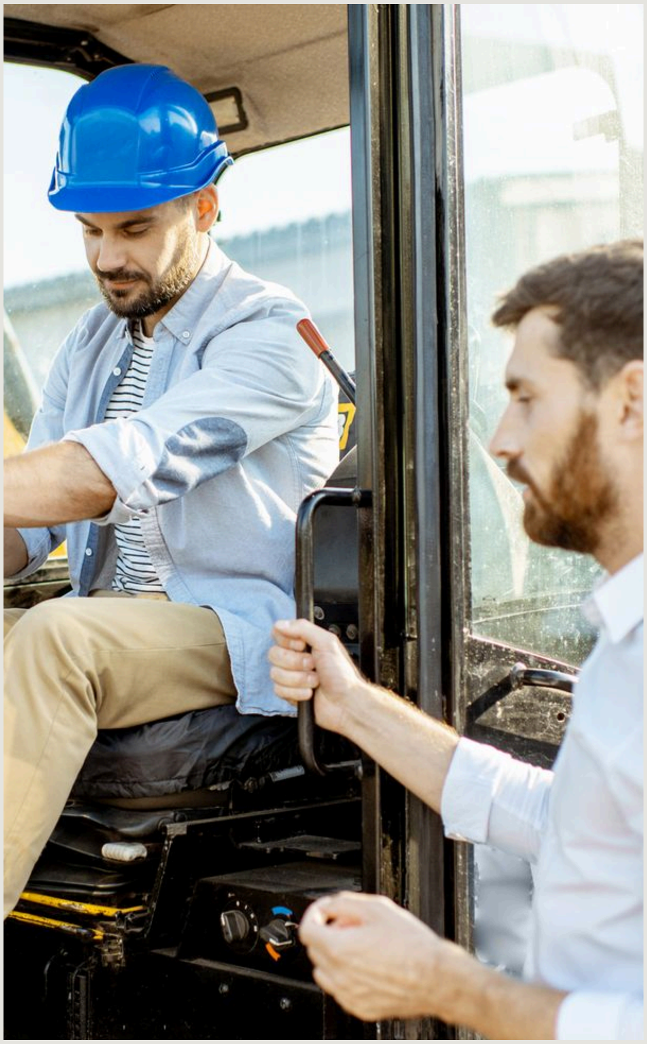
# Executive Summary

In 2025, dealers are under pressure—from rising equipment costs and tariff instability to slower customer decisions and disconnected tech. Nearly half describe themselves as "concerned" about the state of the market, and the dominant theme is unpredictability. Still, many are adapting, leaning on experience, relationships, and smarter tools to keep moving forward.

Sales cycles are stretching, rental demand is rising, and customers expect more digital speed with less financial commitment. Dealers are frustrated with lead quality and inventory mix, but they're also clear-eyed about what needs to change: better tech integration, stronger qualification tools, and data that drives action.

This year's survey isn't just a temperature check—it's a map of where the pressure points are and what high-performing dealers are doing to stay ahead. The message is simple: clarity wins. The rest of this report is built to help you find your own.

## Snapshot: Trends to Watch



Dealers are alert, adaptive, and exhausted. While they're not panicking, they are pacing themselves through what feels like a fragile economy. From rising costs to slow-moving customers and underperforming tech, the pressure is real—but so is persistence.

Tariffs top the list of economic disruptors, tightening margins and cash flow. Customers are holding onto equipment longer, slowing sales and shifting the focus to rentals and financing. Inventory remains a balancing act—too much of the wrong stock, not enough of what is in demand. Dealers are relying more on data, but tech adoption still lags due to poor integration.

Despite it all, relationships remain the foundation of dealer success. Nearly 70% of sales come from existing customers, proving that trust still drives sales. High-intent leads are more valuable than ever, especially in a crowded market where window shoppers outnumber serious buyers. Compact equipment leads demand, while service capacity is capped by staffing issues and price sensitivity.

# Significant Findings

### 01 Tariff Anxiety and Cash Flow Squeeze

- Tariff unpredictability is the #1 economic disruptor.
- Combined with high interest rates and equipment costs, dealers face: tighter margins and slower cash cycles.

### 02 Delayed Customer Buying Cycles

- 75% of dealers expect customers to hold onto equipment longer.
- Financing is gaining traction, but only among 15–20% of buyers.

### 03 Inventory Imbalance and Turnover Tension

- Excess inventory is tying up capital for 30% of dealers.
- High-demand equipment is still scarce in some regions.

### 04 Data Driven Decision Making

- 75% of dealers use third-party pricing/market data weekly or more.
- Over half now use retail pricing data, auction results, and age/usage history to triangulate pricing.

### 05 Tech Upgrades: Wanted but Hard to Integrate

- Nearly 50% cite poor system integration as their top tech frustration.
- AI pricing tools, CRMs, and lead-gen automation are top priorities for adoption.

### 06 Relationships Outweigh Price in Closing Sales

- 69% of sales come from existing customers.
- 65% say relationships and reliability are why contractors choose them over competitors.

### 07 Rentals Are Replacing Sales in Some Segments

- 38% of dealers say rentals are cutting into sales.
- 33% report expanding rental fleets to meet demand.

### 08 High-Intent Leads Are Gold

- 34% of dealers say better-qualified leads would have the biggest day-to-day impact.
- Dealers prioritize engagement, equipment match, and financing readiness when evaluating lead quality.

**This is a market where grit, strategy, and adaptability matter more than ever.** The rest of the report explores how dealers are navigating those realities—and what they need to keep moving forward.

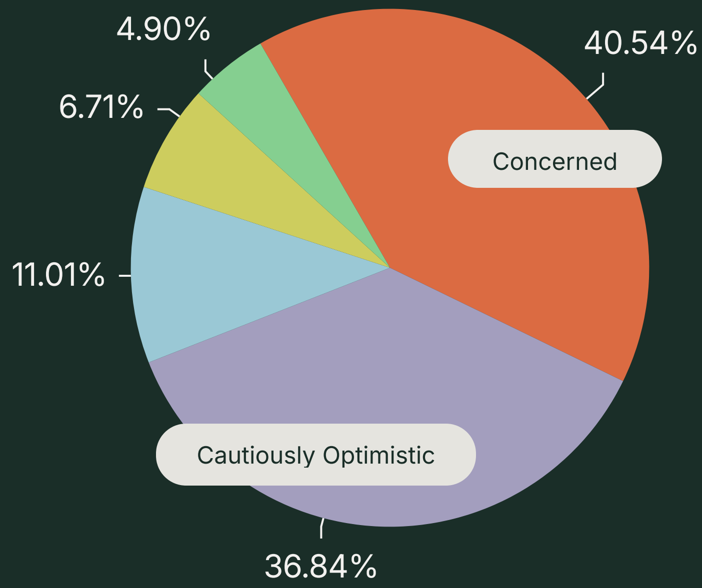
# General Economic Sentiment

**Tariff uncertainty** is the single biggest economic disruptor for dealers in 2025, cited by 70% of respondents. That makes tariffs the top concern, beating even **rising equipment costs (66.3%)** and **financing challenges (49.1%)**. This suggests dealers are not only dealing with rising prices, but they're unsure why or when those increases will hit. The instability itself is what's rattling confidence.

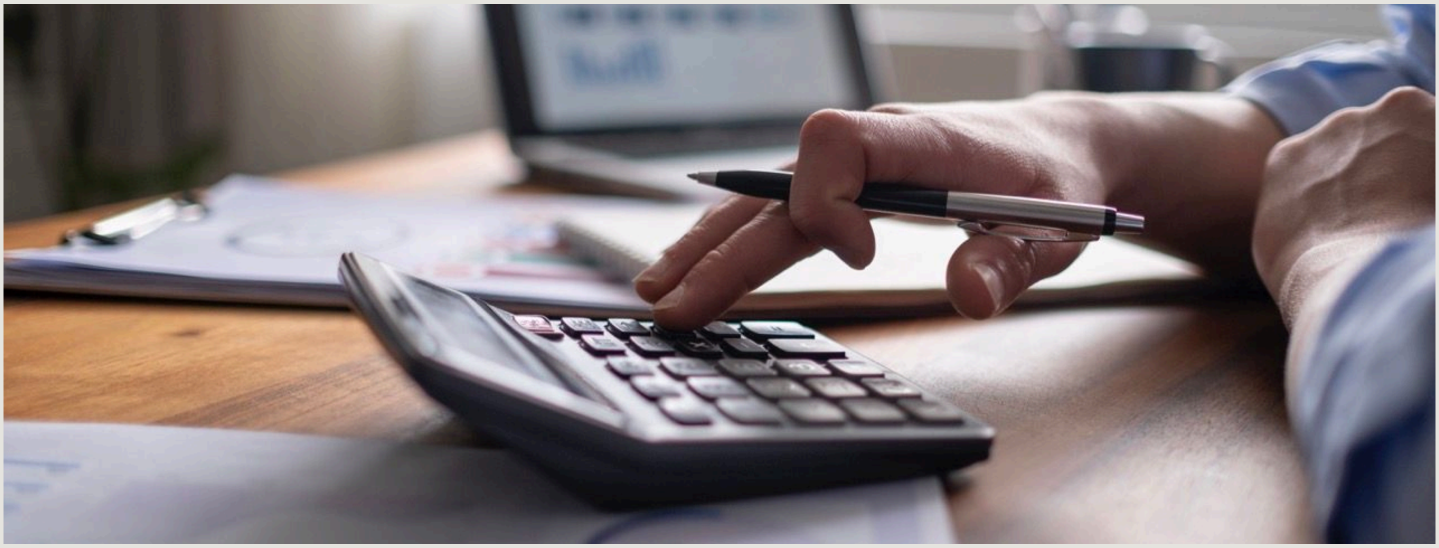
What economic factors are having the biggest impact on your dealership right now? *(Select up to four)*

How would you describe your overall confidence in the equipment market for 2025?

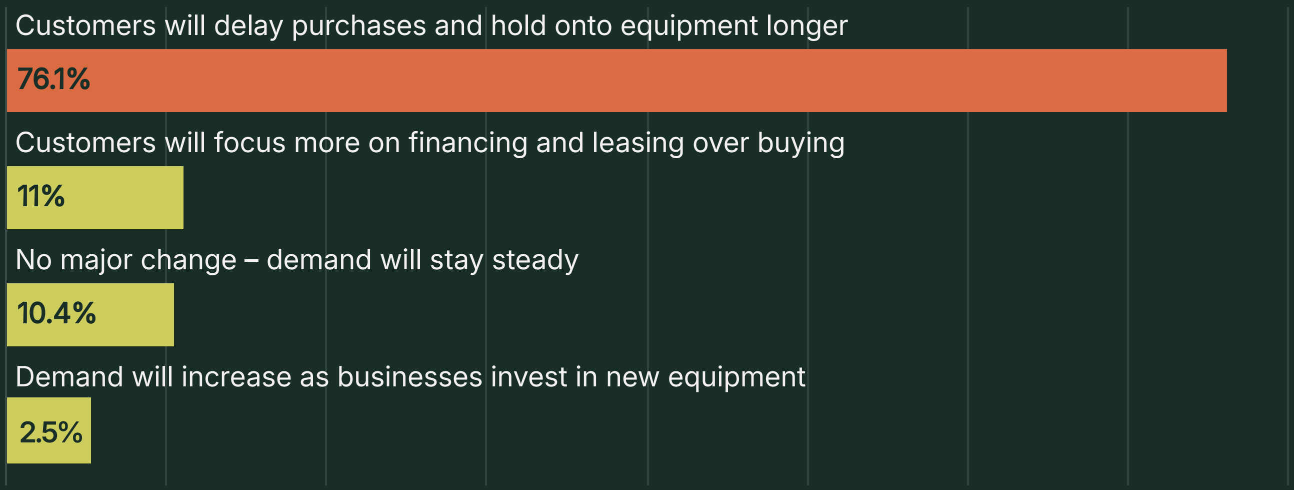
- **Concerned** – Rising costs and tariff uncertainty are impacting sales
- **Cautiously optimistic** – Market is steady but unpredictable
- **Very concerned** – Demand is already slowing, and economic pressures are mounting
- **Neutral** – No major changes expected
- **Very confident** – Strong demand and stable pricing ahead




Nearly **half of dealers describe their outlook as "concerned,"** and many are feeling the squeeze of rising prices, financing hurdles, and slower cash flow. Still, a seasoned **36% remain cautiously optimistic**, relying on experience and adaptability over confidence.



How do you anticipate customer buying behavior will change in 2025 due to economic conditions?




The overwhelming majority, nearly three-quarters, of **dealers believe that economic pressure will cause buyers to pause**, not pounce. That signals a projected slowdown in replacement cycles and longer equipment life spans on customer lots. It also means more wear-and-tear, more maintenance, and potentially more risk for both dealers and end users. The combination of tariffs, rising costs, and financing challenges paints a cash flow problem. It's not just that equipment is getting more expensive, it's that **the path to profitability is narrowing**.

# Forecasting in a Fog

## Predicting Demand When the Rules Keep Changing

Tariffs. Rate hikes. Inventory costs. Dealers aren't just battling price pressure—they're flying blind in an unpredictable market.

That's where smarter forecasting tools come in. With EquipmentWatch and Iron Solutions, you can track month-over-month shifts in Fair Market Value (FMV), monitor long-term depreciation patterns, and compare auction trends across your key machine types.

The tools that help you navigate the unknown:

- **EquipmentWatch:** Monthly FMV/FLV benchmarks across 1,000+ models
- **Iron Solutions:** Dealer comps, auction results, and real-time ag pricing
- **Custom dashboards:** View trends by brand, model year, or geography

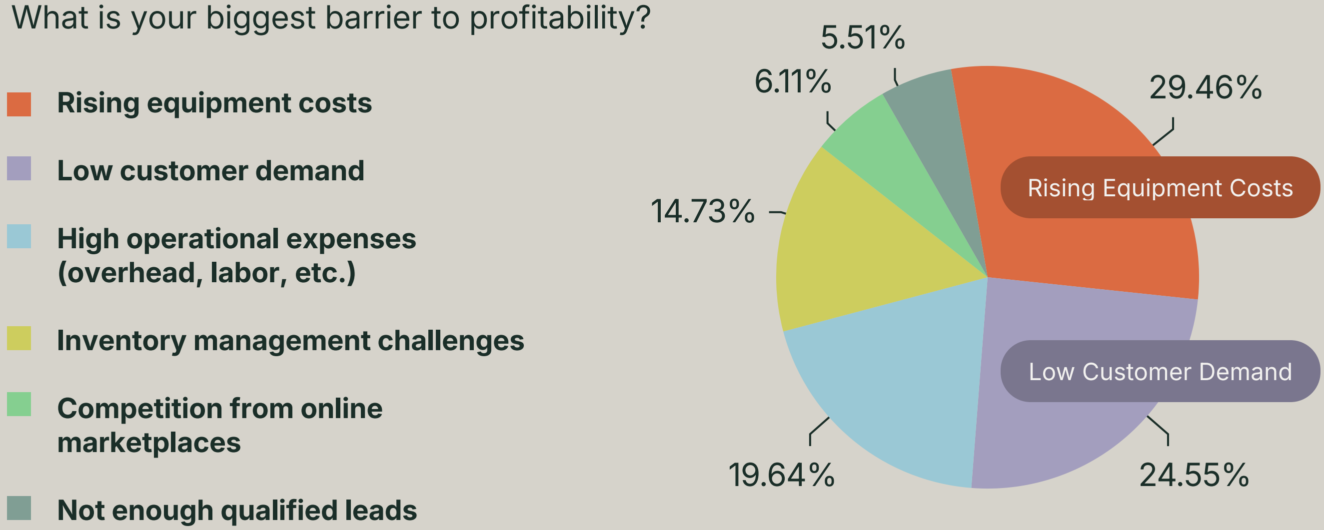
When the market is volatile, your data shouldn't be. Use real-time valuation tools to price smarter, plan better, and stay ahead of surprises.

**"We rely on EquipmentWatch to validate our pricing decisions when everything else feels like guesswork. It gives us the confidence to hold our margins—or pivot when we need to."**

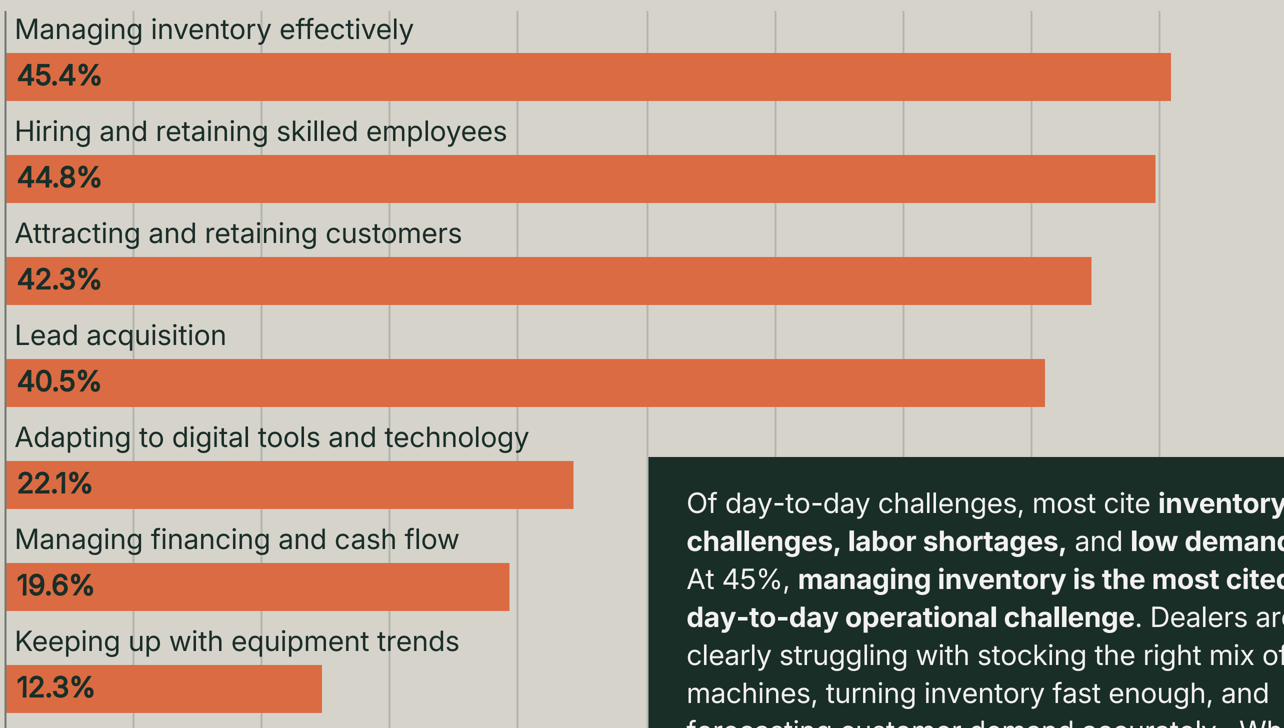
Travis G., Regional Sales Director

# Biggest Operational Challenges

What is your biggest barrier to profitability?

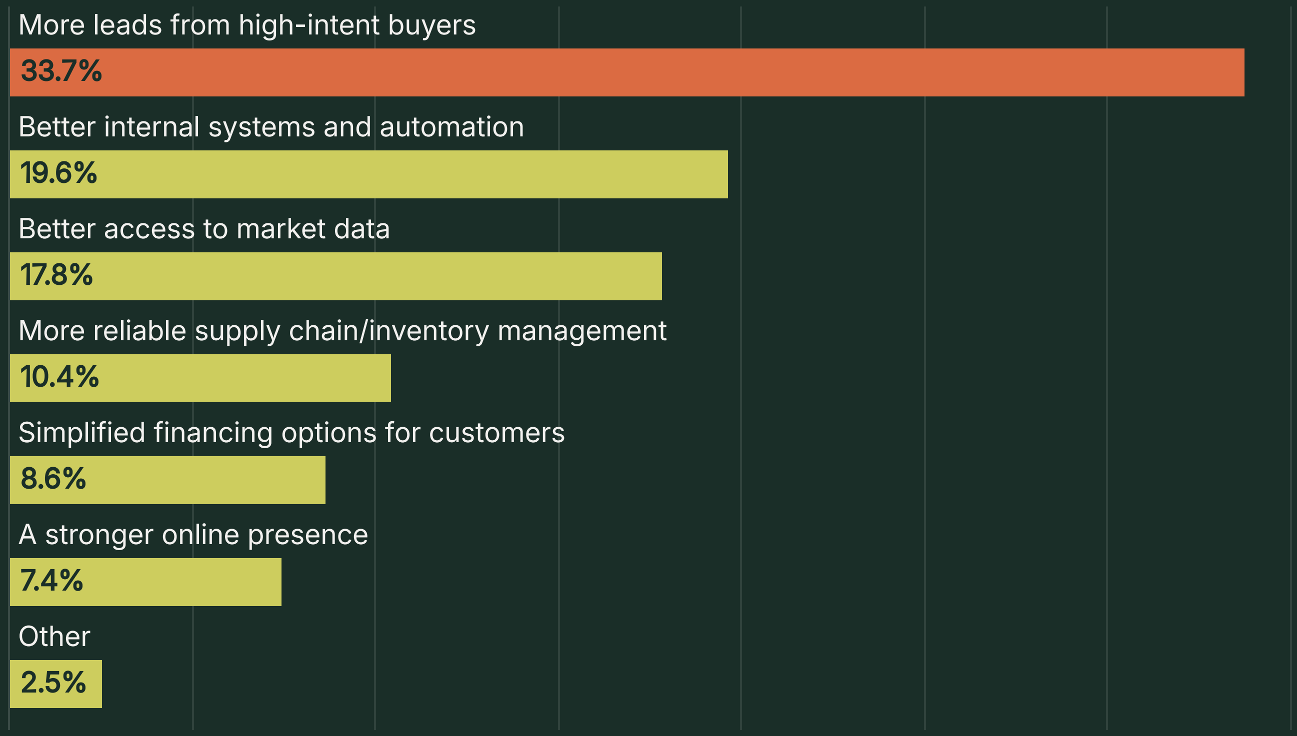



What is the biggest challenge you face in your day-to-day operations? *(Select all that apply)*



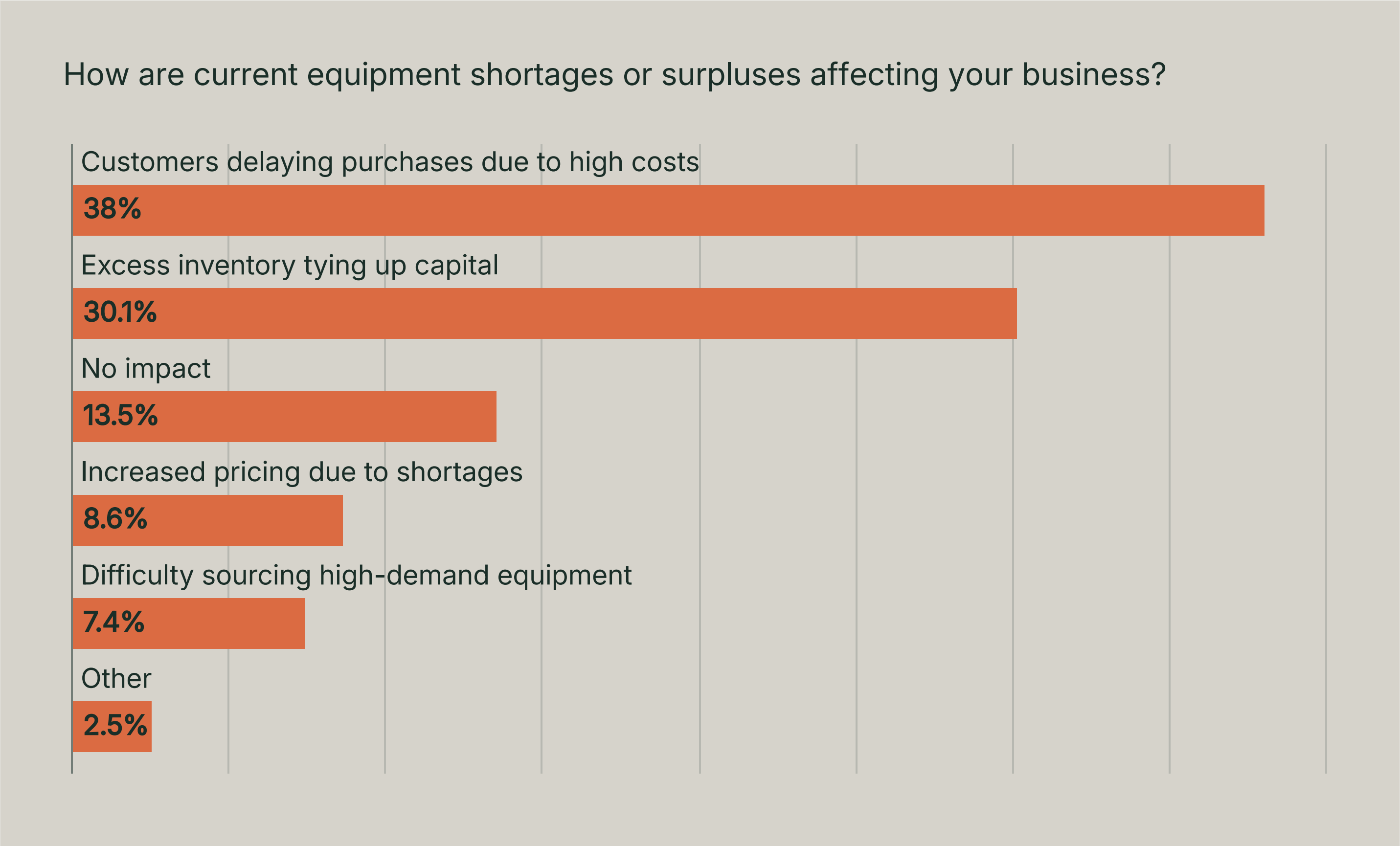

Of day-to-day challenges, most cite **inventory challenges, labor shortages,** and **low demand**. At 45%, **managing inventory is the most cited day-to-day operational challenge**. Dealers are clearly struggling with stocking the right mix of machines, turning inventory fast enough, and forecasting customer demand accurately. When buyers are hesitant, holding too much—or the wrong—inventory drains cash and strains your sales team.

What's one thing that would make your job easier?




The top response, by a wide margin, was a request for **more leads from high-intent buyers, chosen by 33.7%** of respondents. This isn't just about volume; it's about quality. Dealers are tired of chasing cold prospects or nurturing dead ends. **Nearly 1 in 5 dealers (19.6%) want better internal systems and automation.** That likely includes CRMs, inventory platforms, scheduling tools, or marketing workflows. These responses suggest that digital transformation is happening, but slowly, and friction in the backend is costing dealers time and deals.

# Inventory & Market Trends




# Inventory Isn't Just a Problem – It's a Power Play

**Inventory is the #1 daily headache for dealers in 2025.**

- 45% say managing inventory is their biggest operational challenge.
- 30.6% are stuck with excess stock tying up capital and cluttering the lot.

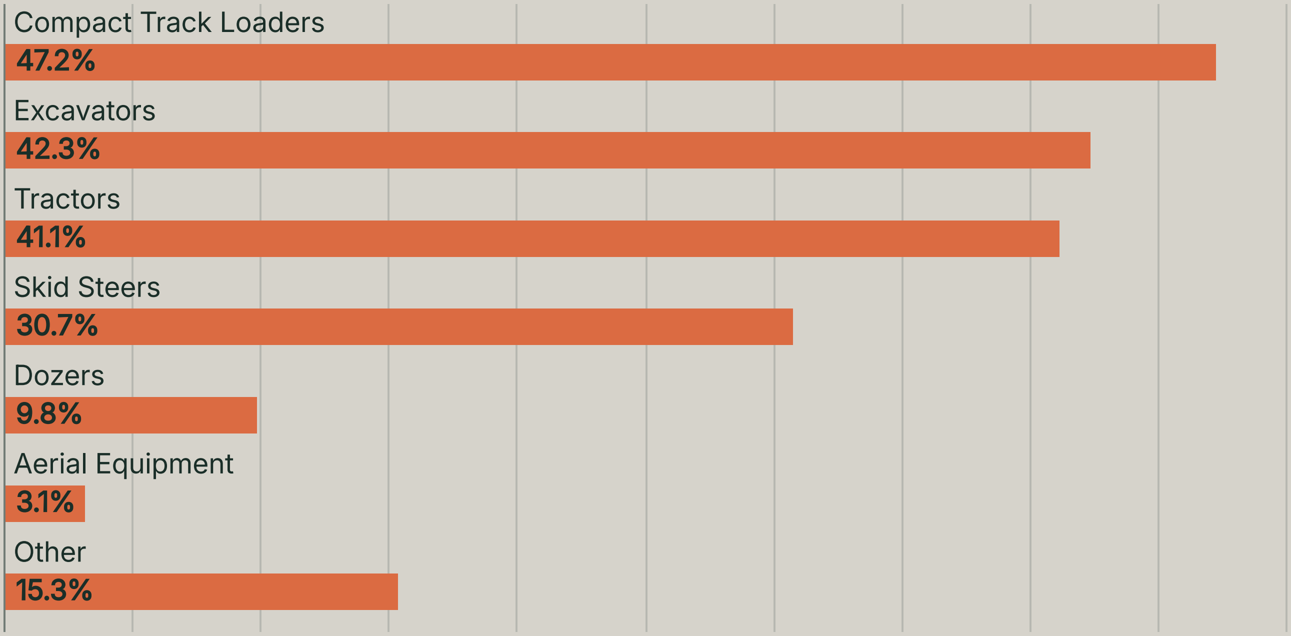
But inventory doesn't just sit—it talks. If you know what it's telling you.

With **Iron Solutions**, you get real-time ag equipment comps, auction data, and depreciation curves—so you can adjust prices before units go stale. With **EDA**, you can match stock to in-market buyers—based on real financing activity—not just hope.

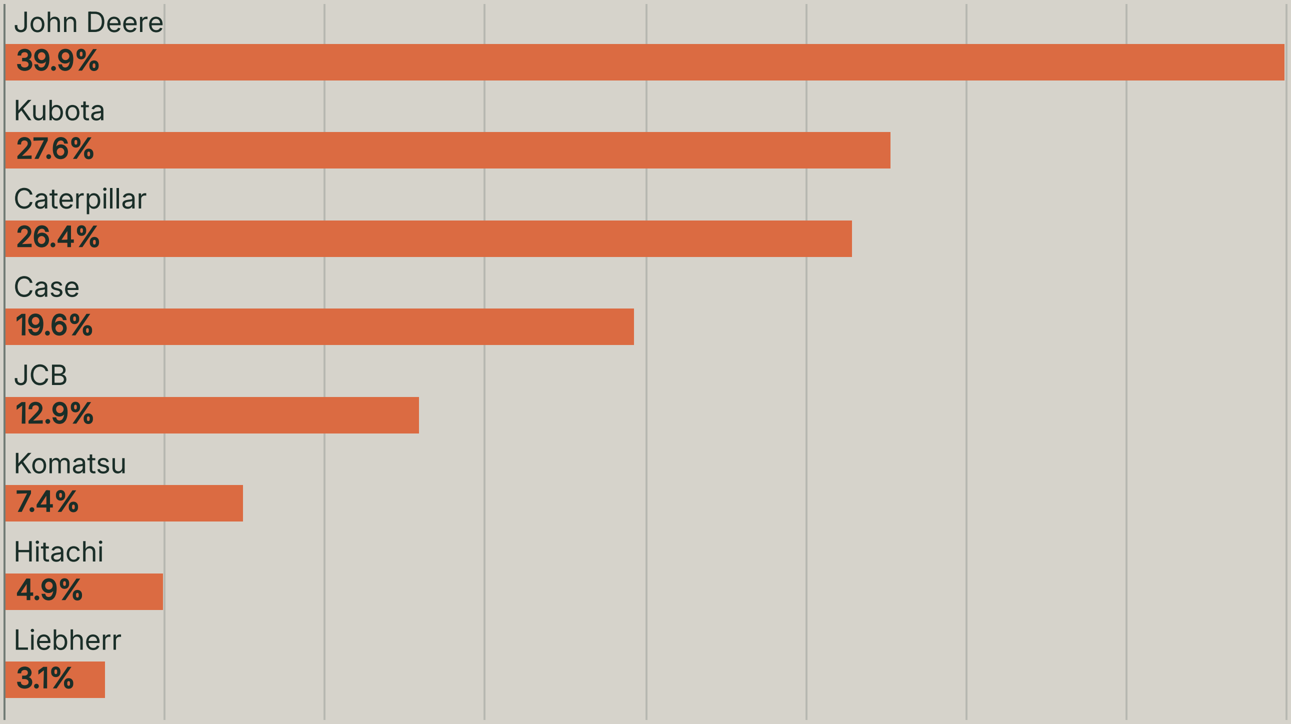
Inventory is either draining your margin or driving your growth. With the right tools, it becomes your sharpest competitive edge.

> **"Before we had the EDA data, we were really shooting from the hip, chasing contractors we knew.** This opens up a lot more opportunities for us. Our sales people use the data pre-sales call to find out which clients have a history of purchasing used equipment. The results are better sales calls and taking up less time from prospects during the process. **The EDA data has been a great return on our investment."**
>
> George Robinson, VP Business Services, H&E

Which machine types are in highest demand? *(Select up to three)*




Which brands are selling the fastest in your dealership? *(Select up to three)*

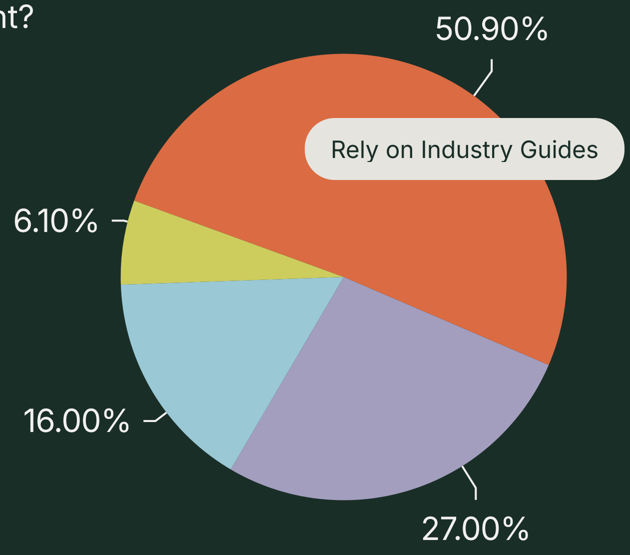


# Digital Transformation & Tech Use

Industry pricing guides are the foundation of used equipment valuation. With **50.9% of respondents leaning on platforms like EquipmentWatch and Iron Solutions**, it's clear that data-backed tools are the standard for resale pricing. **Three out of four dealers now use third-party pricing and market data weekly**—or more—with **nearly 42% relying on it daily**. This speaks to a need for defensible and transparent pricing particularly in a market where every dollar counts.

How do you currently price used equipment?

- **Rely on industry guides (e.g., EquipmentWatch, Iron Solutions)**
- **Compare similar listings online**
- **Use internal historical sales data**
- **Base it on manufacturer recommendations**

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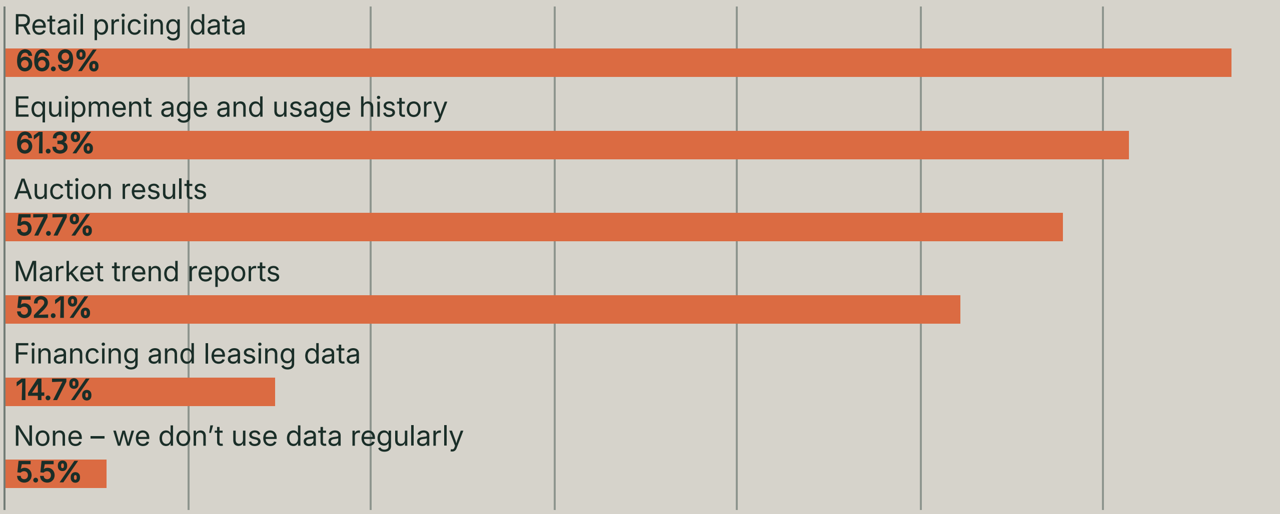
What types of data do you use most to inform your pricing decisions? *(Select all that apply)*

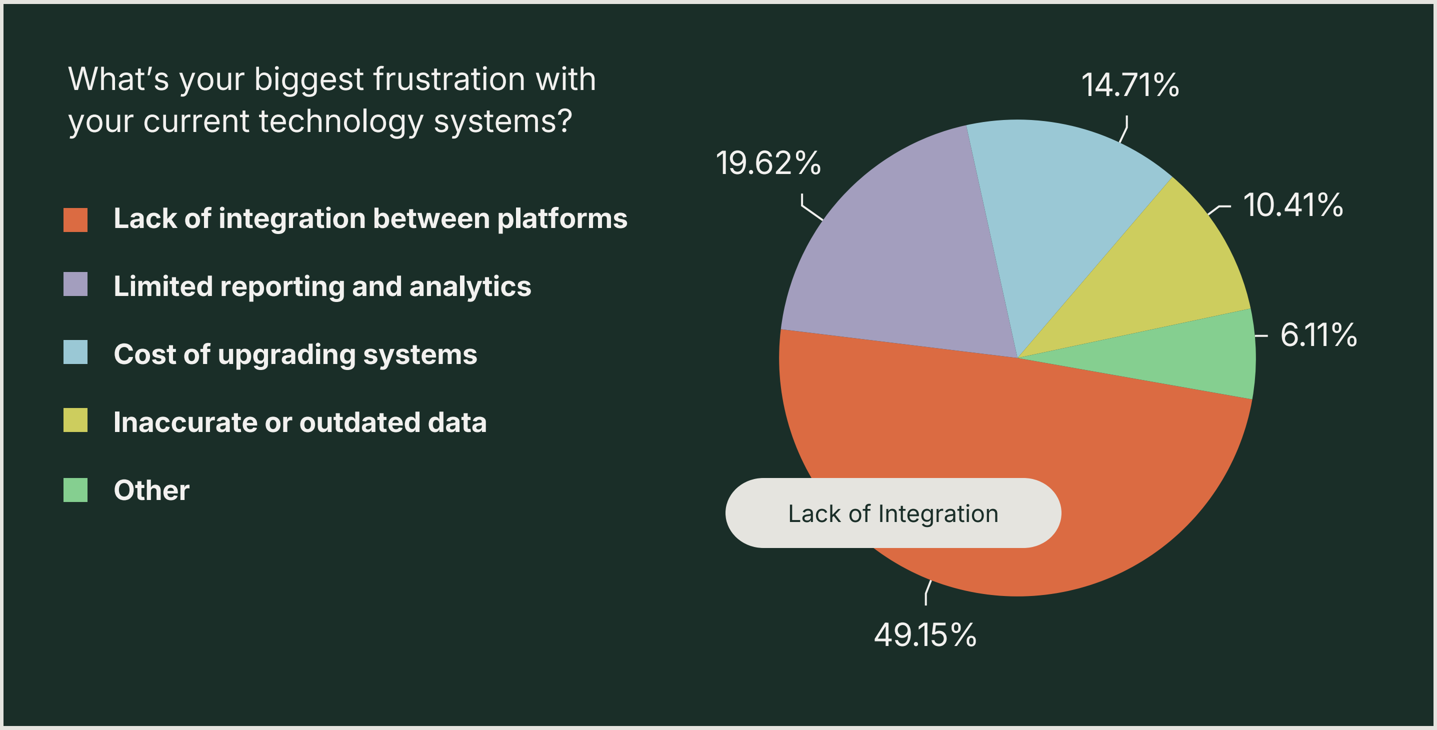


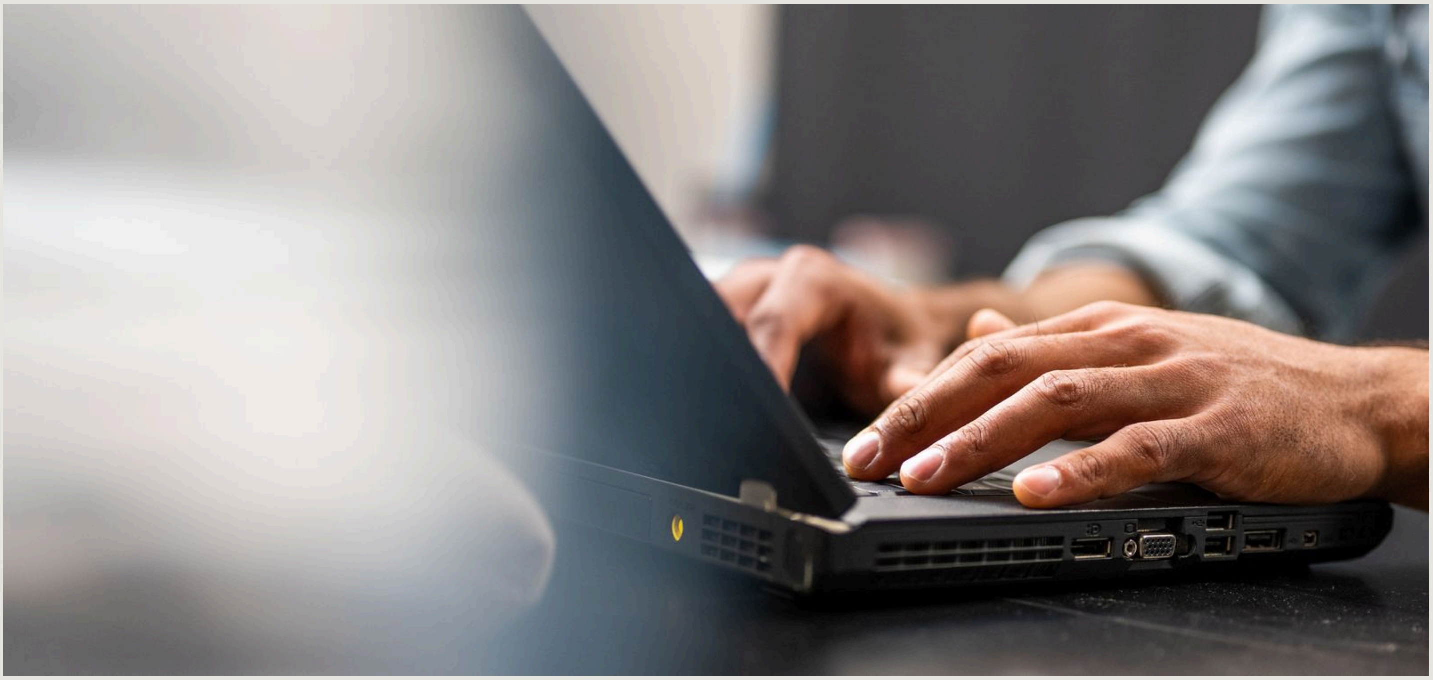

Retail pricing is the top reference point, but most dealers blend it with auction data, usage history, and trend reports to price smarter and protect margins. This signals a **maturing data ecosystem**, where pricing decisions aren't based on just one figure—they're triangulated from several sources. Over half of dealers are reading the broader market—not just current comps. This shows a growing reliance on forward-looking signals, not just historical data. It suggests **dealers want to stay ahead of value swings**, not react to them.

How often do you reference third-party data sources for pricing or market insights?

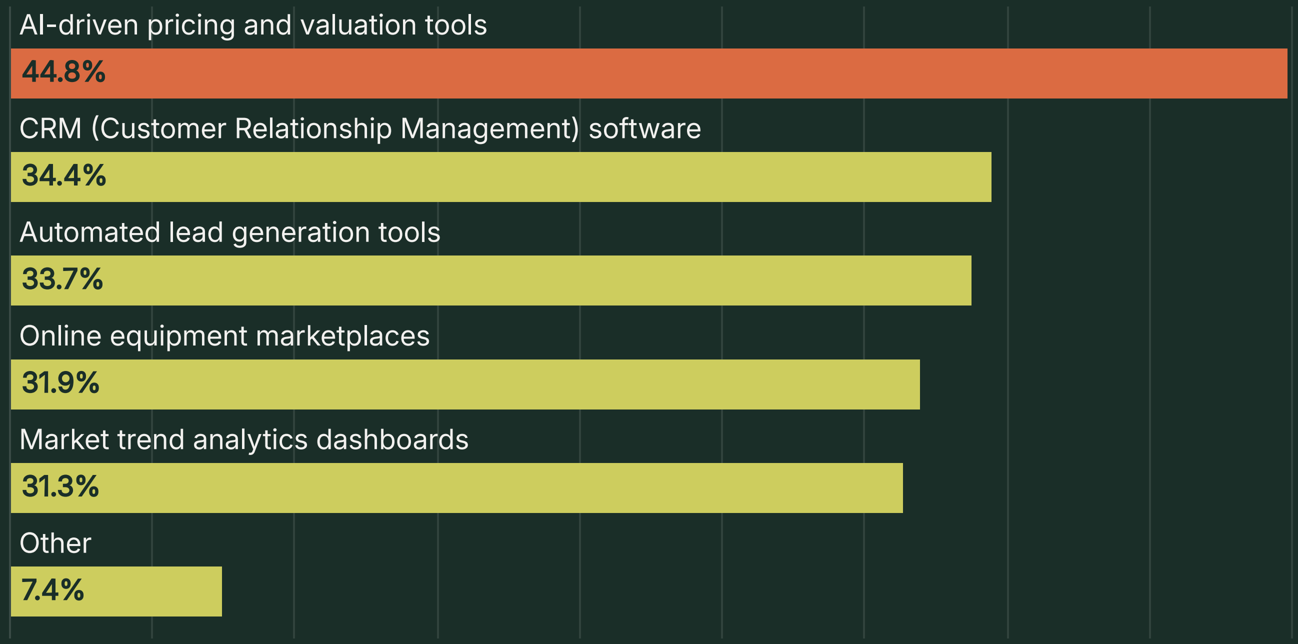

With a combined **75% of dealers checking market or pricing data weekly or more**, it's clear that third-party insights have become an integral part of daily dealership workflows. The fact that **41% use it daily** suggests not just regular access, but active reliance, most notably for sales teams, valuation specialists, and inventory managers.

Despite this maturity, tech integration is still a major obstacle: **nearly half of dealers say disconnected systems are their biggest frustration**, slowing teams down and killing momentum. **49.1% of respondents named lack of integration as their biggest technology frustration.** That means almost half of dealers are stuck toggling between tools: CRM, inventory systems, pricing platforms, marketing dashboards – with little to no data flow between them. The emotional undertone here is clear: frustration, inefficiency, and lost time.



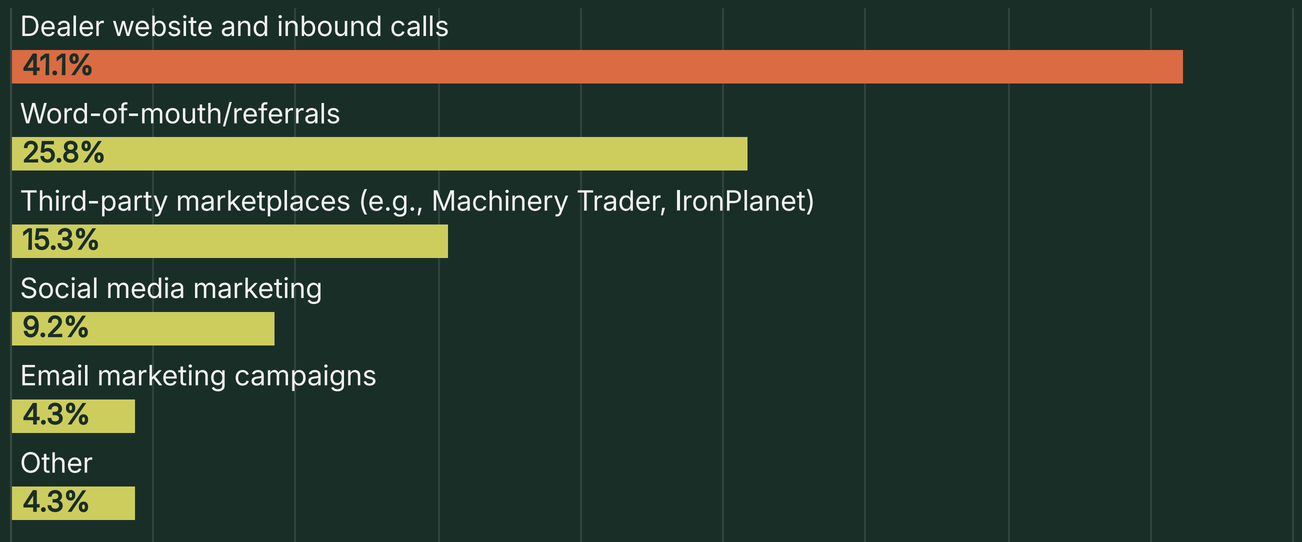
What new technology are you most interested in adopting in the next year?
*(Select all that apply)*



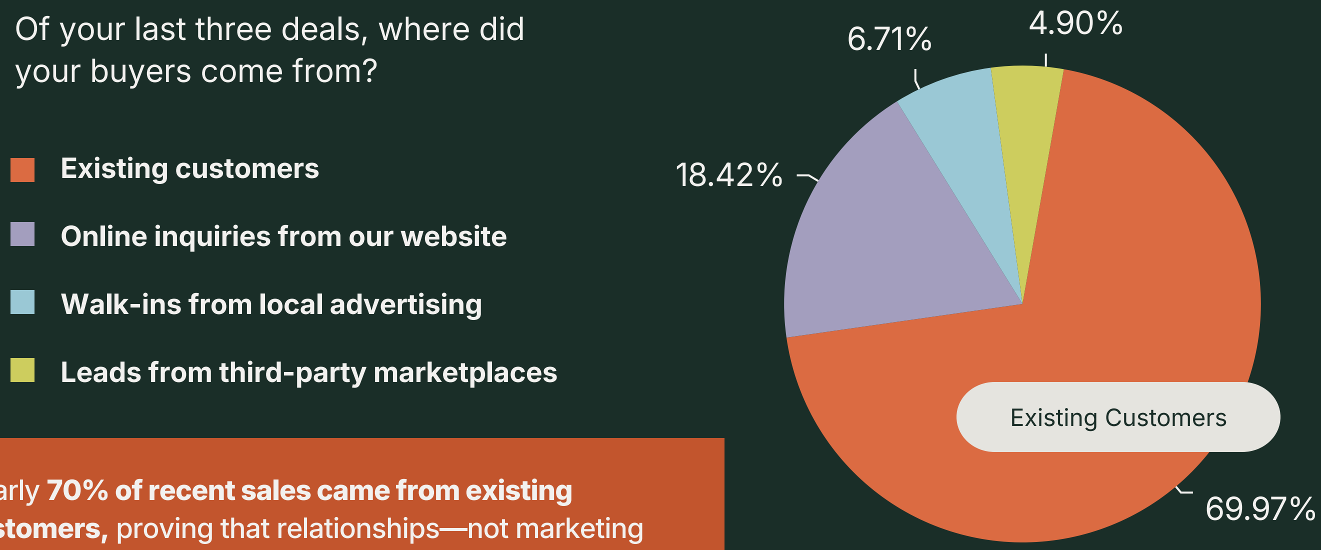

Interest in AI-driven pricing tools is growing fast, with **45% naming it their top tech priority.** Dealers want smarter, faster, and more confident pricing decisions, significantly as margins tighten, and market conditions shift rapidly. Just **over 31% want market trend analytics dashboards**, confirming that a sizable group of dealers are ready to move from reactive to proactive decisions, if they can see the big picture clearly and in real time. The next leap isn't more tools—it's smarter, connected ones.

# Leads/Buyers/Prospects

Where do you currently source most of your leads?

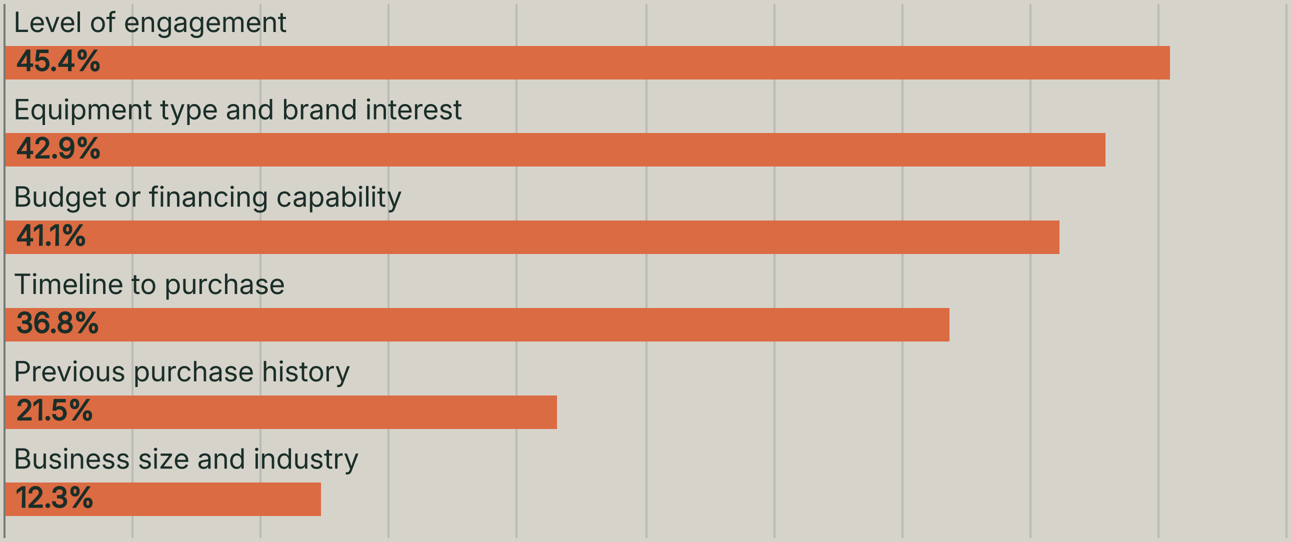



Of your last three deals, where did your buyers come from?



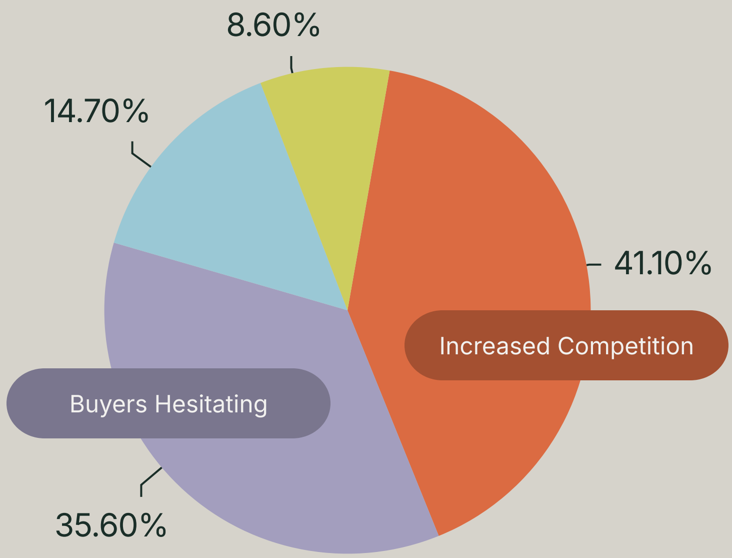

Nearly **70% of recent sales came from existing customers,** proving that relationships—not marketing budgets—still close deals. Most new leads come from dealer websites and inbound calls, showing that owned channels still outperform paid marketplaces. But the lead pipeline has a quality problem: **one in three dealers says they're seeing more tire-kickers and fewer serious buyers,** especially from third-party platforms.

When evaluating a lead, which factors are most important to you? *(Pick top two)*




What's the biggest challenge in converting leads to actual sales?

- **Increased competition from other dealers and online sellers**
- **Buyers hesitating due to high equipment costs**
- **Lack of quality leads**
- **Difficulty securing financing for customers**




Dealers say their biggest sales challenge is competition—both from online sellers and other local dealers—and it's making it harder to close. They're also struggling to qualify leads quickly: **40% say they need better brand presence**, and **37% want stronger lead filtering**. Price hesitation is still slowing things down, but what dealers really want is clarity—who's ready, who's budget-ready, and who's just browsing.

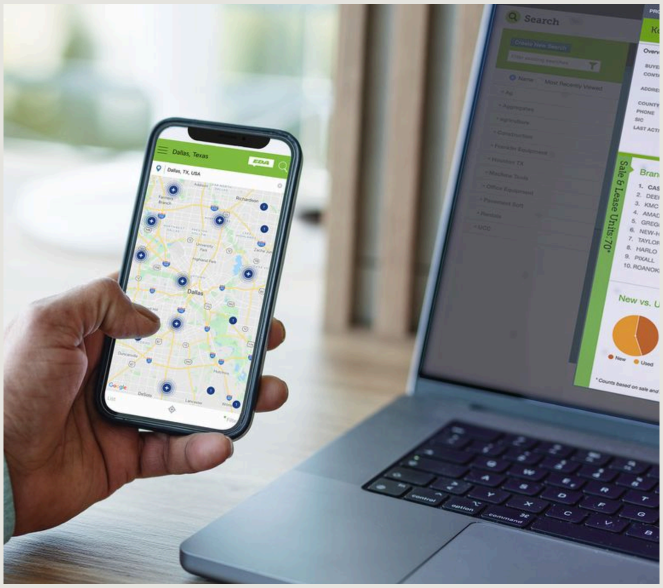
# Catch Hot Leads Before They Cool

Speed matters. When your sales team knows who's buying, and what they're buying, you gain a critical edge. **Fusable's EDA product** delivers customer-specific data like names, addresses, equipment make and model, and serial numbers of financed assets. But the value doesn't stop there.

With EDA, you can also:

- Spot **regional hotspots** of buyer activity
- Identify **hidden opportunities** in your territory
- **Filter leads** by equipment type, brand, and more

Don't wait for leads to come to you. With **EDA**, you can act before competitors even know the opportunity exists.

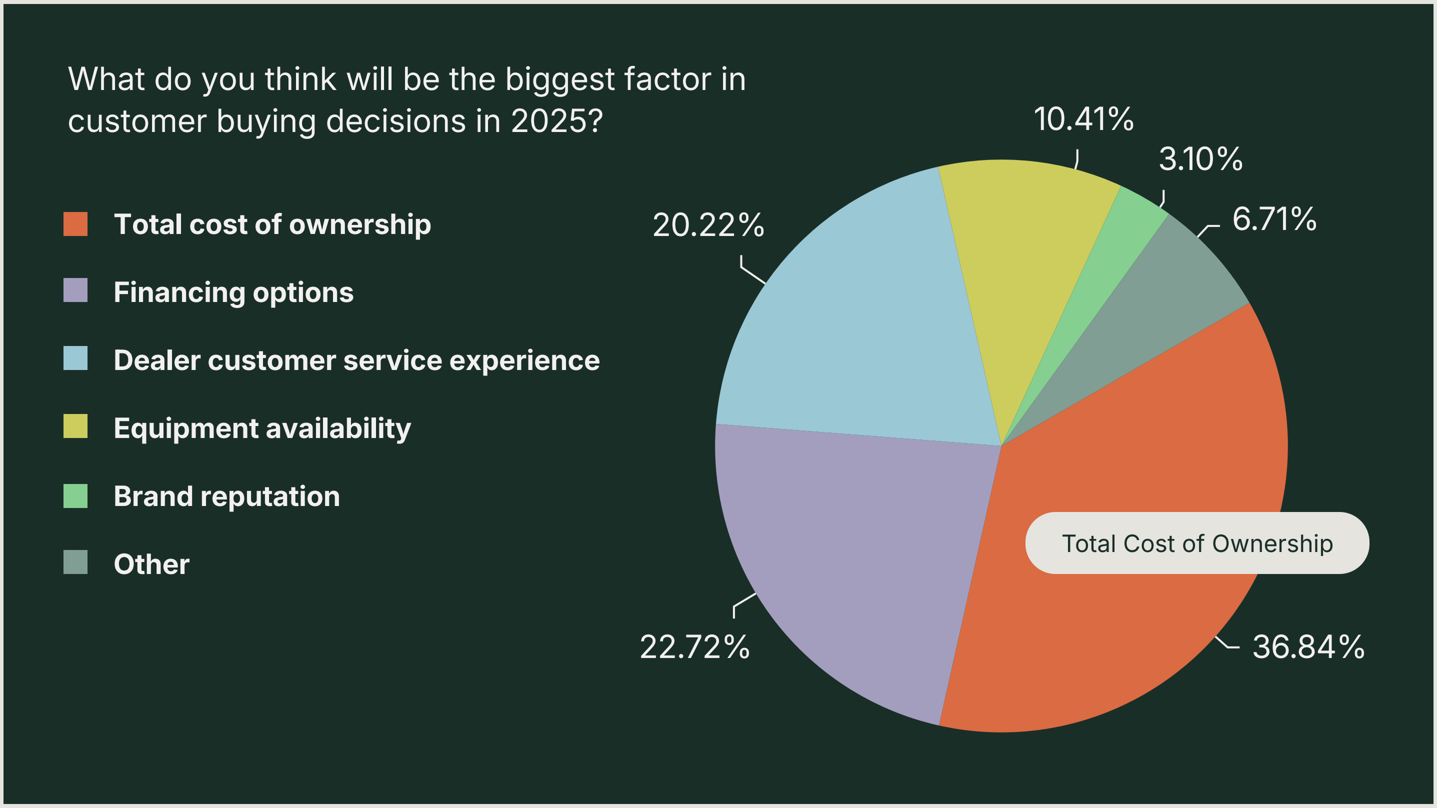


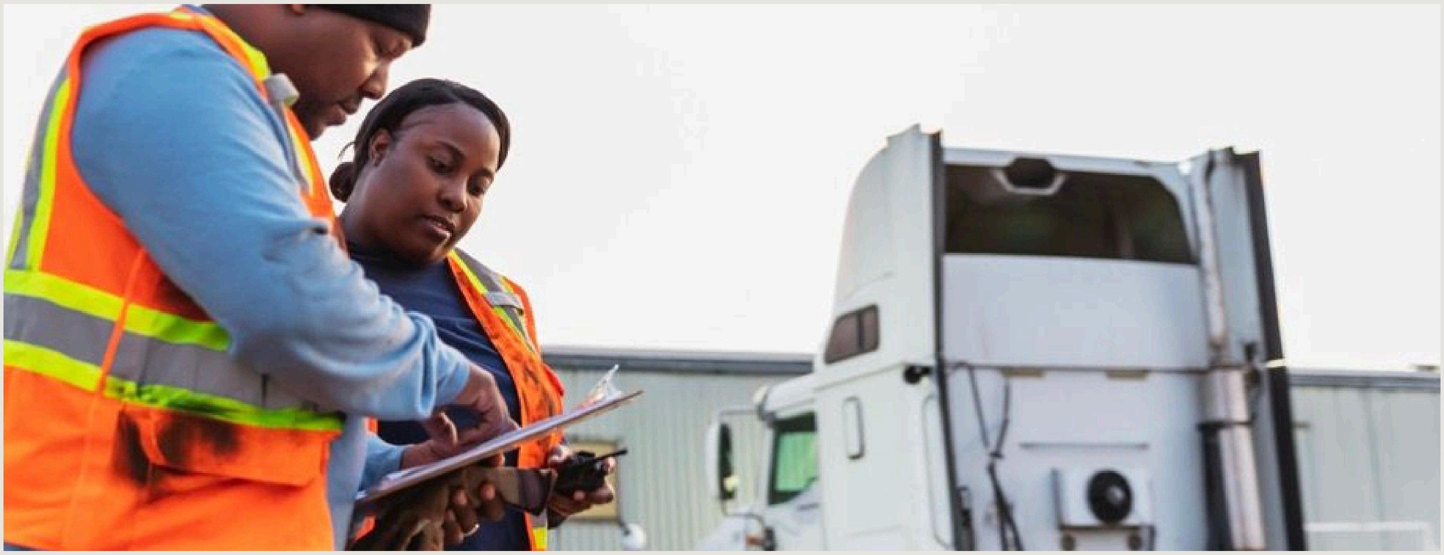
**"Our salespeople use the data pre-sales call to find out which clients have a history of purchasing used equipment. The results are better sales calls and taking up less time from prospects during the process. The EDA data has been a great return on our investment."**

George Robinson, VP Business Services, H&E Equipment

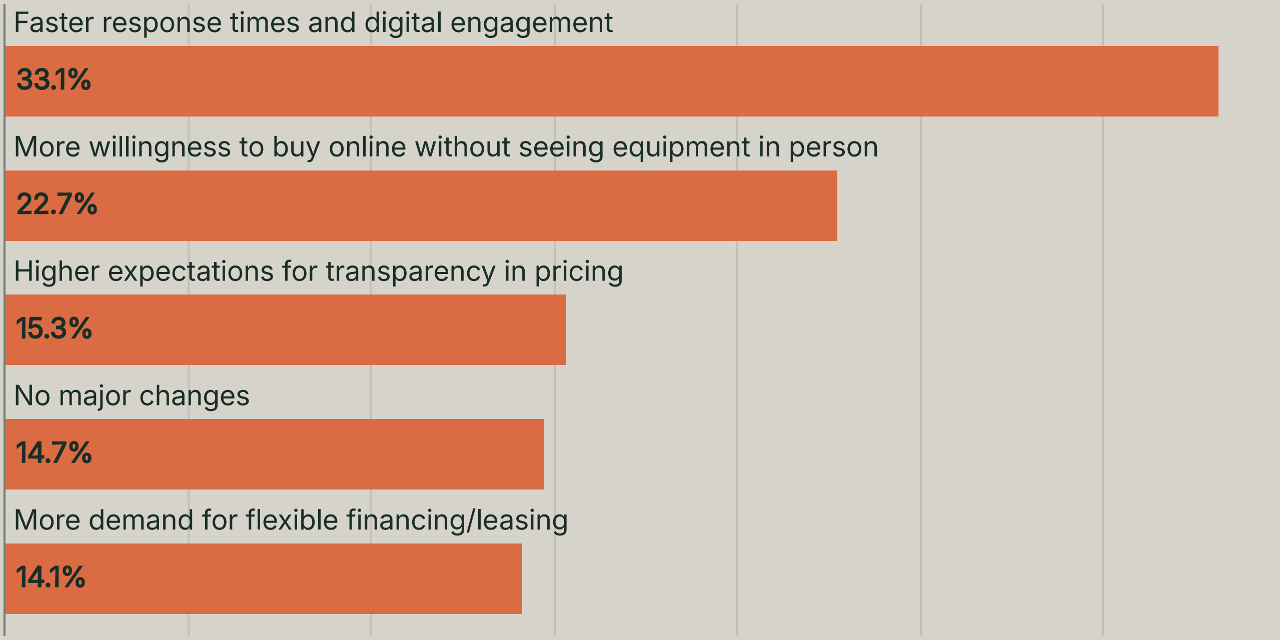
# Customer Behavior & Competition

In 2025, customers care more about the *total cost of ownership* than the sticker price. **36.8% of dealers say buyers are calculating long-term costs**—fuel, service, depreciation—before making decisions. Financing options and flexible payment plans are also shaping sales, especially as equipment prices rise. But relationships still matter, nearly **20% of dealers say customers choose them because of service and trust,** not just price.

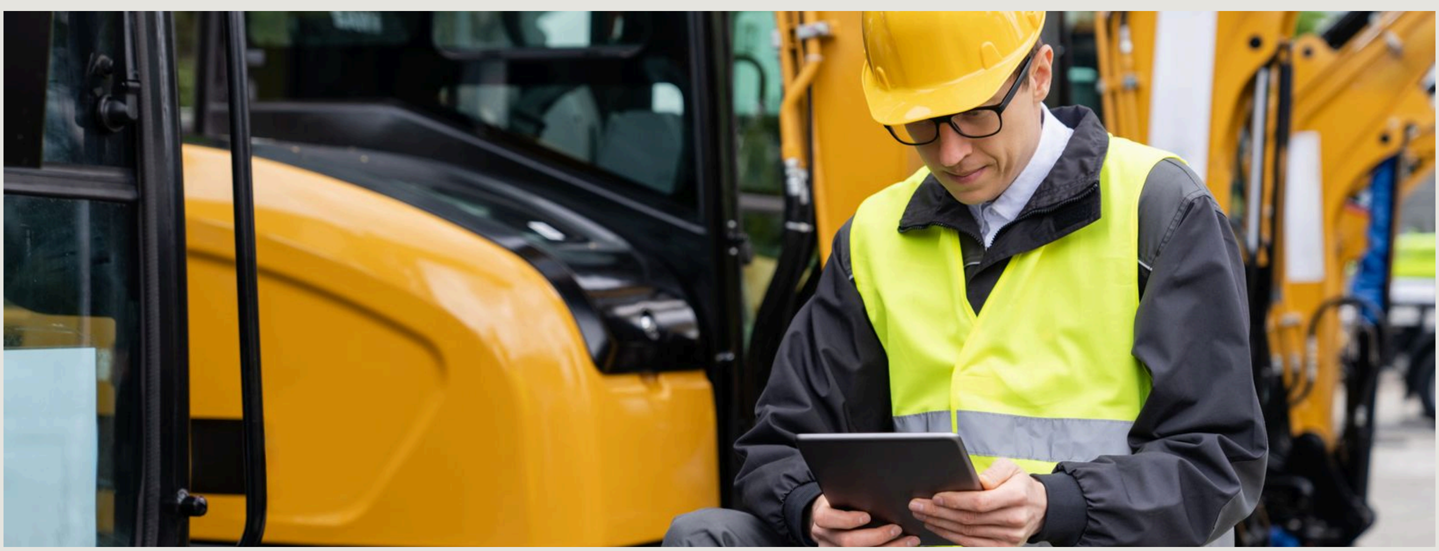


How have customer expectations changed over the past year?




Speed is becoming a baseline expectation. **One in three dealers said customers want faster communication** and seamless online interactions, including quotes, listings, and even contract approvals. **Buying sight-unseen** is gaining traction too—**23% of dealers say it's now common**—which puts pressure on digital listings, branding, and trust. The bottom line: buyers are informed, impatient, and expect you to keep up.



# Closing Summary

If one theme rises above all in this year's survey, it's this: **adapt or fall behind.** From pricing strategies and inventory management to digital marketing and tech adoption, the industry is moving, sometimes faster than many dealers would like. While lead quality remains a core frustration, dealers are more aware than ever of what makes a buyer qualified, and what makes their own business worth choosing.

The greatest competitive differentiator in 2025 isn't inventory, financing, or even price. **It's trust.** Dealers who focus on relationships, invest in smart data tools, and meet rising expectations for speed and transparency are **already winning.** Others are playing catch-up.

This year, we saw clear proof that dealers understand their changing landscape. They're asking for better leads, clearer pricing guidance, smarter marketing, and systems that work with them, not against them. And they're clear-eyed about what their customers want, too: value, flexibility, and a partner, **not just a transaction.**

The road ahead won't be easy. **But it will reward those who prioritize agility, service, and data-informed decisions.**

# What to Watch For Next

As we move into the back half of 2025, dealers are navigating a marketplace marked by caution, complexity, and quiet recalibration. While many of the challenges identified in this survey are rooted in macroeconomic trends, the most resilient and growth-oriented dealerships are already making tactical shifts.

Here's what the data suggests coming next, and how to prepare for it.

### Rental Will Keep Rising

With nearly 40% of dealers reporting rental demand is replacing outright ownership, expect this trend to accelerate most notably in uncertain verticals like construction. Dealers who invest in flexible rental inventory, short-term contracts, and bundled service offerings will be better positioned to retain cash-strapped or project-based customers.

**Think like a rental partner, not just a seller.**

### Buyer Delay Behavior Will Reshape the Sales Funnel

Customers are stretching replacement cycles, comparing financing options, and delaying purchases. This will make the sales process longer, more fragmented, and more digital. Dealers need to build in more nurturing, follow-up, and consultative support, especially as more decisions start online but end face-to-face.

**Use CRM automations to stay top-of-mind during long buying cycles.**

### Tech Consolidation Will Define Operational Efficiency

Nearly half of dealers say disconnected systems are slowing them down. The next phase of dealership growth won't come from adding more tools; it'll come from integrating the ones that exist. Expect greater adoption of unified platforms that combine CRM, inventory, pricing, and lead management into a single view.

**Prioritize tools that reduce handoffs and increase visibility.**

### High-Intent Leads Will Remain the Gold Standard

Lead volume means little without quality. Dealers will need to sharpen their qualification filters, invest in AI-driven lead scoring, and connect marketing efforts directly to bottom-funnel activity. The era of chasing “clicks” is giving way to a renewed focus on “closes.”

**Define and operationalize your definition of a sales-ready lead.**

### The Human Edge Will Still Win

Even in a digitizing industry, the most successful dealers will be the ones who show up. With 65% of contractors citing relationships and reliability as the top reason they choose a dealer, reputation remains the moat—and the multiplier.

**Invest just as much in trust as you do in technology.**

2025 is not a year of retreat; it’s a year of retooling. Dealers who streamline operations, deepen customer relationships, and make smarter, faster decisions with better data will not just survive; they’ll grow. The rest may find themselves outpaced by competitors who turned caution into strategy. Dealers are bracing against unpredictability, battling burnout, and banking on relationships and resilience to get through 2025.

# Fusable Dealer Solutions

The challenges dealers shared this year—lead quality, pricing pressure, inventory strain, and tech overload—are exactly what Fusable's tools are built to solve. Our tech stack turns frustration into forward motion.

### Smarter Leads, Real Market Intel

Tired of dead-end leads? EDA delivers high-intent prospects based on verified financing data. Know who's buying, where, and when—so you can focus your efforts where it counts.

EDA

### Confident Pricing at Speed

With prices rising and margins tight, EquipmentWatch gives you trusted FMV/FLV benchmarks and AI-powered valuation tools. No more guesswork—just clear, defensible numbers that move iron.

Equipment Watch

### Ag Equipment Intelligence

Moving aging inventory? Iron Solutions helps ag dealers spot value trends with real dealer comps, auction data, and pricing history, so you can clear your lot without losing margin.

Iron Solutions

### Truck & Trailer Sales Intelligence

Need better inventory and smarter sourcing? RigDig shows you ownership history, violations, auction patterns, and market trends, so you can buy and sell used trucks with confidence.

RigDig

### Visibility That Converts

From stronger websites to smarter ad campaigns, our marketing experts help you stand out online—where customers are already searching. Visibility and speed matters. We help you deliver both.

DIGITAL MARKETING

**Why Fusable?** Because we don't guess—we ask. Every tool we build is shaped by dealer feedback, built to solve real problems, and designed to deliver results. We turn industry noise into clarity, helping you cut through the static and make smarter, faster decisions. Access to data is one thing—our tools turn it into foresight.

# Ready to learn more?

Schedule a demo today.

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Business Phone Number *

Company Name *

Which product are you interested in? *

Please Select

protected by reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms

Submit

## Methodology

The 2025 Dealer Insights Survey was conducted April–May 2025, with 160 verified equipment dealers across North America. Responses were gathered via email, in-app prompts, and partner networks.

Dealer Types
- 44% Construction
- 28% Agriculture
- 14% Lift/Access
- 9% Truck & Trailer
- 5% Multi-Line

**Geography**
Dealers from all U.S. regions and select Canadian provinces participated, with the Midwest, Southeast, and Prairie Provinces most represented.

All respondents completed core questions; optional segment-specific responses are noted where applicable.

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