

Buying A Used Car The Smart Way - Part 1

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How can you buy a used car and avoid getting ripped off as you do? This is a question that a lot of people ask themselves since more people buy used cars than new cars every single day. Car dealers make a lot of money from people making mistakes that cost them money in the buying process too. So being prepared is essential to buying smart.

Of course, it's only fair that a car dealer make some profit, as they have to in order to stay in business. But for many years the advantage has been mainly in the dealer's hands as car buyers simply didn't have most of the information necessary to stay in control of the buying process. And staying in control as you buy is absolutely vital to getting the best deal possible as you shop.

For instance, getting a clear picture of a car's worth has been fairly difficult in the past, but today it's as easy as making a few clicks online. By going to kbb.com and nadaguides.com you can easily get car pricing information in just a few minutes. This is extremely useful for both cars that you intend to buy and for knowing the value of the car you presently own if you plan on trading it in to the dealer.

Once you know what your car is worth, and what vehicle you want to buy and what it is worth as well, you can start shopping. Using the internet to find all available models that you want to buy within easy driving distance of where you live is a great way to shop. This expands the number of cars to choose from and therefore improves your chances of getting a great deal. Yahoo Auto and Edmunds.com are great places to search for your next car. Once located, narrow down your choices to a handful that seem to be the best buy for you and then arrange time in your schedule to visually inspect them. Be sure to call in advance of your visit to make sure that the car is still available before making the trip though.

Before your actual visit to the dealer or private party, make sure that you have your financing arrangements all taken care of in advance and know exactly how much you can afford to pay. Of course, if you plan on paying cash this is an unnecessary step, but the vast majority of folks will be using a car loan to pay for their next car, so do yourself a favor and save plenty of money over the life of the loan by arranging your own financing in advance with one of the online loan vendors that specialize in making auto loans directly to consumers.

This one simple step can often save you more money than anything else that you do in the buying process, as the success of your car buying deal often hinges on how simple you can keep the buying process. When dealers can introduce financing and monthly payments into the equation, true sales and trade-in figures get much harder to pin down, so having advance financing can keep the deal simple and save you money.

Be sure to read Part 2 of this article where it discusses how to negotiate the deal the smart way. Jim Johnson writes on many consumer related topics including autos. You can find out more about used car buying tips and a used car buying guide by visiting our Auto Review website.