



The EV Ownership Lifestyle

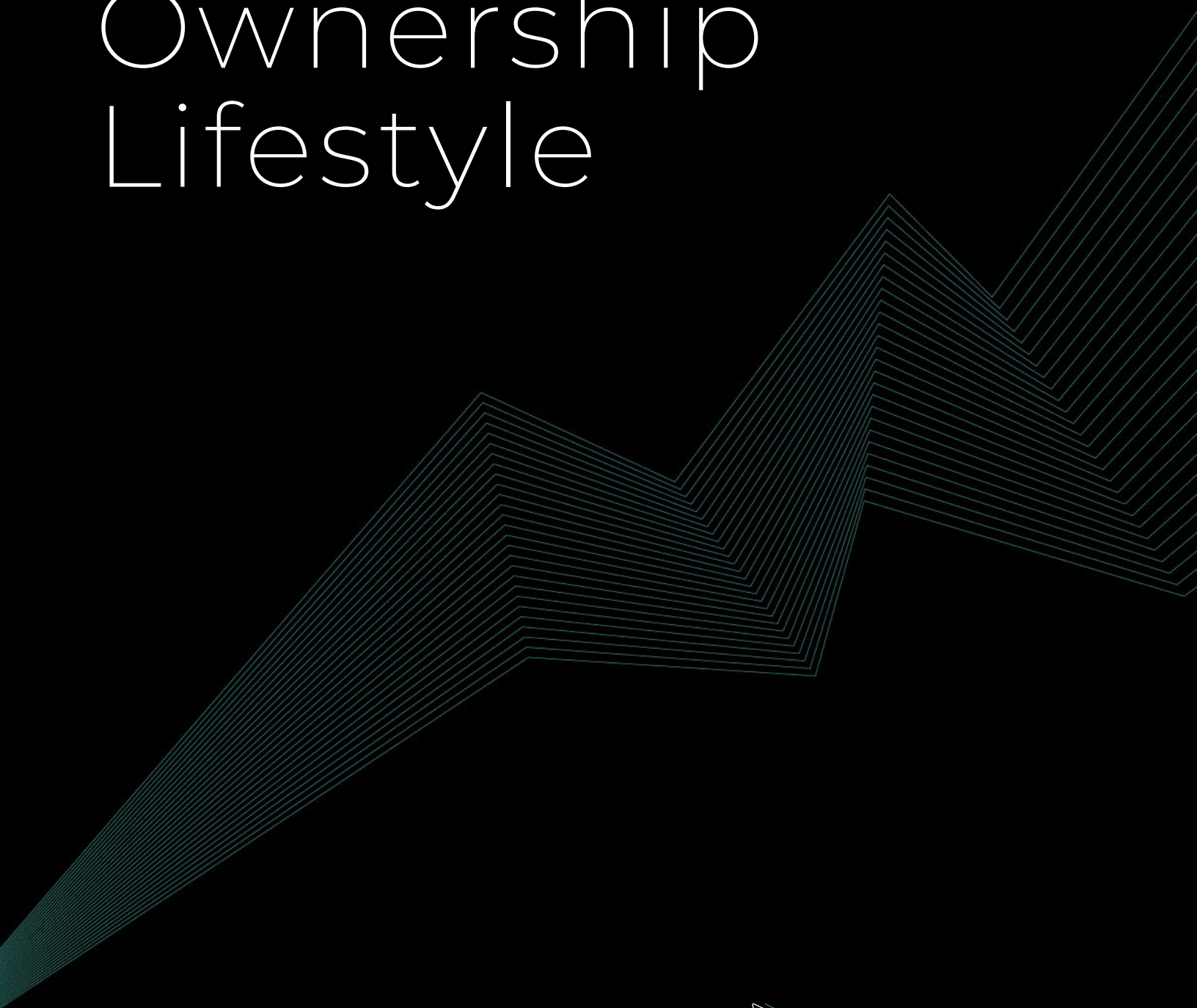


Table of Contents

03 OVERVIEW

04 DEMOGRAPHICS

06 BRINGING THE EV HOME

10 THE CHARGING CURVE

13 RANGE REALITY SINKS IN

16 SERVICE ISN'T AVOIDED

18 EV OWNERS IN FOR THE LONG HAUL

22 ABOUT THIS STUDY


Overview

The transition to electric vehicles may be taking longer than many expected. Or, depending on what camp you're in, their adoption was always going to have its ups and downs. There are questions about the types of EVs being built and if those are meeting consumer wants and daily driving demands. Price is also still a major roadblock, as affordability across the industry is top of mind.

In this report, CDK wanted to understand who looked past every roadblock to going electric and made the leap. We wanted to ask owners who are dealing with charging, range, road trips and budgets to see just where they stand.

The results may not be entirely surprising. When you move through the lives of these owners, it becomes clear that there's very little negative that rises to the surface. They're beyond happy with their EVs, and they're not going back to gas cars. It didn't matter if they owned a Tesla or any other EV; nearly three quarters (73%) aren't going back.

And yes, we talked to Tesla owners. Our survey split down the middle between owners of the most popular EV brand and everyone else to see where the differences existed, if any. In many ways, the two groups were very aligned, which should please traditional automakers. The franchised dealer also shines through as a valued partner when it comes to the purchase process and continuing service.

73% 

Of EV owners say that they'll only buy EVs moving forward

Demographics

300
PARTICIPANTS



EDUCATION LEVEL

High school graduate	14%
Some college (no degree)	19%
Associate degree (2-year)	14%
Bachelor's degree (4-year)	38%
Master's degree	13%
Doctoral degree	1%
Professional degree (JD, MD)	1%



VEHICLE TYPE

Pickup Truck	3%
Full-Size SUV	23%
Crossover or CUV	20%
Minivan	0%
Passenger Car	54%
Wagon	0%
Other	0%



INCOME

Less than \$25,000	3%
\$25,000-\$50,000	21%
\$50,000-\$100,000	43%
\$100,000-\$200,000	27%
More than \$200,000	6%



AGE GROUP

Gen Z	18%
Young Millennial	18%
Old Millennial	23%
Gen X	28%
Baby Boomer + Silent	13%

Bringing the EV Home

The EV conversation features a lot of “known quantities” that seem to dictate a narrative that generally boils down to the positives of buying from a direct-to-consumer Tesla versus the stuck-in-the-past traditional car dealer. As we’ve seen throughout our most recent investigations of EVs, this narrative doesn’t rise to the surface when talking to actual owners.

Take the idea of purchasing the car completely online. Perhaps that used to be the case when Tesla first entered the market, but only 4% of Tesla owners we surveyed bought entirely online — a fairly small number. And slightly more buyers of non-Tesla EVs (5%) bought entirely online.

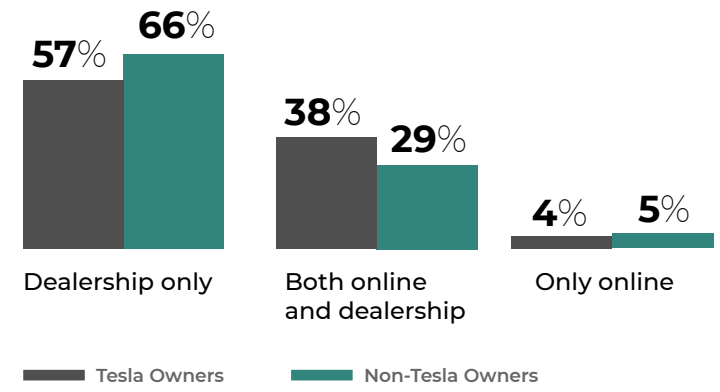
Many more car buyers are becoming accustomed to an omnichannel approach but there are still far more completing the entire transaction at the dealership. Two-thirds of all

non-Tesla buyers purchased their EV that way. What may be very surprising is 57% of Tesla buyers did everything in a physical storefront too, even if it’s not called a dealership.

The number of non-Tesla buyers who completed the EV process at the dealership was almost identical to the number of car buyers in the monthly CDK Ease of Purchase survey, which looks at all types of vehicles purchased. That number averaged 66% throughout 2023.



Purchase Journey

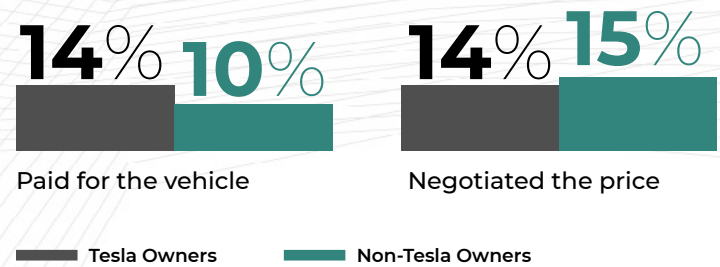


In the case of omnichannel buyers, most of the work they did online was to confirm vehicle availability as well as book appointments and test drives. Tesla buyers (52%) were much more likely to apply for credit online compared to non-Tesla buyers (35%).



Financial Steps Unpopular

Of the steps that you take to purchase a vehicle, which of the following did you complete online?



Perhaps the most important part of the purchase process for EVs is one that simply can’t be done online. Nearly every EV buyer in our survey (98%) took a test drive. And while roughly four out of five non-EV car buyers opted to take their prospective vehicle for a spin, test-driving an EV had a profound impact on the buyers. Multiple respondents said it was on the test drive where they “fell in love” with the EV they chose. In some cases, test driving an EV swayed a buyer from possibly buying a gas car.

“My husband and I saw a car we really wanted, but it was an EV. We never wanted an EV at first, but we talked it over, saw everything that it was equipped with and we asked for a test drive. Once we did that, we were in love and decided to go for it and make that purchase.”



Salespeople Make a Big Difference

There's another popular myth about persuadable car shoppers that this study disproves: the idea that car salespeople try to dissuade them from buying an EV. While there may be true-life anecdotes of this happening, the numbers in our study didn't prove that.

74%

Of EV owners said that when purchasing their current EV, they were also considering purchasing a gas or hybrid vehicle

54%

Of EV owners said that the salesperson at the dealership convinced them to purchase their current EV

This influence is crucial because 74% of those who eventually bought an EV were also considering a gas or hybrid car. That number was higher for non-Tesla buyers at 79%.

The salesperson helped sway over half of EV buyers in the end, and that number was higher for non-Tesla buyers. There were dozens of reasons that convinced buyers to go electric besides the influence of the salesperson. For many, it was the savings when taking fuel costs into account and many also cited their EV purchase as a way to help the environment.

The Charging Curve

EVs may seem different than gas cars because of their instant acceleration, low noise and strong braking. But in the end, owners still put the shifter into drive and hit the accelerator. You don't need to take a new driving test to get from point A to B. But there's likely a need for every new EV owner to take a class called Charging 101.

Now, that class isn't available but charging is core to the EV ownership experience, and our respondents certainly focused on it. The key to that is charging at home. Most headlines about EV charging may revolve around public charger availability, but most of all EV charging is done at home.

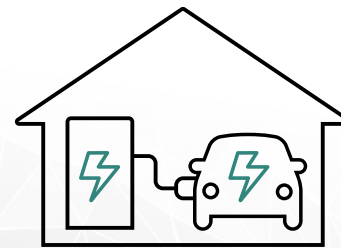
Three out of four (76%) of the EV owners we surveyed said they'd set up a personal charging system in their home. Today's EVs would take forever to charge if you just plugged them straight into a basic electric outlet, which they can do. By installing a Level 2 charger in the home, owners can plug in at night and wake up to a fully charged car.

The longer ranges found in most current EVs actually mean owners can skip a nightly charge or two. Only 38% said they charge every night while another 54% said they charge every second or third night. Surprisingly, Tesla owners were much more likely to charge nightly than non-Tesla owners, with nearly half (47%) taking part in that routine.

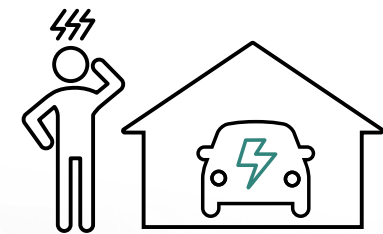
But charger installation isn't easy. It often requires at least one electrician and an electric box or service upgrade too. The local utility may need to be involved as well. That's why over a third (36%) of respondents said it was a hassle to set up their home charger.

This is definitely an area where dealers can be a resource and help minimize buyers' pain points. That's because 75% of respondents said they would've preferred personnel at the dealer to help them figure out their home charging solution. Yet only one out of three (31%) actually relied on someone at the dealership to solve their home charging solution. Just as many (32%) found the answer online.

Only 38% said they charge every night, while another 54% said they charge every second or third night

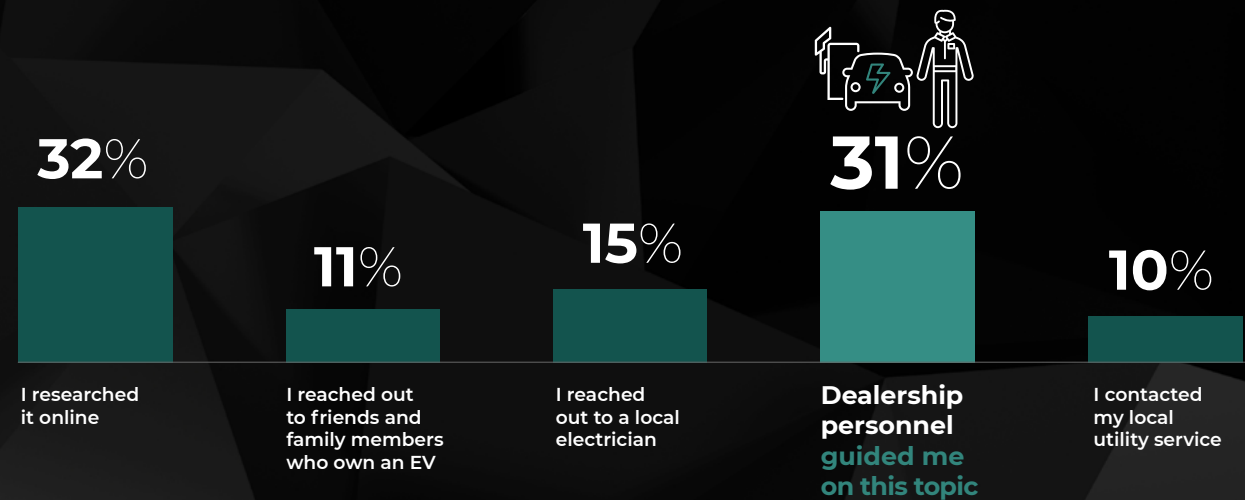


76% Of EV owners have set up a **personal charging system**



36% Of EV owners found **setting up a charging system at home to be a hassle**

How did you figure out what charging system to set up for home charging?



What about those who don't have a home charging system? They overwhelmingly rely on public charging networks (83%), with only a fraction (17%) primarily relying on their workplaces' available chargers.

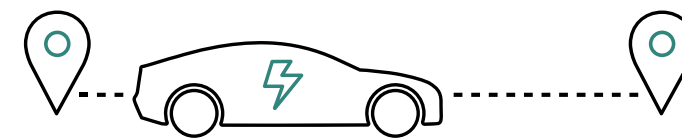
When it comes to cost, there's no doubt topping off electrons is paying off compared to hitting the gas station. Roughly four out of five (78%) say it costs less than \$20 to fill up at a public charging network. Filling up a 15-gallon fuel tank in a gas car at \$3.25 a gallon is just under \$50. Range can vary with a 30-mpg average, getting you 450 miles of distance. Most EVs get under 300 miles of distance. Even in

those conditions, public charging — generally more expensive than charging at home — delivers a cost savings compared to gas, although that can vary greatly depending on the state.

The figure for charging at home doesn't sound as alluring at first glance; 67% of respondents said it cost under \$20 to charge at home. However, 13% of these respondents said they had no idea what the cost was when charging at home. None of the respondents who rely primarily on public networks were in the dark about cost per full charge.

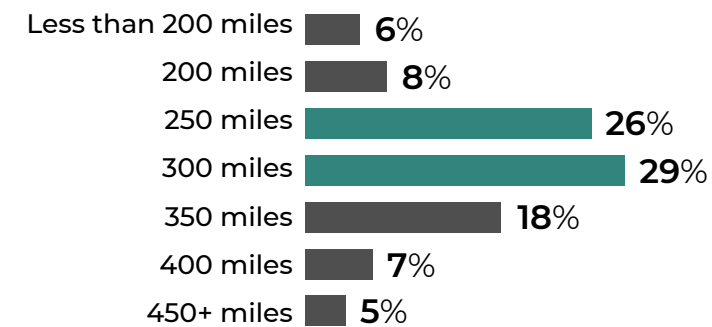
Range Reality Sinks In

No matter how an EV owner gets a charge, the resulting range when they pull onto the road is paramount. The commonly accepted sweet spot of range is 300 miles. Three out of five (59%) of our respondents said their EV hit that number or higher, with another 26% saying they had 250 miles of range. Four out of five (81%) believe their driving range is as advertised by the OEM. And the other 19% who think they receive less peg that number at just 5.8% less than advertised.



Average driving range of current EVs on the roads is between 250 to 300 miles

What's the driving range of your fully electric vehicle?



81%

Of EV owners said the driving range of their EV is as advertised by the OEM

19%

Of EV owners who believe the driving range isn't as advertised by OEM said on average the range is 5.8% less than advertised

It's unlikely exceeding 300 miles of range will matter to most EV owners as the average daily commute is just 19.4 miles round trip. This number is almost identical to the 20-mile daily commute figure of the nearly 400 EV shoppers CDK surveyed in its "EV Confusion Carries On" study. And it's very likely EV owners in this report are commuting regularly as three out of four (75%) put over 10,000 miles on their car every year.

But what about the road trip?

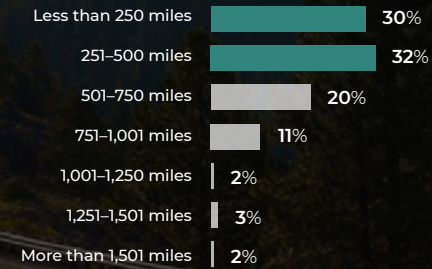
One of the top concerns of EV shoppers is "limited range," with 58% of EV shoppers citing it in our previous research. The lack of charging networks (63%) and the fact that it takes longer to recharge than fill up with gas (58%) were also worrisome to shoppers.

But for the owners in this study, it didn't seem like these concerns were encountered. Most owners (88%) took at least one road trip a year in their EV and a majority of those (62%) were under 500 miles, likely requiring just one stop to recharge. In fact, nearly a third of owners (32%) took three or more road trips a year in their EV.

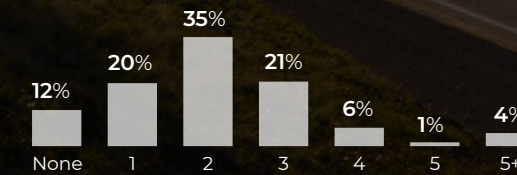


The EV Road Trip

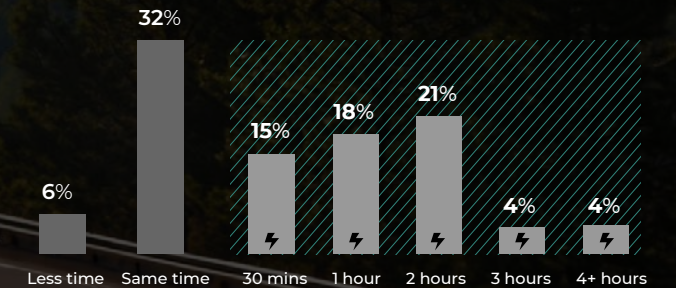
What's the longest road trip you've taken with your EV?



Out of all the long road trips you take every year, how many were over 200 miles one way?



For long-distance trips, how much more time does it take for you to reach your destination when driving a fully electric vehicle compared to a gas-powered vehicle?



Most EV owners' average daily commute is just **19.4 miles round trip.**



This doesn't mean the EV road trip is the same as one in a gas car. Thanks to the advent of the smartphone and ubiquitous GPS, most drivers can type in their destination, get a route and travel time, and be on their merry way no matter the distance ahead. But 68% of EV owners said that planning a trip with an EV takes more time than a gas car.

A majority of EV owners (85%) had to plan the trip around available EV charging networks. Almost the same amount (80%) said they had to make their hotel or online rental decision based on charging availability.

All that adds up. While nearly a third (32%) said an EV didn't add any time to their road trip, a similar number (29%) said technology added two hours or more. These results are likely directly related to the distance of the road trip but it's safe to say, if you're traveling beyond your EV's full range, it'll take longer to get to your destination than if you were driving a gas car.

Service Isn't Avoided

The wild idea that EVs would never need to see the inside of a Service department isn't as prevalent as some of the other myths about EVs. In fact, in our "EV Service: Today and Tomorrow" white paper, we found nearly four out of five Service leaders expect to generate more revenue over the next two years with the introduction of EVs.

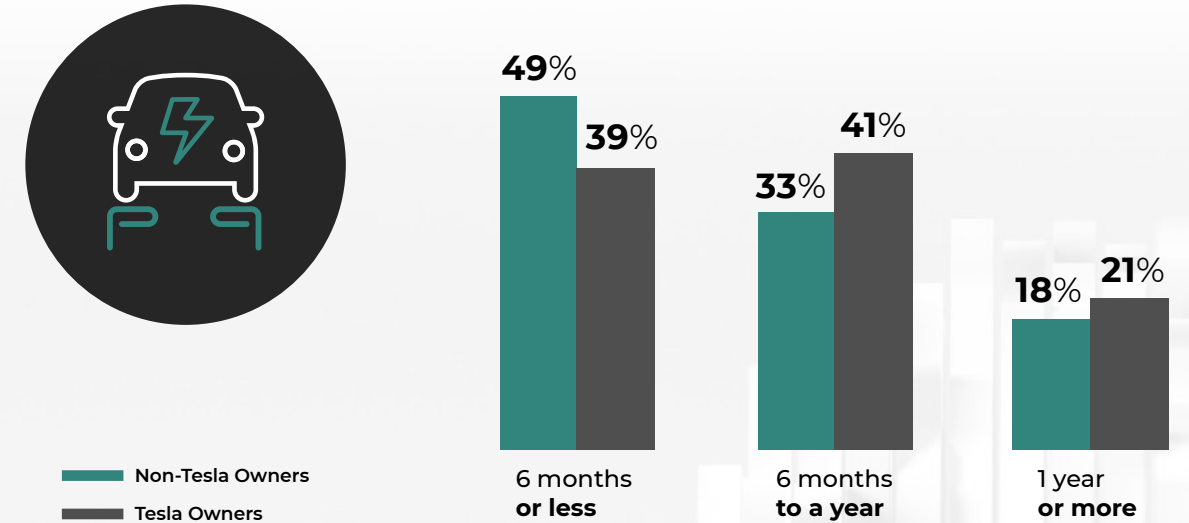
Nearly half of EV owners (45%) brought their vehicles in for service within the first six months of ownership, despite the recommendation of a year. This number was much higher for non-Tesla owners (49%) than Tesla owners (39%).

And when it comes to cost, 56% of EV owners said it cost less to maintain their EV compared to their gas car. This is also the exact same percentage of EV shoppers from our previous research who thought it'd cost less to service

their EV. Despite this alignment — and the fact that lower maintenance costs are touted as a primary advantage of EVs — this number should theoretically be higher.

And despite anecdotal suggestions that EVs from traditional OEMs are taking a long time to be serviced, dealers are completely on par with Tesla in terms of completing service. Both also have nearly identical numbers of services that take three or more days.

How long after you purchased your EV did you have to take it in for service?



45%

Of EV owners brought their vehicles in for service within the first six months of ownership

56%

Of EV owners said it cost less to maintain their EV compared to their gas car

EV Owners in for the Long Haul

The overall market share of EVs may still be relatively small, not breaching 10% of new vehicle sales easily. Yet, if the respondents in this study are any indication, there'll be no reversal back to gasoline propulsion. Nearly all the EV owners (93%) said they were happy with their purchase, and 73% said they'd only buy EVs moving forward. And a surprisingly high number said it was the best car they've ever driven and owned. These two stats were much higher for Tesla owners likely due to the affinity for the brand and its performance.



93%
Of EV owners are happy with their purchase decision

73%
Of EV owners say that they'll only buy EVs moving forward

“I just love it! It’s quiet, I don’t smell gas anymore, it’s more economical ... I just plug it in and it works so much better than anything I’ve bought.”

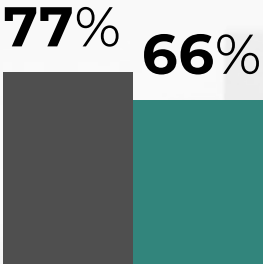
EV Owners in for the Long Haul

EV market share is likely to grow slowly over the next year, but word of mouth can be a powerful adoption tool. And whether they were a Tesla owner or not, four out of five (81%) said they've already recommended friends and family make the EV switch.

The recommendations come after a lot of use since 85% of EV owners said it's their primary vehicle in their household. But for every household with an EV, it's likely there's also a gas vehicle. And not many are willing to go all-in on an EV. Some of the reasons for holding out range from EV-specific issues like range and charging times to practical needs like gas car payoff or hauling and towing.

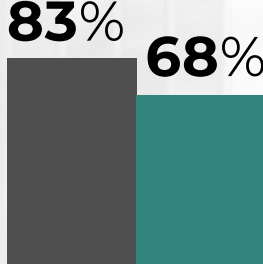
81%
Of EV owners said they've already recommended friends and family make the EV switch

Is your EV the best car you've ever driven?

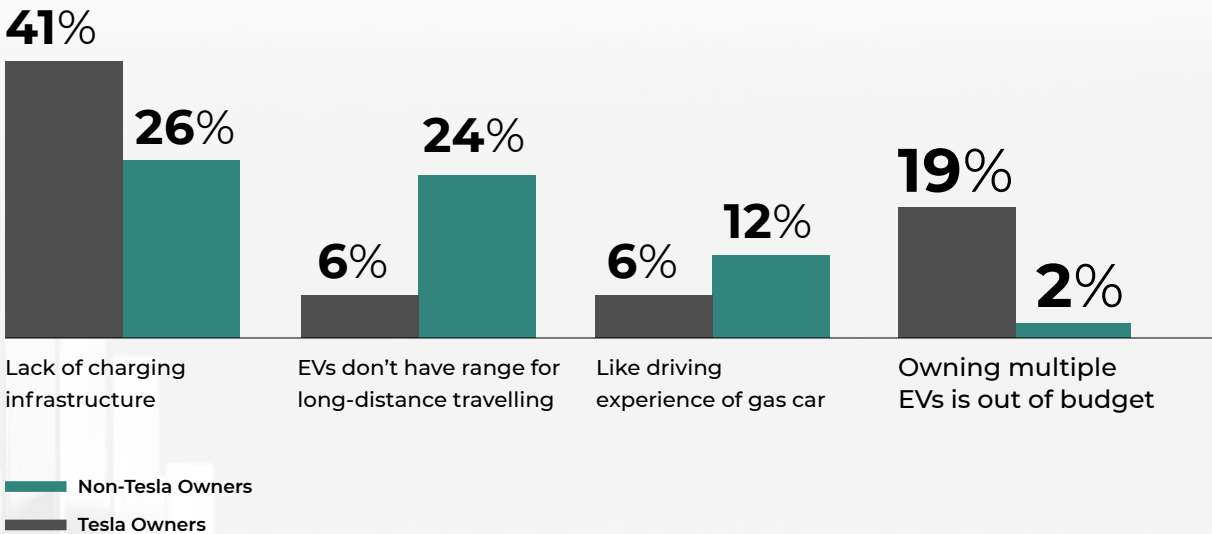


Non-Tesla Owners
 Tesla Owners

Is your EV the best car you've ever owned?



What's stopping you from being an EV-only household?



Whatever the reason, it's likely they'll be less of a burden in the next five to 10 years. And as EVs become more common, the owner affinity will only augment an eventual transition as they tell friend after friend and keep buying EVs themselves.

Just as SUVs won over the hearts of car shoppers in the 1990s, it took almost 20 years for those to overtake sedans as the most popular passenger vehicle. **This question remains: How long will EV adoption take?**

About This Study

This is the third study in a series from CDK that covers the complete ecosystem surrounding electric vehicles from shopping and sales to ownership, service and the dealership's role. The CDK Cap Research and Insights team behind these reports strives to deliver content that connects the automotive retail industry to the consumer to better understand how their businesses can perform better to meet ever-increasing expectations.



Peter Kahn

Head of Research

With over 20 years of experience in researching all aspects of the automotive retail industry, Peter's work is focused mainly on how dealerships and brands can improve efficiencies and meet the changing needs of the vehicle buyer and service consumer. As the Senior Director of the CDK Research and Insights group since 2015, Peter has produced work that covers a range of topics, such as Artificial Intelligence in the Dealership, Women in Automotive, the State of the Automotive Retail Industry, Job Seekers in Automotive Retail and many more that help inform decision-makers in our industry.



Devika Birnale

Market Research Analyst

Devika Birnale is a Market Research Analyst at CDK, where she works on a variety of research initiatives across thought leadership and the Product Technology and Marketing teams. Her research focuses on bridging the gap between end customers, dealerships and CDK. Devika holds a master's degree in marketing intelligence from the University of San Francisco, California.

INSIGHTS

INSIGHTS

INSIGHTS

Visit the Insights Center for the latest thought leadership from CDK. From research to blogs, let us help you aim higher with industry insights that take your dealership to the next level.

INSIGHTS



[CDK.COM/Insights](https://www.cdk.com/insights)



CONNECT WITH US  [CDK.COM](https://www.cdk.com)