A photograph of a car dealership with several cars parked in a row. The cars are mostly white and silver, with one prominent red car in the foreground. The word "FIRST." is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters inside a white circular outline in the upper right corner of the image.

FIRST.

Searching for Cars Online

Which websites are maximising their market share?



Calculating share of search

- Rankings Based Reach (RBR)* provides a simple way to compare a website's search engine rankings with its competitors.
- RBR is an estimate of the percentage of available search traffic a website will receive for a set of phrases – this gives the sites share of search or reach.
- It is weighted based on the popularity of each search phrase and the relative click through rate (CTR) of each ranking position.

Selected sites

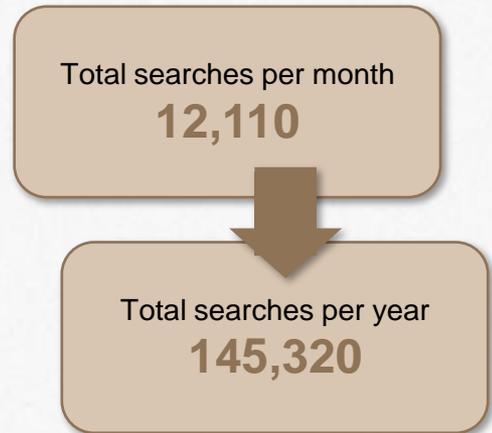
Leading New Zealand car providers were selected for Ranking Based Reach (RBR) performance analysis.

Sites	
2cheapcars.co.nz	hyundai.co.nz
aa.co.nz	kia.co.nz
audi.co.nz	mazda.co.nz
autobase.co.nz	mercedes-benz.co.nz
autotrader.co.nz	nissan.co.nz
bmw.co.nz	subaru.co.nz
buyrightcars.co.nz	suzuki.co.nz
carfair.co.nz	toyota.co.nz
drivesouth.co.nz	trademe.co.nz/motors
ford.co.nz	turners.co.nz
holden.co.nz	volkswagen.co.nz
honda.co.nz	

What are people in NZ searching for?

In order to investigate which websites are leading in search we researched frequently used “cars for sale” - related phrases.

Search Phrase	Searches per month in NZ	Search Phrase	Searches per month in NZ
cars for sale nz	4400	car for sale	390
cars for sale	2400	car sales auckland	390
car sales	1000	vans for sale	260
cars for sale auckland	1000	used cars for sale auckland	210
cheap cars for sale	880	buy a car	110
used cars for sale	590	buy a car online	90
budget car sales	390		



Source: Google Keyword Planner, New Zealand, Sep 2014

Google: Search engine results page 1 (NZ)

What the consumer sees: The top of the Google search results page for a search on “cars for sale nz”

The screenshot shows a Google search for "cars for sale nz" with approximately 15,300,000 results. The results are divided into organic and paid sections. Organic results include Autotrader, Holden, Beforward, Trademe, AA Carfair, and Autobase. Paid results include Autotrader, Holden, Beforward, Honda Dealers, Ford, Kia Motors, Mazda, Volvo, Toyota, and Suzuki.

Organic Results:

- Sell Your Car Fast - No Success Fee, Ad Listed Till Sold**
Ad www.autotrader.co.nz/Sell-Your-Car
Your Gateway To Ov 500,000 Buyers!
Car Dealers - Sell Your Car Quickly
- Holden New Cars for Sale - Holden.co.nz**
Ad www.holden.co.nz/LatestOffers
Get \$2,000 cashback on every new Holden passenger car or SUV.
Holden's Vehicle Showroom - Latest Offers - Book a Test Drive
- Used Cars At Low Price - beforward.jp**
Ad www.beforward.jp/
Quality Japanese Car Direct Sales Cheaper Than Your Local Car Dealer!
New Arrival Cars For NZ - Used SUV RV for Sale - Used HatchBack for Sale
- Trade Me Motors - Used cars, new cars, motorbikes, boats ...**
www.trademe.co.nz/motors
Trade Me Motors. Thousands of used cars, new cars, boats, motorbikes, dirt bikes, ca parts, caravans, trucks, trailers and more on trademe.co.nz.
- Buy New & Used Cars, Sell New & Used Cars**
www.autotrader.co.nz/
Autotrader New Zealand is the leading car website to buy or sell a car. Thousands of car listings, car news, reviews and videos, plus finance and insurance ...
Used Cars For Sale - Clear criteria - Sell Your Car - Advanced Search
- Turners Auctions: Turners | Car Auction | Cars For Sale ...**
www.turners.co.nz/
Turners – Need a New Car, Need to Sell Your Car? ... Search thousands of used cars for sale from around New Zealand, then BID in the auction or BUY NOW.
- Cars for sale - AA Carfair - aa.co.nz**
www.aa.co.nz/cars/cars-for-sale/
Search for new cars and used cars online. Whether you are selling a car, buying a car or just looking for advice on how to buy or sell a car, start your search with ...
- Cars for Sale, Bikes for Sale, Boats for Sale, Trucks for sale**
www.autobase.co.nz/
Cars, Used cars for sale in New Zealand. ... Helping you to choose the right vehicle with confidence from a New Zealand Registered Motor Vehicle Trader.

Paid Results (Ads):

- Honda Dealers New Zealand**
www.honda.co.nz/Agent
Use Our Agent Search to Find Your Local Honda Showroom!
- Time for a New Car?**
www.ford.co.nz/
Find Your New Ford Car now. View the Range & Prices. Find a Dealer.
- Kia Motors New Zealand**
www.kia.co.nz/
Discover Great Deals on a New Kia. Book a Test Drive in New Models!
- Mazda NZ Official Site**
www.mazda.co.nz/
Browse the New Mazda Range. Worry-free Ownership. Visit Us Now!
- Volvo Cars New Zealand**
www.volvocars.com/NZ
Luxury Sedan, SUV & Hatch Cars. View The Full Volvo Range Now!
- Toyota Used Cars for Sale**
www.drivesouth.co.nz/
Compare our great selection All makes & models for sale
- Save up to \$2000 on Swift**
www.suzuki.co.nz/
Get as much fun as you can handle in a new Swift GL from \$18,990+orc
- Buy Used Cars Nz**
www.pdm.co.nz/UsedCars
We Accept Trade-Ins & Financing. Head Down to Our Dealership Today!

Autotrader and Holden are leading the way in paid search ranking on position 1 and 2.

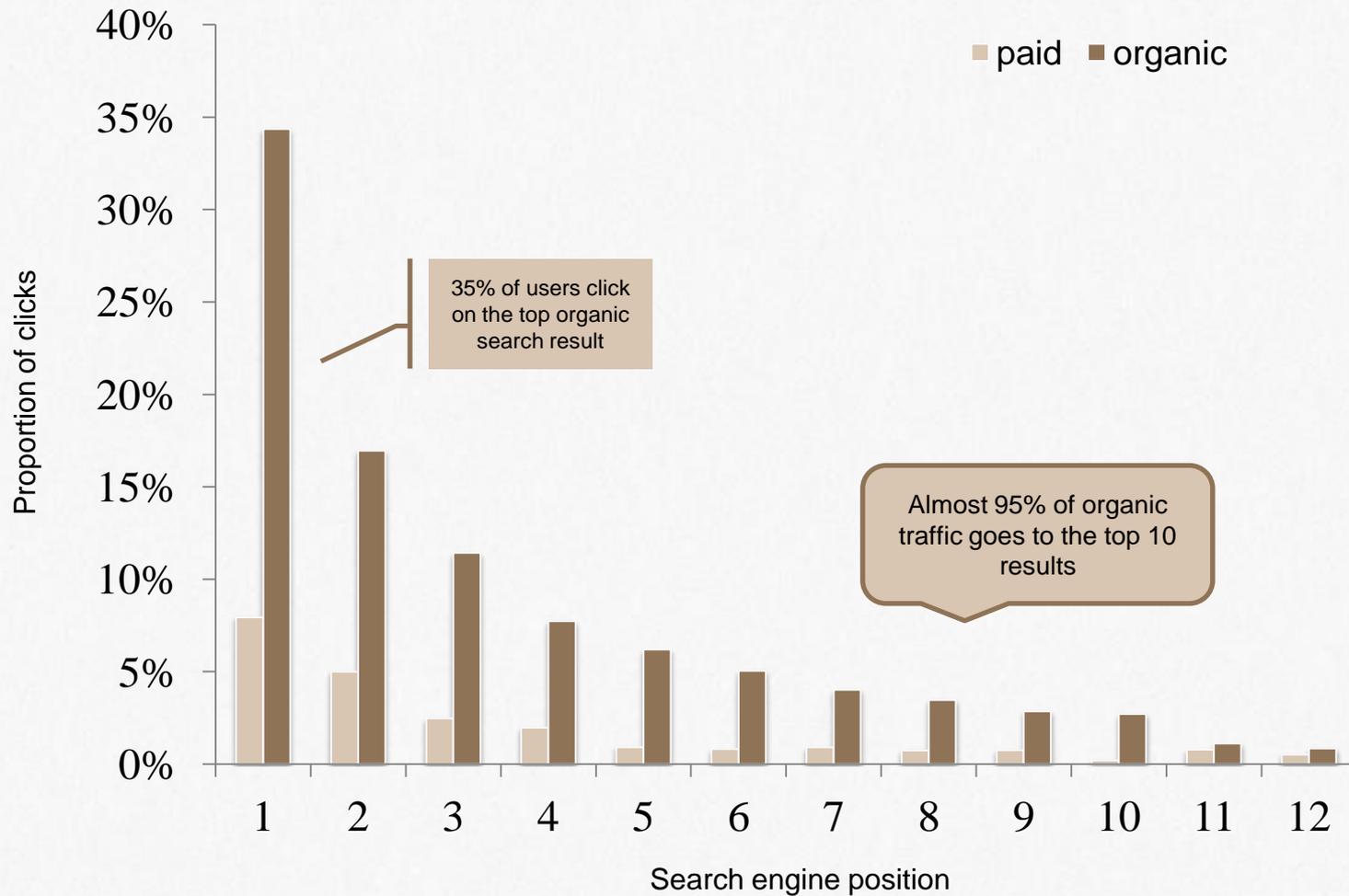
In the organic search results a large variety of the analysed companies rank on Google's first page.

Despite ranking well for organic listings, Autotrader are still investing heavily in Paid Advertising which allows them to dominate the first page with multiple listings.

Popular brand names like Honda, Ford and Kia are also very prominent in paid search. In total there are ranking 11 companies in the paid search results.

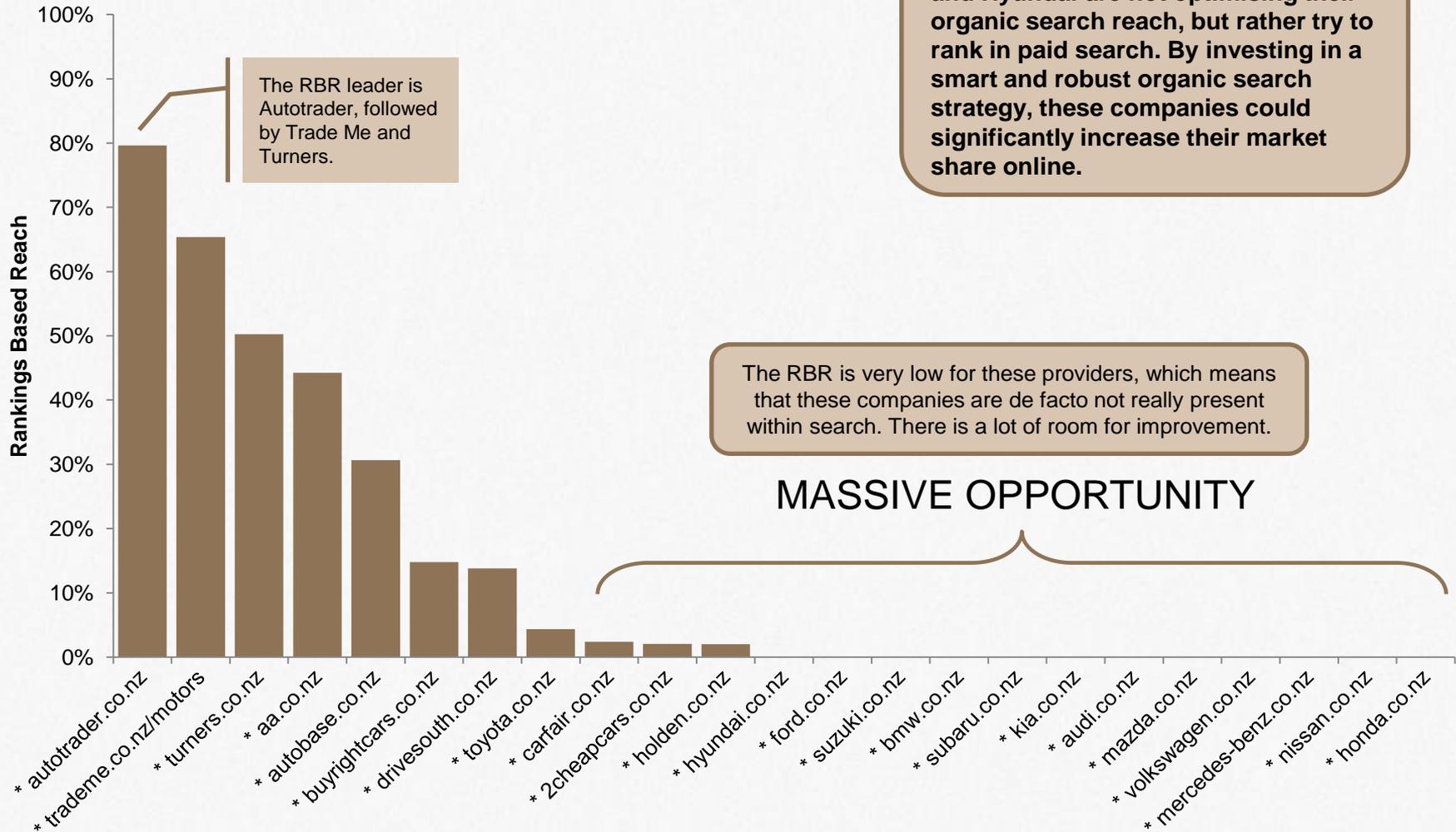
That represents the maximum allowable amount for the 1st Page and is an indicator that this market is highly competitive.

The importance of top rankings



Source: Chikita, 2010 (Organic Search) & Accuracast 2009 (Paid Search)

Rankings Based Reach: Natural Search



Car brand companies as Ford, BMW and Hyundai are not optimising their organic search reach, but rather try to rank in paid search. By investing in a smart and robust organic search strategy, these companies could significantly increase their market share online.

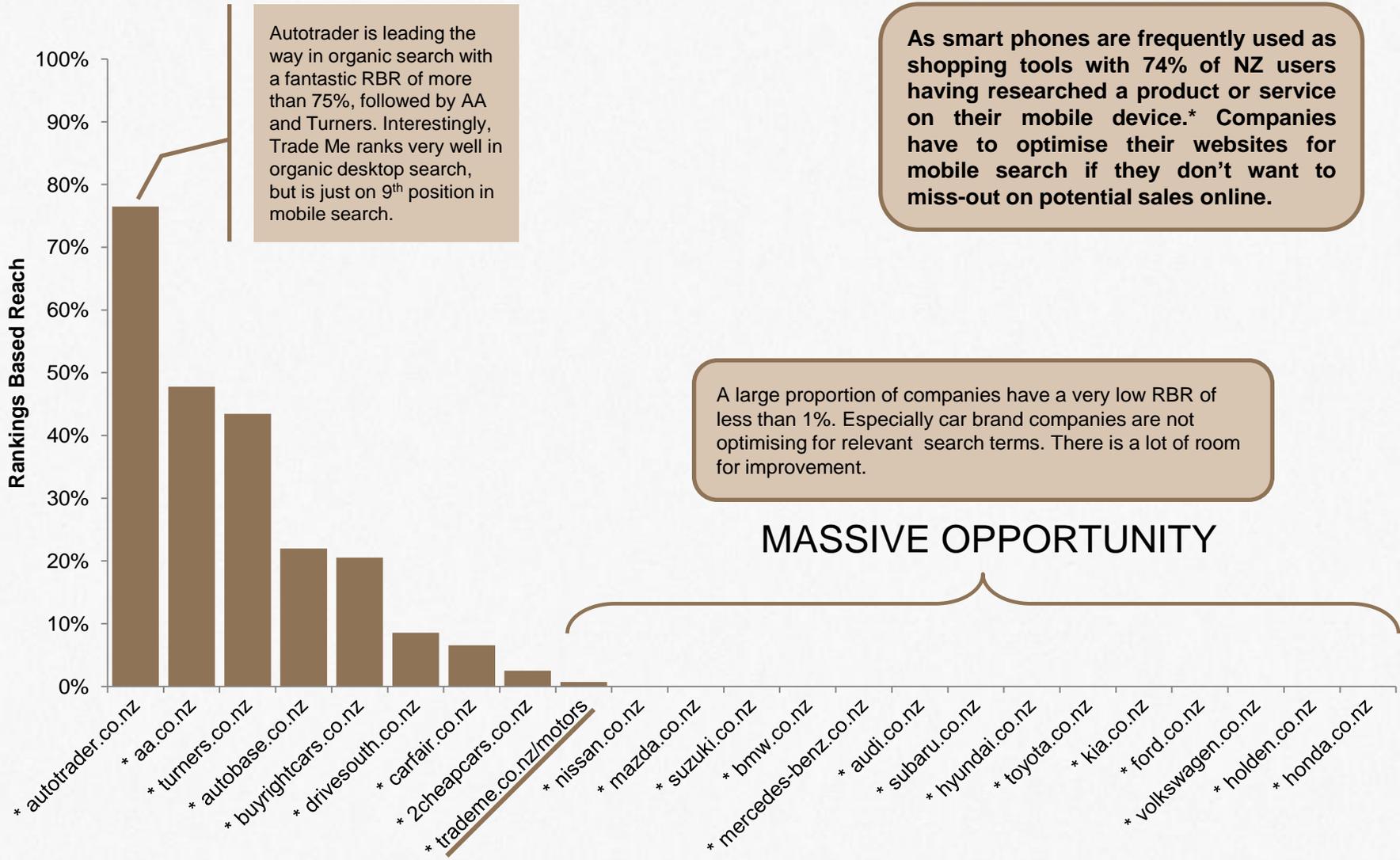
The RBR is very low for these providers, which means that these companies are de facto not really present within search. There is a lot of room for improvement.

MASSIVE OPPORTUNITY

* includes all websites under the relevant domain name (eg, including www.)

Source of ranking data: Google New Zealand, www.google.co.nz, Sep 2014.

Rankings Based Reach: Natural Search (Mobile)



Autotrader is leading the way in organic search with a fantastic RBR of more than 75%, followed by AA and Turners. Interestingly, Trade Me ranks very well in organic desktop search, but is just on 9th position in mobile search.

As smart phones are frequently used as shopping tools with 74% of NZ users having researched a product or service on their mobile device.* Companies have to optimise their websites for mobile search if they don't want to miss-out on potential sales online.

A large proportion of companies have a very low RBR of less than 1%. Especially car brand companies are not optimising for relevant search terms. There is a lot of room for improvement.

MASSIVE OPPORTUNITY

* includes all websites under the relevant domain name (eg, including www.)

Source of ranking data: Google New Zealand, www.google.co.nz, Sep 2014.

*Source: Scary eCommerce Statistics, www.ecommerce.org.nz, Sep 2014.

Search trends: Brand search volume

New Zealand = 2004 - present = All categories = Web Search =

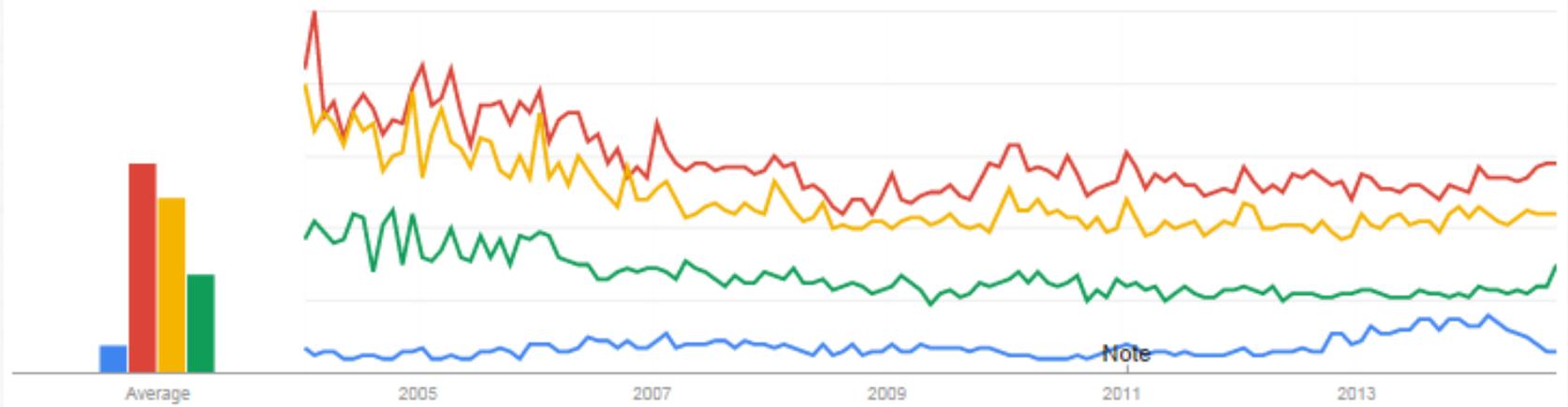
Topics

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bmw
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Most car brand companies show large brand search volumes and are competing for market share online. Autotrader is not specialised in a certain brand but offers a large variety of different vehicles. Their brand search volume has decreased recently.

To combat being left behind, companies have to constantly drive consumer brand recognition via search, display, social and email campaigns.



Source: Relative total keyword performance on a normalised scale 1 to 100, Google Trends, New Zealand, Sep 2014

Search trends for: 'cars for sale nz'

New Zealand = Jan 2006 - Aug 2014 = All categories = Web Search =

Topics

Subscribe



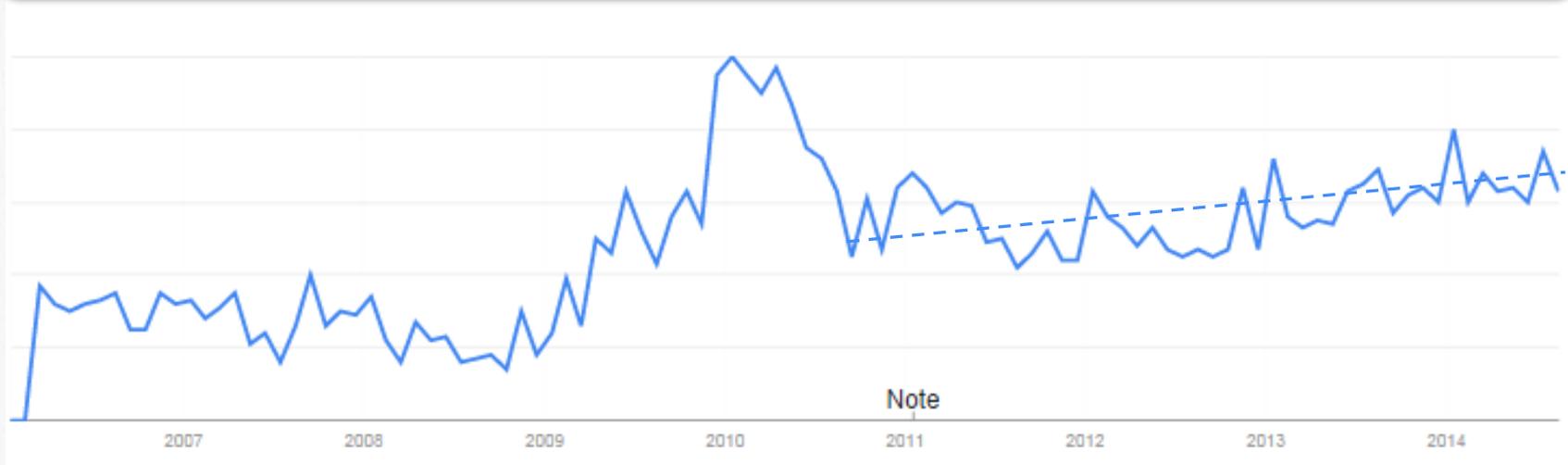
cars for sale nz

Search term

+ Add term

The search volume for the term 'cars for sale nz' is high and ranking well for this term within the search engine can boost organic traffic. Moreover the chart illustrates that the search volume for this term is continuously increasing since it's decline at the end of 2010.

Car providers who want to be competitive will need a sophisticated digital strategy and should also consider niche consumer search behaviour as an integral part of their online strategy.

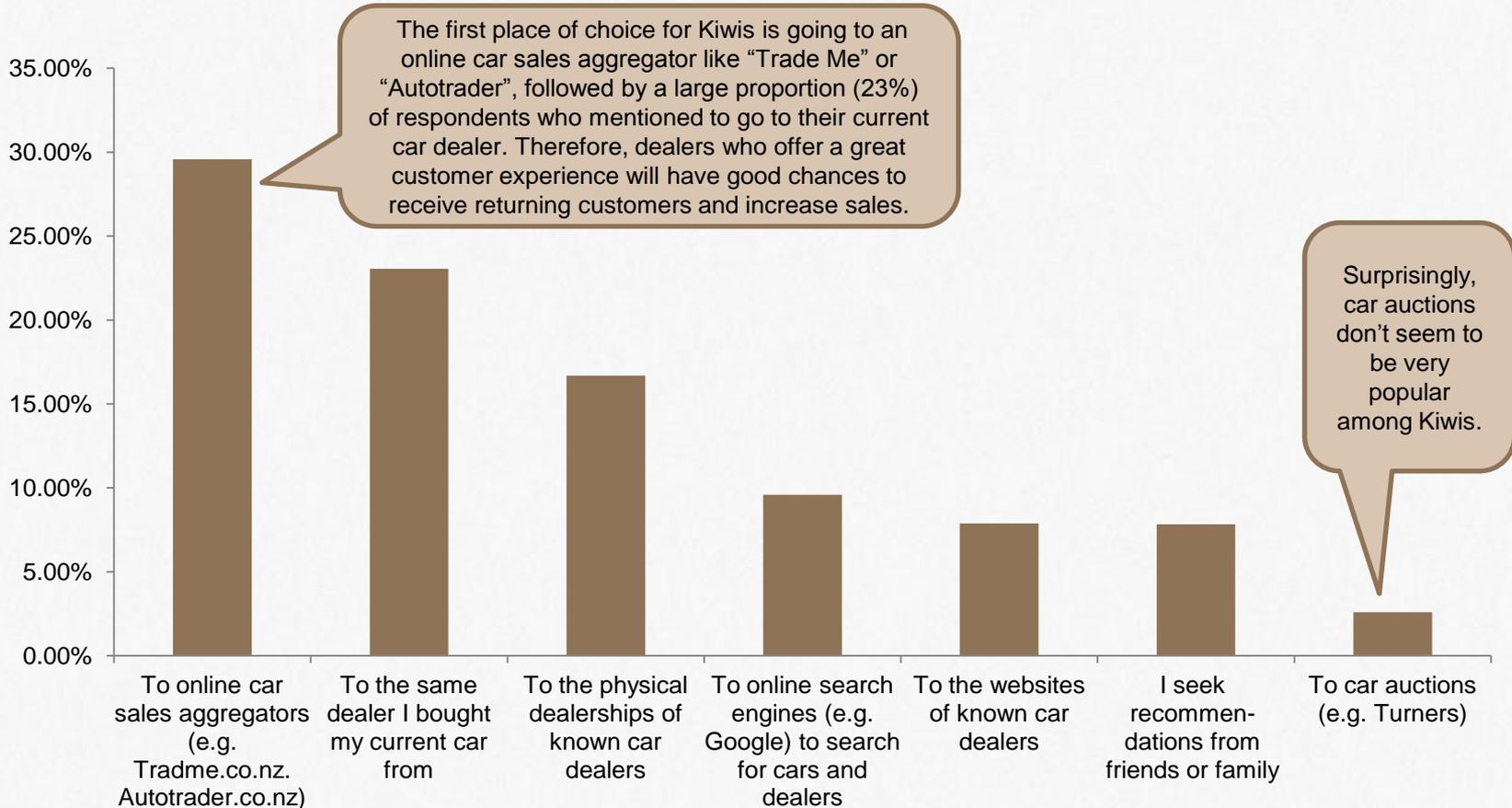


Note

Source: Relative total keyword performance on a normalised scale 1 to 100, Google Trends, New Zealand, Sep 2014

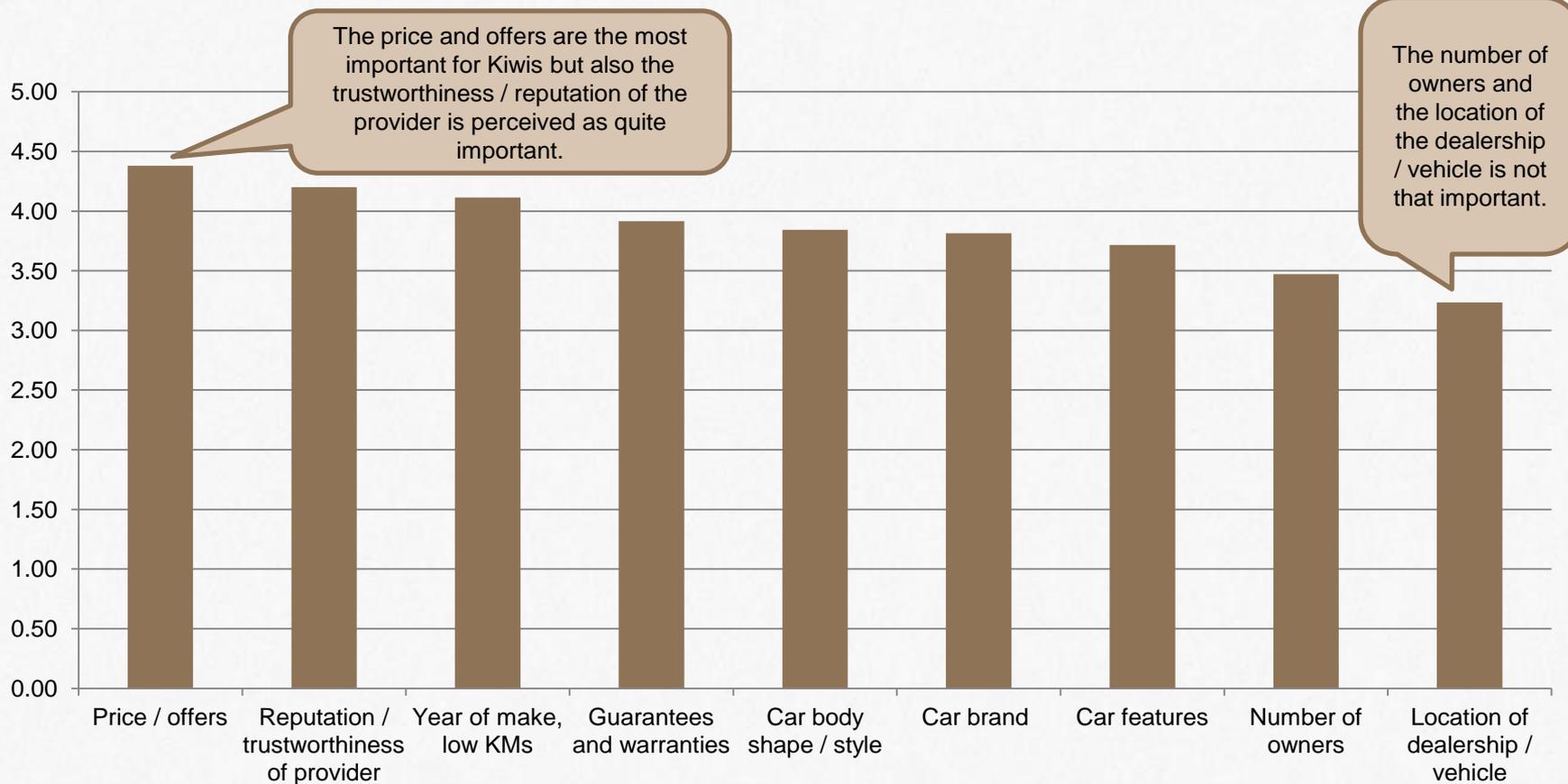
Consumer Research: 30% choose online car sales aggregators

Question 1: Typically, where is the first place you go when considering purchasing a new or used car?



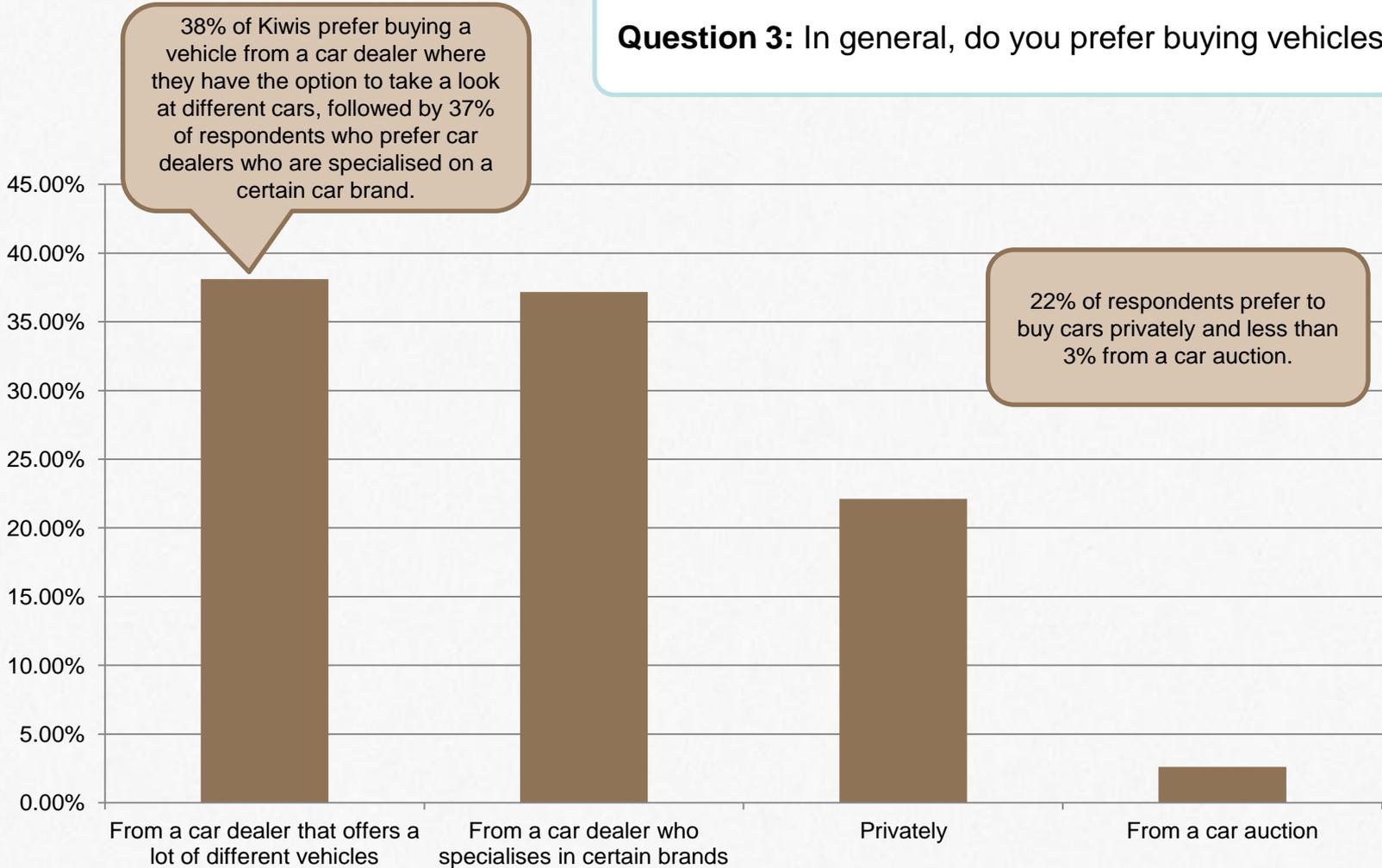
Consumer Research: Price and offers then reputation

Question 2: What is most important to you when considering a new or used car? (Rank the following on a scale of 1-5, 1 being least important, 5 of great importance)



Consumer Research: 75% of Kiwis buy from car dealers

Question 3: In general, do you prefer buying vehicles...?



New & used cars

Summary & Observations



- According to an article from [automotivenews.co.nz](http://www.automotivenews.co.nz), sales of new vehicles in 2014 are expected to top those of a record in 2013, the best year for the New Zealand motor industry since 1984.* As the car sales market in New Zealand is likely to be very profitable, car dealers should make use of this development and implement suitable digital strategies to increase sales.
- Autotrader is leading the RBR (for desktop search), followed by Trade Me and Turners. However, in mobile search Trade Me just ranks on ninth position, left behind by players like AA, Turners, AutoBase and others.
- In general, search results are broadly dispersed among a wide range of competitors. In this competitive market, some car providers have recognized the urgency of ranking well in organic search, nevertheless there are still many companies (especially car brand companies) which are not at all present within organic search. It would make sense for them to invest in a robust and smart search strategy.
- In our survey we revealed that buying from a car auction is rather unpopular among Kiwis, and that 75% of the respondents would buy their car at a car dealer.
- **A digital strategy that integrates both organic and paid search should be a key customer acquisition and revenue driver for car dealers, both online and offline/in store.**

* Source: 2013 New-car sales forecast: 2014 better than 2013, <http://www.automotivenews.co.nz>

About *FIRST.*

Respected digital veterans are the foundation our agency is built upon. Our expertise in digital has been built on over 14 years' experience in digital strategy, analytics, conversion, search marketing and digital campaigns.

FIRST., our award-winning team of internet marketers, has helped over 300 companies across 100 industries achieve digital success. We provide companies with a digital roadmap to success centered around a “digitally led” sales and marketing strategy.

Our services span search (SEO and SEM), email, performance media, conversion optimisation and advanced analytics. Most importantly, our work is underpinned by a focus on delivering the return on investment our clients expect.





Contact us

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<http://www.firstdigital.co.nz/blog>

https://twitter.com/first_nz

Our Vision

To be highly sought after for making a measurable difference

Our Mission

We're a team focused on transforming businesses and creating market leaders through digital marketing. We innovate, test and optimise to create a competitive advantage to dominate the digital channel. Our data-driven approach will keep things simple and make a measurable difference.

Our Focus

As a Google Certified Analytics Partner (GACP), and Certified Optimizely Partner we focus on smart customer acquisition using search and performance media, maximising conversion using best practice CRO and helping NZ businesses making the best possible decisions based on accurate, actionable web analytics.