

## Study: Car dealers seek more respect

**Publisher:** Northeast Pennsylvania Business Journal

**Year:** 1994



**Northeast Pennsylvania  
Business Journal**

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Vol. 9 No. 3

February 1994

\$2.50

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Given the choice, many automobile dealers in the United States and Netherlands would rather get some respect than get rich from the manufacturers whose lines they carry, a Penn State researcher says.

"Most manufacturers probably believe that dealers are primarily concerned with the profit margins they can make by carrying the manufacturer's product line," notes Nirmalya Kumar, assistant professor of marketing in the Smeal College of Business Administration. "Our survey of automobile dealers, however, shows that to the dealers, respect and being treated fairly by their more powerful partners — the manufacturers — are relatively more important than earnings or other tangible rewards."

Kumar examined the topic with Lisa K. Scheer, assistant professor of marketing at the University of Missouri at Columbia, and Jan-Benedict E.M. Steenkamp, associate professor of marketing at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. Their research was supported by Penn State's Institute for the Study of Business Markets.

The team surveyed 417 new car dealers from the United States and 289 dealers from the Netherlands, making the study perhaps the first of its kind to include data from two countries. In both countries, various dealers surveyed handled cars made in the U.S., Europe, Japan and elsewhere.