

# WHAT IT TAKES TO SELL ELECTRIC VEHICLES



## A Growing Market

Consumer interest in purchasing electric vehicles (EVs)—whether battery electric vehicles powered only by electricity or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles—is increasing every year. In 2018, EV sales were up by 67% over 2017 sales in nine states that have zero emission vehicle (ZEV) programs, not including California (See fig 1.). Moreover, a recent survey suggests that almost half of Northeastern drivers and six out of ten millennial drivers in the Northeast are likely to consider an EV for their next car purchase.

With more makes and models than ever before, market growth for EVs is expected to continue. Today, there are more than 40 models of EVs available, from crossovers to sedans to luxury vehicles, and more than 80 models are expected by the end of 2022.

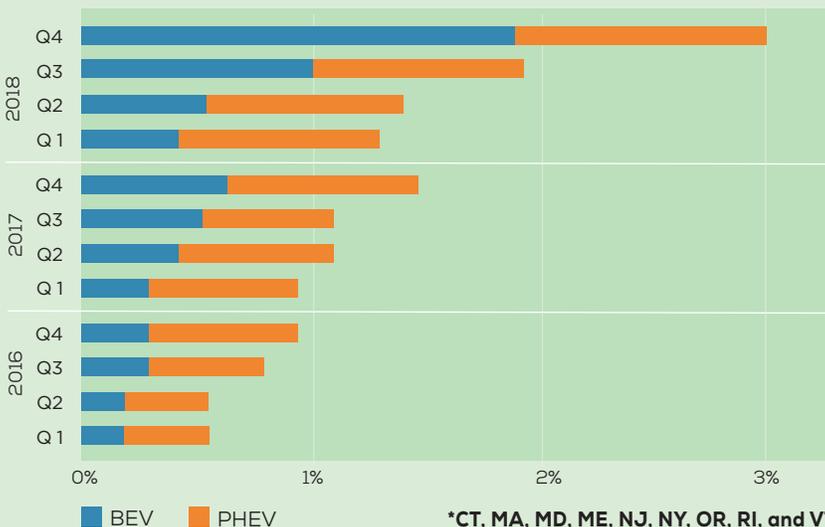
## Leading Dealers Offer Advice

NESCAUM facilitates a workgroup of dealership associations and states with ZEV programs to identify ways of supporting dealerships to sell more EVs. During a recent workgroup

webinar, three leading Northeastern dealerships with impressive EV sales—Hoselton Auto Mall in Rochester, New York; Quirk Chevrolet in Braintree, Massachusetts; and Karl Chevrolet in New Canaan, Connecticut—presented their most effective sales strategies.

**Train EV Sales Specialists.** Leading dealerships recommend building a sales staff trained to answer questions from car buyers about how EVs will fit into their lifestyle and budget. Training about particular models as well as more general training on EV technology, the charging process at home and away from home, and available purchase incentives are important. Quirk Chevrolet’s four trained specialists are ready to help customers connect with a home charging station vendor, load an app for finding public charging stations onto their phones, and estimate their future monthly charging costs, all steps that help them close deals faster. Leading dealers also

**fig. 1 SHARE OF EV SALES IN NINE STATES THAT HAVE ZERO EMISSION VEHICLE PROGRAMS\***



\*CT, MA, MD, ME, NJ, NY, OR, RI, and VT  
Source Data: IHS Palk



*“In 2017, 14% of the cars we sold were electric. We can sell 50 EVs a month. The market is there, we just have to embrace it.”*

SEAN MULKERRINS,  
ELECTRIC VEHICLE  
SALES SPECIALIST AT  
QUIRK CHEVROLET



*“We emphasize a lot of selling points with our customers, including the great technology EVs offer, how well they handle, how sporty and fun they are to drive, their lower maintenance costs, and the fact that they are cleaner cars that use sustainable energy.”*

LEO KARL, PRESIDENT, KARL CHEVROLET

encourage employees to try the vehicles themselves, and many decide to purchase one. “A salesperson who owns an EV is the best salesperson there is,” says Leo Karl, President of Karl Chevrolet.

**The Test Drive is Key.** Leading dealers regularly participate in ride and drive events. “From farmers markets to electric utility ride and drives, we get our vehicles to events so we can teach people about them and offer a first-hand experience” says Sean Mulkerrins, a Quirk EV Sales Specialist. After test drives, many new customers come into the dealership in search of additional information. Hoselton Auto Mall also includes EVs in rental and loaner fleets, and Karl Chevrolet gives out vouchers to customers to try EVs overnight.

**Target Fleet Sales.** Leading EV dealers are selling vehicles to state and local agencies, universities, and businesses. “We make the process super easy for them,” says Sean Mulkerrins. “We bring the vehicles to them for a test drive and help them understand the special purchase incentives available.” Fleet managers are especially attracted to the low maintenance costs and long warranties.

**Market Creatively.** “From an advertising standpoint, social and digital media is really the place we want to be for electric vehicles,” says Dan McMorrow, Director of New Car Operations at Hoselton Auto Mall. “We ran campaigns using Facebook and put a lot of weight behind those efforts.”



DAN MCMORROW, DIRECTOR OF NEW CAR OPERATIONS AT HOSELTON AUTO MALL

“Our percent penetration of EV sales has pretty much doubled every single year since 2015,” says Dan McMorrow, Director of New Car Operations at Hoselton Auto Mall, which offers Nissan, Toyota and Chevy products in Rochester, New York.

“From making sure our employees were product knowledge wizards to keeping a good inventory of EVs on our lots, really embracing this technology was the key to our dealership’s early success with sales,” explains McMorrow.

Hoselton employs creative ways to introduce customers to EVs, including making 20% of their rental fleet electric, offering EV loaner cars when vehicles are being serviced, and hiring someone not on staff to bring vehicles to community events and ride and drives. “When customers get a chance to try out an EV without any pressure to buy, their interest often gets piqued and they want to learn more,” says McMorrow.



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