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YOUR VEHICLE TRADE-IN CHECKLIST





So, the time has come: You've decided you're ready to purchase a new (or used) car.

We know you're eager to drive off the lot. But before you can do that, a fair amount of preparation is in order. Namely, you're going to have to figure out what you're doing with your current vehicle.

If your car is very old or badly damaged, it might be worth it just to scrap it. However, if your vehicle has years left to live (or miles left to be driven, more like), then you're going to want to trade it in. Who knows, you might just get enough cash from it to take care of your down payment!

Trading in isn't a hard process. But in order to make the most of your current vehicle, you need to come into it armed with the right knowledge. By following this simple checklist, you should have no problem doing so.

BEFORE VISITING YOUR LOCAL CAR DEALER: RESEARCH

The first step in the trade-in process is undoubtedly going to be research. The following items can all be completed from the comfort of your own home, right on the internet. Get them out of the way first thing so you can get into the fun...

✓ **The first order of business is setting up a budget.**

As rule of thumb, this should be the start to your car buying process, regardless if you're trading in or not. But it can be particularly helpful in trying to determine how much you can afford, and what you might need from your trade-in.

“Once you have your budget outlined, you can pick out a new vehicle. Start comparing models and brands by visiting manufacturer websites or automotive research sites like Kelley Blue Book® (KBB) and Car and Driver.”



✓ **Set your sights on a new vehicle.**

Once you have your budget outlined, you can pick out a new vehicle. Start comparing models and brands by visiting manufacturer websites or automotive research sites like Kelley Blue Book® (KBB) and Car and Driver. Here, you'll be able to find all the important vehicle specifications, features, and reviews.



After you have a vehicle picked out, check it out on your local dealer's website. Request price estimates to determine what you might need for your down payment. You can then use that golden number to set the bar for your trade-in.

✓ **Find out your vehicle's worth.**

It's hard to tell the exact worth of your vehicle based on appearance and performance alone. Luckily, the internet is filled with trade-in calculators that you can use to estimate your car's worth.

We always recommend turning to KBB's value calculator first, as it's one of the most trusted automotive resources on the internet. All you have to do is enter your vehicle's condition and specs to discover just how much it's worth.

BEFORE VISITING YOUR LOCAL CAR DEALER: PREP YOUR VEHICLE

Bear in mind that a value estimate is just that: an approximation. If you trade in your car as is, you'll be fortunate to get even that. However, by making just a few cosmetic changes or performing a minor tune-up, you could add a decent amount of money to that value.

When it comes time to trade in your car, don't shortchange yourself. A little bit of elbow grease is bound to pay off in the end!

☒ **Clean and repair the exterior.**

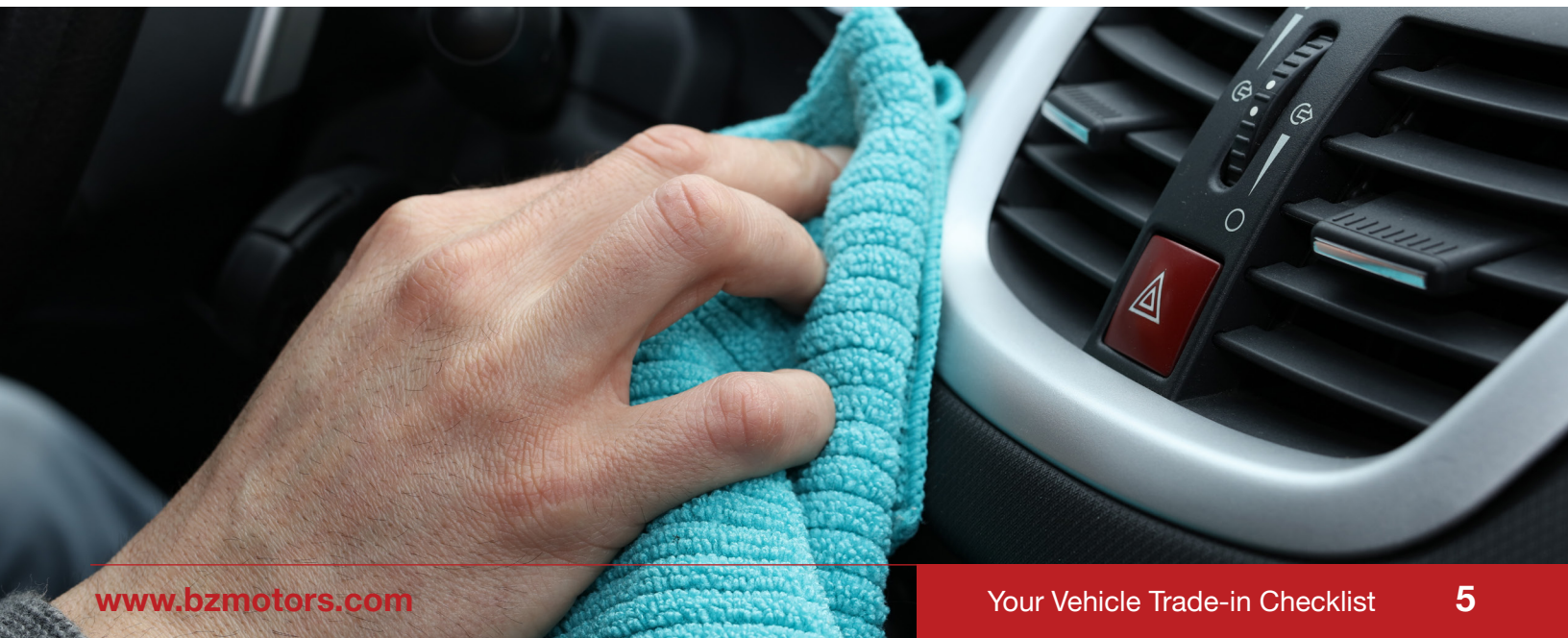
It's important that your vehicle looks as nice as possible when you bring it in for an official appraisal. Ensure the exterior of your car is clean, and consider repairing any minor flaws, such as dents or scratches.

Is the paint chipping? Is there any visible rust? Perhaps there's a nick in the windshield? Having any of these imperfections removed prior to appraisal is definitely going to make a huge difference.

☒ **Clean and repair the interior.**

Part of the appraisal process is inspecting the interior of the car and its overall condition. Look around the upholstery and make sure there are no rips, tears, or stains that may negatively affect the appraisal price.

Vacuum and wipe down the interior. You're getting rid of the car, obviously, but that's no reason you can't go the extra mile.





Are there any unpleasant smells? If you've ever smoked in your car, the odor can be very detrimental to value. A product like Febreze may only lift the surface smell. Consider cleaning soft surfaces with baking soda to lift the deep-seated aromas.

✓ **Consider any general maintenance the car may need.**

Does your car need new tires/brakes or an oil change? Perhaps the alignment is due? You should be extra conscientious of these things if you're trying to raise the car's value.

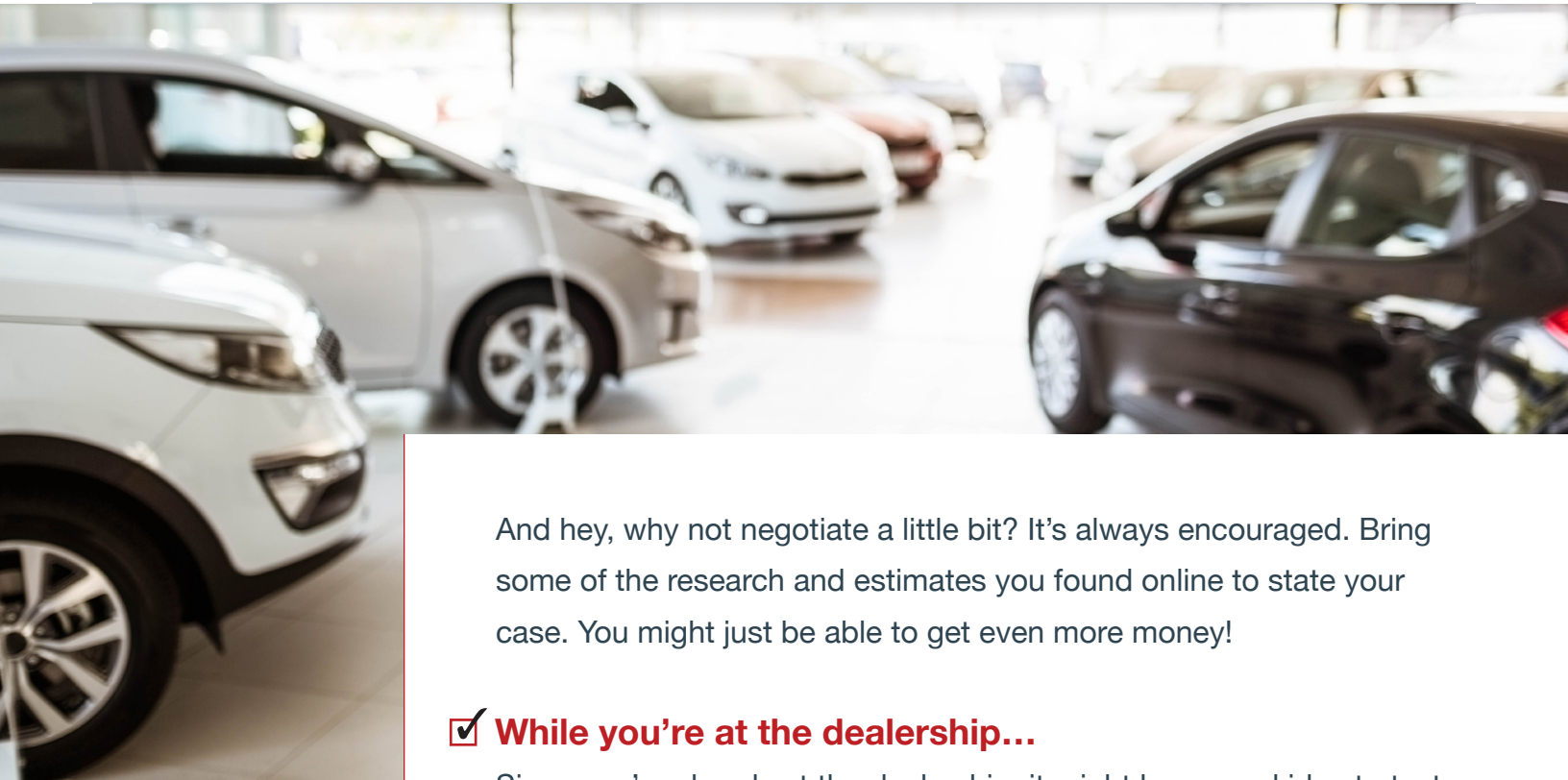
There are many small maintenance items that you can perform on your own at home. However, if you'd like a professional to take care of things, don't hesitate to call the

technicians at your local dealership for a tune-up. They can get things back in tip-top shape in no time at all.

Remember, the less it's going to cost the dealership to get your car back up to spec, the more they'll be willing to give you for a trade-in.

✓ **Schedule an appraisal appointment for your current vehicle.**

After making all these changes, your car should be ready for a professional appraisal. Don't be surprised if the trade-in exceeds that estimate a bit. Thanks to the hard work you've put in, your car is looking and running better than it has in a long time.



And hey, why not negotiate a little bit? It's always encouraged. Bring some of the research and estimates you found online to state your case. You might just be able to get even more money!

✓ **While you're at the dealership...**

Since you're already at the dealership, it might be a good idea to test drive your new vehicle of interest. When you schedule your appraisal, schedule a test drive at the same time.

Getting behind the wheel of a car before you buy is an absolute must. If you don't enjoy driving it for 20 minutes, then how do you think you'll feel about driving it for years to come?

When you're out on the road, be sure to take note of the handling and engine response, as well as the vehicle's dimensions. It needs to be as roomy as it is fast and fun!

WHEN THE DAY COMES: WHAT YOU SHOULD BRING

Trade-in day: On one hand, it's bittersweet. You've spent a lot of time with your car. It's gotten you to work and school (or helped you play hooky). It's been your road trip chariot and your Saturday night transport. But now it's time to say goodbye.

Be honest... You're excited to see it go. To ensure the process is as smooth and quick as possible, make sure you come to the dealership prepared. Here are the documents and forms of identification you'll need to carry with you:

- Driver's license (and social security number).
- Your bank information (this is especially important if you currently have a loan on your vehicle).
- The car's title.
- Your proof of auto insurance (keep your current insurance card, and have the agency fax the new one to the dealership).
- Reports of any accidents you may have had in the car.
- A log of all your routine maintenance and any significant repairs.
- If you had a loan, but have paid it off, you'll need the original lien release.

In addition to all these basic documents and IDs, the dealership may have a few forms specific to their business. Inquire ahead of time and see if they can email or fax you any forms the day before. Getting all these filled out beforehand can really expedite the process!

LOOKING FOR A BIT OF EXTRA ADVICE?

Vehicle trade-in money can really make a difference in the car buying process. And getting the most for your current car is an art form in itself.

Sit down with the sales representatives at your local car dealer for a bit of extra advice. Ask them what makes a used car valuable to them, and what kind of work you can put in to ramp up the price. It's best to go right to the source for this kind of information.



And remember, if in the end you're not happy with the trade-in value that a dealership gives you, you can always negotiate. After reading this eBook, you're going to be more informed than the typical driver. Be sure to use all this knowledge to your advantage!

TRADE IN YOUR CAR TODAY!

By checking off all the items on this list, you shouldn't have a hard time getting a nice chunk of change for your current car. Even the oldest vehicle has worth, and you deserve to get a fair trade for it.

If you'd like any more information on this process, or any additional help getting rid of your current car, be sure to contact your local car dealer today.