



Ralph Seekins

GET THE MOST FOR YOUR TRADE-IN

good on the outside and the inside. A good wash and wax, cleaning the grime off the tires and wheels, cleaning every corner of every window, and getting a deep clean on the upholstery and carpets will more than return the effort and/or cost. And, don't forget something like using a little Febreze air freshener (nothing too strong) particularly if you are a smoker. You can do these things yourself if you have the time and a place to get it done at home. Or, in cold or inclement weather, nearly every community has a few businesses that specialize in almost every level of vehicle detail cleaning. Once again, a clean looking, clean smelling trade-in makes a good first impression on the appraiser and is well worth the effort.

Check the oil and filter. Any good appraiser is going to check the oil to see if it is dark and goeey and will also look at the oil filter to see if it looks like it has been changed on a regular basis. Clean oil and a relatively recently changed filter also makes a good impression. If you've kept your regular service records, it's

a good idea to bring them with you. Even though most dealerships will check with one of the vehicle history sites, not everything you do to your vehicle will be reported on those sites and a complete service history is something that adds value to your trade in.

Be honest with the dealership about any damage you may have had repaired. Most appraisers are very, very good at spotting body repairs and if they have to guess about the extent of the damage that was done, they will always guess at the high end.

Make sure you take your personal items out of the car or truck before you get to the dealership. Interior clutter leaves a negative impression on the appraiser. Think about it. If you get into a vehicle with stuff scattered around versus one that appears neat and well cared for, what would your impression be? One thing though, be sure you bring your owner's manual with you and leave it in the glove box with your service records.

These are simple tips. However, having appraised thousands of vehicles over the last 42 years, I guarantee that they will help you get the most for your vehicle at trade-in time.

Safe driving for you and your family.

I've been in the automobile business now for more than 42 years. All my friends know what I do for a living and they will often ask for advice on everything from oil change intervals to the best way to buy a vehicle. Recently one of my really good friends who had moved out of state called and told me he was in the market for a new vehicle and he asked me how he could get the most for his used vehicle as a trade in. Here's how I advised him.

Think about how you would look at your trade in if you were in the market for a pre-owned vehicle. Remember that it is going to be a "new car" to any prospective buyer. And the dealer looking at your car or truck is also trying to visualize how that vehicle will look to prospective buyers that come to his or her dealership looking for just the right vehicle. So, the first thing I'd do is spend a few bucks getting my car or truck clean and looking

Ralph Seekins has more than 42 years' experience in the automotive industry. He started as a mechanic, worked in sales, and for the past 36 years, has been the owner of Seekins Ford Lincoln.