

# Fullpath's Auto Intelligence Index Reveals AI-Driven Referral Traffic For Car Sales Grows 15x Year-Over-Year

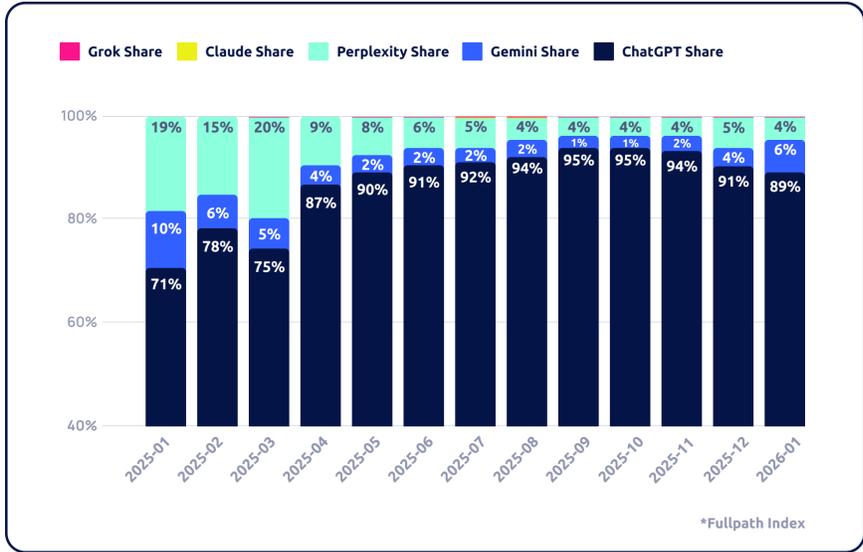
Tel Aviv, Israel, February 24, 2026 — Fullpath, automotive’s leading AI and Customer Data Platform, today released its Auto Intelligence Index for January 2026, an analysis of key automotive retail trends across its nationwide network of franchised dealerships. The data reveals a fundamental shift in how consumers discover car buying opportunities online, uneven inventory supply recovery across brands, and diverging OEM investment strategies in early 2026.

## Key Highlights:

### AI in Automotive Sales: Conversational AI Goes Mainstream

Total traffic to dealer websites originating from generative AI platforms including ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, Claude, and Grok grew more than 15x year-over-year (YoY), underscoring a rapid shift in how shoppers are researching vehicle purchases. While total AI referrals dipped roughly 2% month-over-month (MoM) from December's holiday-season peak, the long-term trend remains unmistakable.

OpenAI’s ChatGPT continues to hold the top spot as the most dominant traffic source among AI platforms, accounting for approximately 89% of all AI referrals, though its share has eased from a peak of nearly 95% last September as competitors gain ground. Notably, Google Gemini posted the strongest monthly surge, growing over 50% MoM to bring its share of AI traffic from 4% to 6.5% between December and January. Perplexity held a 4% share, down from nearly 19% just a year ago as the overall market expanded dramatically around ChatGPT, while Claude and Grok have established nascent footholds that did not exist in the twelve months prior.



## **Website Traffic: Broad-Based Growth Led By Stellantis, Hyundai, and Honda**

Dealer website traffic showed healthy momentum across nearly every OEM group in the start of 2026. Stellantis led the pack with roughly 29% YoY and 18% MoM growth, marking the strongest performance on both measures. Hyundai and Honda continued to outpace the broader market with 34% and 23% YoY growth, respectively.

## **OEM Spend: Diverging Investment Strategies**

Dealership marketing budgets shifted meaningfully across OEMs, suggesting different strategic approaches heading into 2026. Toyota dealers implemented the most aggressive ramp-up with budget increases of roughly 24% MoM and 27% YoY, while Daimler (Mercedes-Benz) dealers posted the single largest monthly jump with an approximate 58% increase. Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) budgets more than doubled year-over-year from 2025 to 2026, reflecting an expanded commitment to digital investment.

## **Days Supply: Inventory Rebuilds Unevenly Across Major Brands**

Average new vehicle days supply rose approximately 17.5% month-over-month from December 2025 to January 2026 while holding roughly flat year-over-year at 1.8%. With rising days supply on the horizon, buyer leverage may be returning and margin compression could be a risk for dealerships.

“AI is quickly becoming the new front door to automotive retail,” said Aharon Horwitz, CEO & Co-founder of Fullpath. “A 15x increase in AI referral traffic in a single year isn’t just a trend, it signals a fundamental behavioral shift in how consumers begin their car-buying journey. At the same time, days supply tells you who holds leverage in the market. As inventory rebuilds unevenly across brands, pricing power, incentive strategy, and marketing investment will increasingly diverge. Dealers who monitor and align their digital strategy with real-time inventory conditions won’t just capture demand, they’ll protect margin in a more competitive environment.”

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## **Methodology**

The Fullpath Auto Intelligence Index Numbers for 2026 are derived from Fullpath’s Customer Data Platform and AI analytics, which aggregate anonymized website traffic signals, advertising spend trends and day supply metrics across automotive OEMs and thousands of dealerships nationwide. Explore more data and insights from Fullpath here:

<https://www.fullpath.com/data-insights/>.

## **About Fullpath**

Fullpath is the automotive industry’s AI-first Customer Data Platform (CDP). Fullpath unifies first-party dealership data and activates it by layering powerful AI and marketing automation on top. Dealerships that invest in the platform create exceptional, hyper-personalized customer experiences that drive loyalty and build resilient, lasting business.

For more information or interview requests, please contact:  
Ilana Shabtay, [ilana@fullpath.com](mailto:ilana@fullpath.com)  
VP Marketing, Fullpath