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With a little attention to detail and some elbow grease, you can save thousands of dollars by selling your vehicle online rather than swapping it with a dealer. The following tips will show you how:

* Avoid overpricing. Research the private-party value on sites like cars.com to find out exactly what your car is worth and price yours competitively to sell quickly.

* Thoroughly clean your car inside and out; wax the exterior. The car should be spotless, with no clutter. Have existing problems repaired, or be prepared to lower your price accordingly.

* A vehicle history report provides credibility and builds trust. Carfax reports are available free at cars.com with the purchase of their Premium Ad package. If you have maintenance records, show them to potential buyers.

* A professional inspection will prevent last-minute surprises and adds to the buyer's peace of mind. Cars.com recommends SGS Inspections, with its nationwide staff of inspectors who will come to your home, office or any convenient location and perform a 150-point inspection and post results within 24 hours. Their fee includes interior and exterior photos.

* When writing your ad, provide specific details and features. Include plenty of well-lighted photographs of your clean and shiny vehicle, inside and out.

* Respond to inquiries promptly to keep the buyer enthused. Get the buyer's full name, address and contact information. Verify the information before meeting face-to-face. Initially, you may wish to meet the buyer away from your house and also have a friend come along.

* Accompany the buyer on the test drive to continue discussing the vehicle's selling points.

* Once you've agreed on a price, discuss method of payment. It's best to request a cashier's check drawn on a local bank and to go with the buyer to the bank to verify it. For cash transactions, both buyer and seller should sign a cash receipt or a bill of sale.

* After the transfer of title, notify your insurance company and local DMV. Remember that in most states, the license plates stay with the buyer.

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