Tips on Preparing Your Car for a Resale by Hiteshbhoi

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As new vehicle models make their way out of the factories and into dealerships, many customers will look to trade in or resell their current cars.

There are numerous factors that determine a vehicle's resale value, such as the make and model of the vehicle as well as its age, mileage and overall condition. Although a large portion of the resale value is predetermined, car owners can increase the value by taking proper care of the vehicle to keep it in its optimum condition.

The service specialists at Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge provide the following tips to help car owners prepare their vehicles for resale or trade-in:

* Have all ownership materials. The documentation that accompanied the vehicle when first purchased is a key component in resale value. Ownership materials include the warranty manual and owner's manual. It also is important to have the spare key and, when applicable, the convertible top boot cover.

* Look under the hood and fill all fluids. These include brake fluid, power steering fluid and wiper fluid, along with oil, coolant and antifreeze.

* Do basic operational checks. First, check the dashboard to see if any warning lights are lit and address any indicated problems. Second, make sure all lights, locks, windows, wipers, turn signals, the trunk release, mirrors, seat belts, defrosters, the horn, air conditioning and heat systems and seat adjusters work. Accessories that were purchased with the vehicle, such as heated seats or a sunroof, should also be in working order.

* Conduct your own road test. Make sure the vehicle easily starts and the gear selector functions properly. Also, check steering performance and make sure that the cruise control, overdrive, gauges and sound system are in tip-top shape. Finally, check to see if the acceleration and brakes are operating effectively.

* Check for leaks. Inspect under the hood for any dramatic decreases in fluid levels.

* Evaluate overall appearance. Externally, check for dents and scratches, ensure all the wheels match and are filled, and remove any decals and stickers. Internally, clean the floors, mats and seats, along with the panels and dashboard. Remove all personal items from the glove compartment and trunk. Finally, have your vehicle professionally washed and detailed prior to having the resale value evaluation.

And lastly, Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge specialists recommend regular service and maintenance checkups by certified automotive experts throughout your vehicle's life. Although your dealership should keep a detailed history of your vehicle on file, keep your own record of all checkups and maintenance performed on your vehicle in a logbook to demonstrate that proper care was provided. - NU

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