

## “Keeping Up with the Joneses”

Using Social Proximity & Predictive Analytics to Identify the Next Car Buyer

### CHALLENGE



Automotive marketers traditionally rely on individual-level intent signals to identify consumers likely to be in-market for a vehicle. While effective, this approach overlooks a powerful behavioral driver: social influence. Consumers often enter the market after observing a recent vehicle purchase by a friend or neighbor using El Toro’s patent approach to identify social influence and purchase propensity. The challenge was to determine whether this “Keeping up with the Joneses” effect could be quantified, modeled, and activated at scale to identify incremental, high-value automotive prospects beyond standard intent modeling.

### APPROACH



Using advanced predictive analytics and proprietary digital canvassing techniques, we analyzed the relationship between recent vehicle buyers and social indexing.

The analysis evaluated:

- Over **25,000 verified vehicle sales** (test and control populations)
- Nearly **127,500 digitally identified households with a high social index score; note this is based on 5.1 intender-identified** per past purchase. These socially influenced Joneses are culled out to be highly likely to be influenced by their friends' purchases.
- Leveraging block-level household density and proximity patterns is an important element in this process.
- Subsequent purchase behavior among friends who were not originally flagged as intenders

This methodology isolated a distinct “Jones” audience: households not initially identified by the El Toro intent model but that share a high social index ratio with a recent buyer.



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### KEY FINDINGS



- **20% of recent vehicle buyers** had at least one close friend or neighbor subsequently enter the predictive intent model following the initial purchase.
- The Jones audience delivered a **+65% lift in sales rate** versus the control population of El Toro Auto Intenders (4.68% vs. 2.83%).
- Certain regions (less urban) showed even stronger results, with performance **up to +77% higher than the control**.
- Jones households purchased a **higher mix of premium vehicles**, indicating stronger consideration and purchase confidence.

When benchmarked against national averages, the Jones population outperformed overall new-vehicle sales rates by **approximately +180%**.

Audience	Purchase Rate	Delta
All Buyers	.8%	N/A
In-Market Intenders (Web and Geo)	2.83%	+253%
Joneses (Social Influence)	4.68%	+485%

**Note 1** - While the majority of Joneses purchases happen within the first 90 days of prospect identification, this is a statistically significant increase in their purchase behavior for 270 days after identification.

**Note 2** - Because Joneses are identified in real-time to achieve maximum results, it is recommended to leverage El Toro’s CRM Enrichment process, which delivers leads daily for prospects identified yesterday

These results confirmed that **vehicle purchases materially increase the likelihood that nearby households will begin their own buying journey shortly thereafter.**



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## BUSINESS IMPACT



By activating the Jones segment:

- Dealers and OEMs gain access to **incremental, high-propensity prospects** not captured by traditional intent models
- Media efficiency improves by focusing spending on households with **demonstrated social and behavioral relevance** and by targeting them **before they begin actively shopping** for a new vehicle.
- Campaigns benefit from **higher conversion rates and stronger vehicle-mix outcomes**

The Jones audience proved to be a scalable, cost-efficient pre-targeting segment suitable for inclusion in future predictive automotive marketing programs.

## CONCLUSION



This analysis confirms that vehicle purchases are socially contagious among friends and neighbors. By combining predictive analytics, proximity intelligence, advanced neighborhood geometry, and verified sales data, Brands, OEMs, and Tier 2 can identify the next buyer—not just the current one.

The “Keeping Up with the Joneses” model transforms social influence into a measurable, addressable, and high-performing automotive audience, enhancing both reach and return on marketing investment.



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