

# Frontline Friction Analysis

20 Documented Pain Points Facing Sales & Service Teams at U.S. Dealerships

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## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This analysis documents 20 specific, industry-validated pain points that frontline Sales and Service teams face when dealing with electrified vehicles — BEV (Battery Electric Vehicle), HEV (Hybrid Electric Vehicle), PHEV (Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle), and E-REV (Extended-Range Electric Vehicle) — at U.S. franchised dealerships. Each pain point is mapped directly to existing GEVA advisory session content, validating that GEVA's growing advisory session library was built to address documented, real-world friction — not theoretical training gaps.

Pain points are organized into 5 severity-ranked categories. Category 1 is the most CSI (Customer Satisfaction Index)-impacting; Category 5 is the least severe but still operationally significant.

### SEVERITY 1 TURNOVER & CONTINUITY

*Structural, permanent, and self-compounding — knowledge resets every time a staff member exits*

#### #1 Sales Consultant Turnover Continuously Resets EV Product Knowledge

<b>Surface</b>	Sales floor
<b>Why It Matters</b>	2025 NADA Workforce Study data shows non-luxury sales consultant turnover hit 73% in 2024 — up 13 percentage points year over year. This means nearly three out of four salespeople do not make it 12 months. Every departure erases accumulated EV knowledge. New hires start from zero, can't answer basic charging and range questions, and expose the dealership to CSI (Customer Satisfaction Index) risk during the most vulnerable post-sale window.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's recurring advisory cadence means EV knowledge is not dependent on any individual staff member surviving. Advisory sessions covering EV fundamentals and powertrain orientation rebuild the knowledge floor for every new hire cohort. Continuity lives in the cadence, not the individual.

#### #2 Service Advisor Turnover Erases the Hardest-Won Operational Knowledge

<b>Surface</b>	Service drive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	Service advisor turnover runs 49% annually. The EV knowledge that takes longest to build — distinguishing normal behavior from actual defects, knowing what to handle on the floor vs. what to bring forward, managing customer expectations at the lane — is the first thing lost when advisors depart. Each new service advisor without EV fluency creates unnecessary ROs (repair orders), misdiagnosed complaints, and damaged CSI scores before they get up to speed.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	Every GEVA Service session delivers the same advisory framework regardless of who is in the advisor seat. Knowledge lives in the advisory cadence, not the individual.

#### #3 No Cross-Rooftop EV Language Standard — Each Location Develops Its Own Vocabulary

<b>Surface</b>	Both — most visible when customers interact with multiple rooftops
<b>Why It Matters</b>	Without a shared advisory layer, each dealership rooftop develops its own informal EV language. Sales staff at one location calls it 'one-pedal driving.' Another calls it 'regenerative mode.' Service at a third location explains it differently still. Customers who visit multiple rooftops get contradictory information. For multi-rooftop dealer groups, this fragments brand trust and creates cross-location inconsistency that compounds with staff turnover.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	Cross-rooftop language consistency is GEVA's core operating premise. All advisory sessions are delivered to Sales and Service across every rooftop using the same vocabulary, the same powertrain definitions, and the same boundaries for what staff handles on the floor. GEVA's powertrain orientation sessions establish and maintain the shared language floor.

#### #4 New Hires Arrive on the Floor Without EV Context — The Knowledge Gap Starts on Day One

<b>Surface</b>	Sales floor and service drive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	With sales consultant tenure averaging under two years and turnover accelerating, a significant portion of any dealership's floor staff at any given time has been in the role fewer than six months. Manufacturer onboarding covers vehicle features and trim levels — not electrified powertrain behavior, charging literacy, or customer expectation management. New hires are customer-facing on EV questions before they have any EV foundation. Every customer interaction during that ramp period is a CSI (Customer Satisfaction Index) exposure. The problem compounds at the service drive, where new service advisors handle EV anxiety visits with no established framework for normal vs. abnormal behavior.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's powertrain orientation sessions (Sales and Service) provide the foundational EV context that manufacturer onboarding does not deliver. The recurring advisory cadence means the knowledge floor is continuously refreshed — new hires are brought up to standard faster because the advisory baseline already exists, rather than learning informally from colleagues who may themselves carry incorrect knowledge.

### SEVERITY 2 KNOWLEDGE GAPS

*Staff can't answer the questions customers are already asking — and customers notice*

#### #5 Staff Cannot Explain Real-World Range vs. EPA-Rated Range

<b>Surface</b>	Sales floor primarily; also service drive when range complaints arrive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	Multiple industry studies confirm that EV customers know more about charging and batteries than dealership sales staff. Staff routinely quotes EPA window-sticker range without explaining the conditions under which that number was generated. When customers experience 15–30% less range in cold weather or highway driving, they return to the service drive believing the vehicle is defective. This is one of the highest-volume preventable complaint drivers in EV ownership.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's real-world range and environmental impact sessions (Sales and Service) directly address this gap. Seasonal performance context is reinforced across the recurring advisory calendar.

#### #6 Staff Cannot Explain Why EVs Lose Charge While Parked

<b>Surface</b>	Service drive
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<b>Why It Matters</b>	Parasitic drain — the ongoing energy draw from thermal management, telematics, and software processes — is a normal BEV and PHEV operating condition. Without this context, staff labels it a defect. Customers are told 'we found nothing wrong' and leave without understanding, feeling dismissed. This scenario is one of the most CSI-damaging service drive interactions in EV ownership because it damages trust without resolving anxiety.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's advisory sessions on charge loss while parked (Sales and Service) were built specifically for this scenario. The Service version equips advisors to explain the behavior; the Sales version sets the expectation before it becomes a complaint.

### #7 Staff Cannot Accurately Distinguish BEV, HEV, PHEV, and E-REV Powertrains

<b>Surface</b>	Sales floor primarily; also service intake
<b>Why It Matters</b>	A Cox Automotive study found fewer than half of dealerships felt well-prepared to sell EVs. Staff regularly conflates HEV with PHEV, misrepresents E-REV range capabilities, and confuses charging requirements. When the wrong mental model is applied to a vehicle at point of sale, misaligned expectations follow — directly damaging post-delivery CSI.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's powertrain foundation sessions establish consistent definitions across all four electrified types for both Sales and Service teams. The GEVA advisory standard: powertrain vocabulary is not optional.

### #8 Staff Cannot Explain OTA Software Updates or the Behavior Changes That Follow

<b>Surface</b>	Service drive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	Over-the-air (OTA) software updates are a defining operating condition for modern EVs. They can change regenerative braking behavior, charging limits, and range estimates — sometimes noticeably, overnight. Customers who experience post-update behavioral changes arrive at the service drive convinced the vehicle is malfunctioning. Service advisors without OTA literacy cannot distinguish a software-driven change from a defect. This generates unnecessary ROs and CSI damage.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's sessions on software-driven vehicle behavior address OTA update literacy for both Sales and Service teams. OTA literacy is a recurring advisory session topic.

## SEVERITY 3 CUSTOMER EXPECTATION MISALIGNMENT

*Gaps set before or at the sale that compound into repeat service visits and CSI damage*

### #9 PHEV Customers Not Told It Must Be Plugged In to Access Electric-Only Range

<b>Surface</b>	Sales floor
<b>Why It Matters</b>	PHEVs are routinely sold without staff explaining that achieving electric-only range requires plugging in. Customers who never plug in treat the vehicle as a conventional hybrid and never access the feature they may have paid a premium for — or worse, feel misled when they learn about it post-delivery. Consumer Reports data shows PHEVs generate 80% more reported problems than ICE vehicles, partly because dual-system complexity is never explained at point of sale.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's charging and refueling behavior sessions address PHEV plug-in requirements directly. GEVA's buyer typology sessions identify the PHEV buyer profile and the explanation cadence required at point of sale.

## #10 Customers Not Set Up With Charging Apps and Home Charging Before Delivery

<b>Surface</b>	Sales floor (pre-delivery gap); post-sale anxiety surfaces at service drive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	The first week of EV ownership is the highest-anxiety window. Customers who arrive home without a configured charging app, without home charging context, and without a clear understanding of L1/L2 charging options generate callbacks, service drive visits, and negative reviews. Staff shortcutting the pre-delivery checklist to protect time creates exponentially more service drive overhead within the first 30 days.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's home charging sessions (Sales and Service) and charging behavior sessions equip staff to close the pre-delivery education gap consistently. Charge level literacy is reinforced at the service advisor level through dedicated advisory content.

## #11 Public Charging Network Complexity Surprises Customers — Multiple Apps, Broken Stations, Cost Confusion

<b>Surface</b>	Post-sale; surfaces at service drive when customers report 'the car won't charge'
<b>Why It Matters</b>	J.D. Power's 2025 Public Charging Study found overall charging satisfaction fell even as reliability improved — because cost and ease of payment created new friction. Customers unprepared for network-specific apps, variable pricing, and occasional failed charging sessions arrive at the service drive reporting a vehicle problem. Service advisors without public charging literacy cannot distinguish a network issue from a vehicle defect, creating misdiagnosed ROs.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's public charging network sessions (Sales and Service) address network literacy directly. Charging behavior and infrastructure context is reinforced across the recurring advisory calendar.

## #12 Used EV Buyers Have No Battery Degradation Baseline — Arrive Expecting New-Car Range

<b>Surface</b>	Sales floor (used department); service drive post-purchase
<b>Why It Matters</b>	Used EV transactions generate disproportionate post-sale complaints because neither sales staff nor buyers have a shared framework for expected battery degradation. A three-year-old BEV with 15% capacity loss is operating normally. But a customer who expected new-car range treats this as a defect — and the service advisor who can't explain battery degradation curves confirms the misperception by saying 'we found nothing wrong.'
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's used EV advisory sessions (Sales and Service) were built specifically for this gap. They equip staff to set battery degradation expectations at point of sale and give service advisors the language to explain normal capacity behavior post-purchase.

## #13 Customers Surprised by Seasonal Performance Shifts — Winter Range, Reduced Regen, Slower Charging

<b>Surface</b>	Service drive (primarily winter); sales floor in northern markets
<b>Why It Matters</b>	Cold weather creates a cluster of EV behaviors that customers interpret as defects: reduced range, slower charging, reduced or eliminated regenerative braking, and increased cabin heating demand. None of these are defects. All are normal operating conditions. Without pre-sale framing, every first winter becomes a service drive event. CSI data consistently reflects this seasonal spike.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's environmental impact and real-world range sessions directly address seasonal behavior for both Sales and Service teams. This framing is reinforced on a recurring basis across the advisory calendar.

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## SEVERITY 4 SERVICE DRIVE OPERATIONAL FRICTION

*EV-specific behaviors that create misdiagnosis, unnecessary ROs, and clogged service bays*

### #14 Service Advisors Can't Distinguish Normal EV Behavior From Actual Defects

<b>Surface</b>	Service drive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	EV service satisfaction consistently lags ICE vehicle satisfaction, primarily due to untrained frontline staff. Both failure modes are expensive: over-diagnosing wastes technician time and drives up RO counts; dismissing actual concerns damages CSI and creates safety risk. Service advisors without EV literacy default to one extreme or the other because they have no reliable framework for 'normal.'
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's service-focused advisory sessions explicitly map normal vs. abnormal electrified vehicle behaviors. The 'Bring to the Next Session When:' framing in every session gives staff a clear boundary for what to handle on the floor vs. what to bring forward — without pulling advisors out of their operational lane.

### #15 Regenerative Braking Wear Pattern Triggers False Alarm Brake Inspections and Misrepresentation

<b>Surface</b>	Service drive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	EV and HEV brake rotors accumulate surface rust faster than ICE vehicles because friction braking is used infrequently. Service advisors unfamiliar with regenerative braking systems flag minimal brake pad wear or rotor surface condition as a safety concern, recommend unnecessary brake service, and give customers inaccurate information about their vehicle. This drives unnecessary repair costs and damages trust when customers research and discover the behavior is normal.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's energy recovery and charging behavior sessions cover regenerative braking system behavior for service teams. Service-lane interpretation of EV-specific wear patterns is a recurring advisory session topic.

### #16 PHEV Dual-Drivetrain Complexity Creates Disproportionate Service Volume

<b>Surface</b>	Service drive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	Consumer Reports reliability data shows PHEVs generate 80% more reported problems than ICE-only vehicles. The dual drivetrain — a combustion engine, an electric motor, and the integration systems between them — creates a larger surface area for issues and requires service advisors to triage across two completely different powertrain contexts. Advisors who lack PHEV-specific knowledge misroute repairs, misdiagnose complaints, and create warranty claim confusion.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's PHEV-specific advisory content covers dual-drivetrain service context for both Sales and Service teams. PHEV is one of GEVA's four core powertrain focus areas addressed in every advisory engagement.

### #17 12-Volt Battery Drain Surprises Service Staff — Treated as BEV Defect

<b>Surface</b>	Service drive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	Every BEV still carries a 12-volt auxiliary battery that powers safety, lighting, and interior systems. Service advisors unfamiliar with this architecture diagnose 12-volt battery failures as high-voltage system defects, escalate unnecessarily, and generate extended diagnostic time. Customers are told the vehicle needs significant work when the repair is routine — and CSI suffers from the confusion surrounding the explanation.

<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's BEV architecture sessions address 12-volt system context as part of foundational powertrain orientation. Service-specific framing is included in the Service session variants.
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## SEVERITY 5 LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION FAILURES

*How staff explains EV behavior creates problems — even when the underlying knowledge is present*

### #18 Staff Defaults to ICE Mental Models When Explaining EV Behavior

<b>Surface</b>	Sales floor and service drive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	Staff trained on ICE vehicles apply familiar analogies that are technically inaccurate for electrified powertrains. Describing state-of-charge as 'like a fuel gauge' misleads customers on charge management behavior. Describing an HEV's battery as 'charged by driving' omits the ICE-as-generator component and creates incomplete expectations. Inaccurate analogies build on themselves — customer misunderstanding at sale becomes a service complaint post-delivery.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's advisory standard enforces powertrain-accurate language across all four electrified types. Powertrain foundation sessions establish the correct vocabulary for both Sales and Service teams. HEV accuracy — charging via regenerative braking AND the ICE acting as a generator while driving.

### #19 Service Advisors Use 'Nothing Is Wrong' as a Dismissal Rather Than an Education Moment

<b>Surface</b>	Service drive
<b>Why It Matters</b>	The J.D. Power 2025 CSI Study confirmed that communication shortfalls remain a top driver of service dissatisfaction. 'Nothing is wrong with your vehicle' is technically accurate in most EV anxiety visits — but it lands as dismissal when delivered without explanation. The customer leaves the service drive feeling unheard, and the behavior that triggered the visit (range fluctuation, parasitic drain, regen changes) will trigger the same anxiety again. The CSI score reflects the interaction quality, not just the repair outcome.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	Every GEVA Service session equips advisors with explanation frameworks — not just diagnostic conclusions. The advisory premise: normal behavior without explanation equals CSI damage — is embedded in every service-facing session.

### #20 EV Buyer Typology Not Applied — Staff Uses a Single Script Across All Electrified Customers

<b>Surface</b>	Sales floor
<b>Why It Matters</b>	Digital Dealer and Urban Science research both document that EV buyers arrive with significantly more questions and concerns than ICE buyers — and that their expectations vary dramatically by powertrain type and buyer profile. A first-time BEV buyer requires a different delivery conversation than a PHEV conquest buyer from an ICE vehicle. Staff who apply a single script fail both. The result is an expectation gap that surfaces in the first 30 days.
<b>GEVA Addresses It</b>	GEVA's buyer typology sessions (Sales and Service) address this directly. They map buyer profiles to powertrain types and equip staff to calibrate the delivery conversation before the vehicle leaves the lot.

# CATEGORY SEVERITY SUMMARY

Rank	Category	Primary Impact	Pain Points Covered
1	<b>Turnover &amp; Continuity</b>	Structural — compounds with every departure	<b>#1 – #4</b>
2	<b>Knowledge Gaps</b>	Direct CSI risk at point of sale and service drive	<b>#5 – #8</b>
3	<b>Customer Expectation Misalignment</b>	Repeat visit driver; first-year ownership anxiety	<b>#9 – #13</b>
4	<b>Service Drive Operational Friction</b>	Unnecessary ROs; misdiagnosis; technician time waste	<b>#14 – #17</b>
5	<b>Language &amp; Communication Failures</b>	Multiplies all other categories when unaddressed	<b>#18 – #20</b>