

Santa Needs a New Sleigh but first He Needs Auto Financing Tips

His Reindeer Share Helpful Suggestions
From www.AutoFinancing101.org



The holiday season is rapidly approaching, and Santa just realized he has a problem. His sleigh is getting old and won't be able to make it around the world to deliver toys to all the good girls and boys. Santa needs a new sleigh, but he doesn't know where to begin.

Luckily, Santa's eight reindeer – plus Rudolph – have some advice on financing a sleigh that they learned on AWARE's helpful Web site – www.AutoFinancing101.org. Each reindeer has an important tip for Santa as he prepares to purchase and finance his new sleigh!

DASHER, the speediest reindeer, is quick to tell Santa that the first step he should take is to **build a budget**. He must create a price range for his sleigh and stick to it, and make sure to factor in vehicle related costs outside of the monthly payment, such as insurance, maintenance and gas costs. Dasher tells Santa to check out AWARE's Learning Suite at <http://www.AutoFinancing101.org/LearningSuite> for tools such as the downloadable Affordability Gauge, which will help him calculate his budget, taking all vehicle related costs into consideration.

DANCER, the graceful reindeer, elegantly reminds Santa to take the time to do his homework and **conduct research**. According to Dancer, Santa should gather all the information he can find – using the Internet, buying guides and consumer publications – to learn about the sleighs on his short list. The big guy should also make sure he understands the key differences between buying and leasing, so he and Mrs. Claus can make a choice which best suits their needs and circumstances.

PRANCER, the most powerful reindeer, knows the power of good credit, and authoritatively reminds Santa that credit history affects the rate at which one can finance a vehicle. He tells Santa to **review his credit report**. That way, he'll know what creditors will see – and can correct any errors he may find. He can also take any steps necessary to improve his credit score. Prancer tells Santa he can get free copies of his credit report once a year from each of the three nationwide credit reporting companies by calling (877) 322-8228 or visiting www.annualcreditreport.com.

VIXEN is a beautiful, powerful reindeer with important advice for Santa: **comparison shop**. She tells Santa to compare the interest rates ("APR") and other financing terms offered by several different sources, such as banks, credit unions, and dealers. There are thousands of sources of financing for vehicle purchases, and in this highly competitive marketplace it's smart to check

multiple sources. That way, says Vixen, Santa can ensure he has the information he needs to finance a beautiful, powerful sleigh!

COMET brings happiness and wonder to the world. But he tells Santa that he doesn't want to have to wonder what the dealer is talking about when it comes to financing. Comet encourages Santa to ***become familiar with common terms*** he's likely to hear or read in the course of purchasing or financing a vehicle – such as down payment, fixed- and variable-rate financing, and on- and off-site financing. Santa can learn about many familiar terms in AWARE's glossary: <http://AutoFinancing101.org/learningsuite/AWAREGlossary.pdf>.

CUPID brings love and joy to the world. She tells Santa that he'll love his new sleigh if he obtains the optional services he wants and needs. Cupid advises Santa to ***understand the value and price of optional services***, such as credit insurance, guaranteed auto protection, and extended service contracts. If he does not want these services, he need not sign for them.

DONNER's original name was Dunder, which means "thunder" in Dutch. Donner reminds Santa to ***negotiate***. He tells Santa to remain calm, and take his time negotiating the price of the sleigh, as well as the financing terms he is offered.

BLITZEN is known as the lightning reindeer, but she tells Santa ***not*** to read his contract at lightning speed. Instead, he should ***read the contract carefully*** and ask questions about anything he does not understand.

RUDOLPH's bright red nose guides Santa's sleigh. Rudolph also has good guidance for Santa when it comes to financing his new sleigh. He reminds Santa that once he brings his new sleigh back to the North Pole, he must fulfill his financing obligations and ***make payments on time***. Late or missed payments can incur late fees and may even cause a vehicle to be repossessed, permanently. A bad payment record would also show up on Santa's credit report, damaging his ability to get credit in the future. This would be terrible, as Santa needs his sleigh for many Christmases to come!

Santa is very grateful for his reindeer's great advice and promises to share all the cookies he finds by the children's trees this year!

AWARE was formed by the vehicle financing industry to build a greater understanding among consumers about how auto financing works. The group's primary initiative is its Web site, www.AutoFinancing101.org, which is available in both English and Spanish.