



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers that Highlight Brand Value Through Both Process and Appeal Are Best Positioned to Satisfy Customers

IKEA Ranks Highest in Customer Satisfaction among Cabinet Brands

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 16 May 2012 — While aesthetics and functionality are important to consumers when choosing new kitchen cabinets, brands that differentiate themselves throughout the shopping and purchase process are best positioned to satisfy customers, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Kitchen Cabinet Satisfaction StudySM released today.

The study, now in its fifth year, measures customer satisfaction with kitchen cabinets by measuring five factors: design features (such as the variety of cabinet colors/finishes and range of sizes and shapes available); ordering and delivery (including ease of ordering, condition of products at delivery and timeliness of delivery); price; operational performance (including smoothness of drawer slides and sturdiness of cabinet joinery); and warranty.

The study finds that one-third of customers rely mostly on the retailers when shopping for kitchen cabinets, placing heavy emphasis on the in-store product displays, sales staff recommendations, and retailer website.

“While the majority of customers indicate purchasing their kitchen cabinets through a retailer and not directly from the manufacturer, a key opportunity for manufacturers to differentiate their brand is through their in-store displays,” said Christina Cooley, senior manager of the home improvement practice at J.D. Power and Associates. “Manufacturers have the opportunity to communicate their brand value to potential customers by showcasing the brand’s function and style offerings.”

For example, some brands have seized the opportunity to position themselves as “green,” according to Cooley. The study finds that not only do the cabinet brands with the highest overall customer satisfaction have an image for being environmentally responsible and for being certified by a green accreditation program, but their customers are also willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. One-fourth (25%) of customers who purchased kitchen cabinets are aware of green accreditation programs for kitchen cabinet manufacturers.

IKEA ranks highest in overall customer satisfaction among cabinet manufacturers for the first time in the study with a score of 776 on a 1,000-point scale. IKEA performs particularly well in three of the five factors: ordering and delivery, price, and warranty. Following IKEA in the rankings are American Woodmark (767) and Thomasville (763).

The study also finds that the ordering and delivery factor remains the most influential factor contributing to overall satisfaction among kitchen cabinet customers. Though 80 percent of customers indicate that the sales person informed them on how to go through the ordering process, customers of the highest-ranked brands more consistently received that information. On average, it took 18 days for customers to receive all pieces/parts of their entire order. In addition, 14 percent of customers indicate that their cabinets were damaged upon delivery.

“It is not surprising that brands with customers who indicate having a more difficult ordering process or issues with receiving their cabinets late or damaged end up being more negatively viewed by their customers, even if the manufacturer wasn’t directly involved in those processes,” said Cooley. “For this reason, it’s critical that the manufacturers work closely with their distribution channels to ensure a positive customer experience.”

For consumers who are shopping for kitchen cabinets, J.D. Power and Associates offers the following tips:

- Make sure the retailer/dealer clearly explains the ordering and delivery process with you so you know exactly what to expect. Don’t be afraid to ask questions to make sure you fully understand the process.
- Shop multiple brands so you’re aware of the various offerings available. During a remodel, consumers tend to spend an average of \$4,400 on kitchen cabinets alone, which is a sizeable investment. More than one-third of customers indicate that they did not consider other brands other than the one they purchased.
- Make sure to think about your practical needs, as well as what style best represents you and how you want your home to appear. Some of customers’ most-frequently cited desired features include hidden door hinges; microwave shelf; pull-out waste and recycling containers; lazy Susan features; and crown/trim molding.

The 2012 U.S. Kitchen Cabinet Satisfaction Study is based on responses from more than 900 customers who purchased kitchen cabinets within the previous 12 months. The study was fielded in January and February 2012.

About J.D. Power and Associates

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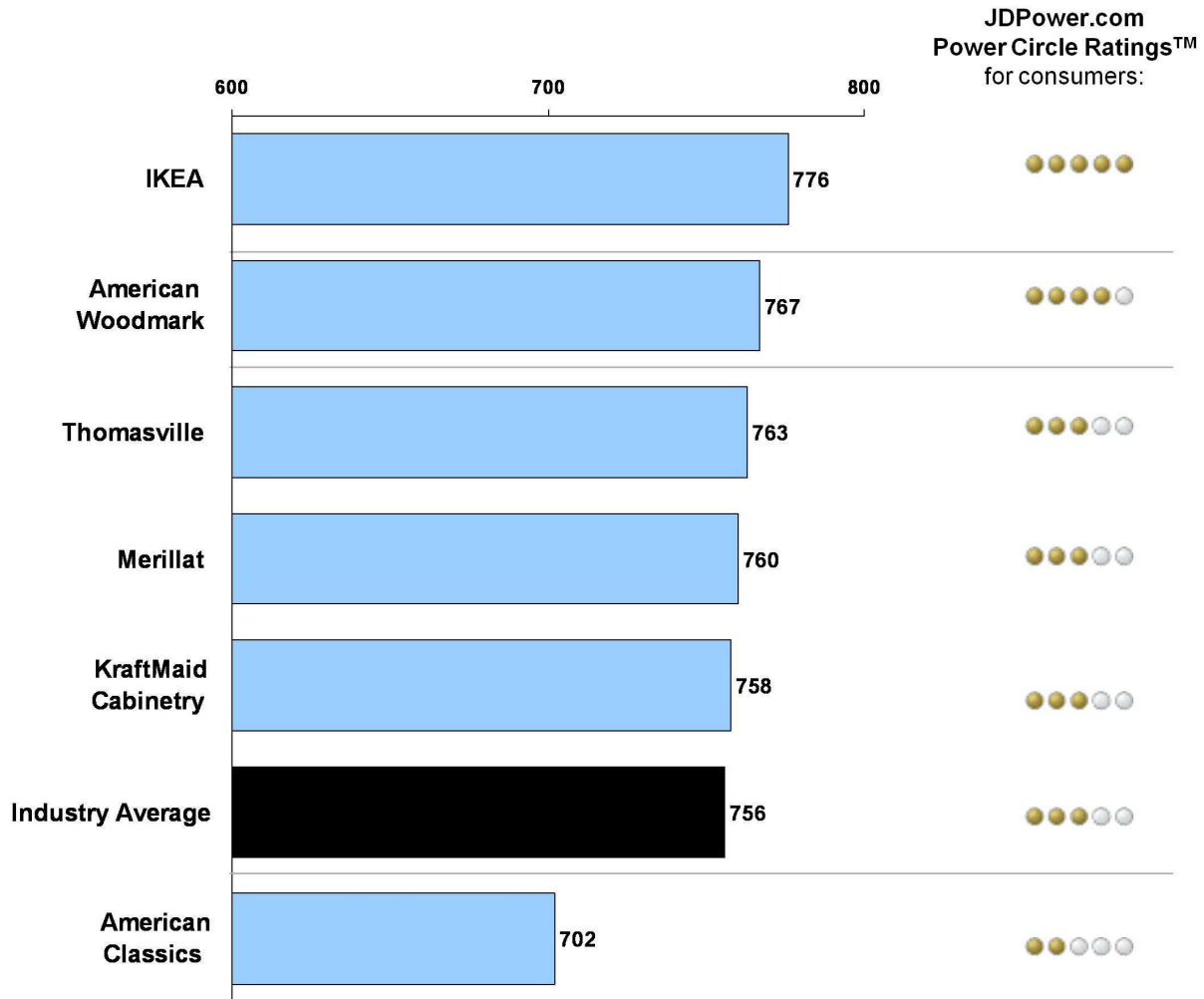
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NOTE: One chart follows.

J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Kitchen Cabinet Satisfaction StudySM

Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Power Circle Ratings Legend

- Among the best
- Better than most
- About average
- The rest

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Kitchen Cabinet Satisfaction StudySM

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