

## Press Release

### **J.D. Power Asia Pacific Reports: Understanding the Viewpoint of Customers during the Product Planning and Design Stages Is Key to Increasing Customer Loyalty**

Honda N-ONE; Subaru Forester; Toyota Alphard; and Volkswagen Polo  
Rank Highest in Their Respective Segments in New-Vehicle Appeal in Japan

**TOKYO: 26 September 2013** — Owner satisfaction with their new vehicle's appeal increases in 2013, particularly in the categories of engine/ transmission and fuel economy, according to the J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2013 Japan Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study<sup>SM</sup> released today.

The study, now in its third year, measures what gratifies owners with their vehicle's performance and design during the first two to nine months of ownership. Overall APEAL scores are based on owner evaluations of 95 attributes grouped into 10 categories of vehicle performance: exterior; interior; storage and space; audio/ entertainment/ navigation; seats; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC); dynamics (driving performance); engine/ transmission; visibility and driving safety; and fuel economy. Overall APEAL scores, which indicate the product appeal of vehicles, are based on a 1,000-point scale.

The overall industry APEAL index score averages 697 in 2013, six points higher than in 2012. The largest improvement in 2013 is in the engine/ transmission category, which increases by 12 points year over year. The fuel economy and seats categories each improve by seven points in 2013. Additionally, the exterior category, which has the greatest impact (approximately 25%) on a vehicle's overall appeal, averages 721—a three-point improvement from 2012.

"There is a strong correlation between APEAL scores and brand repurchase and recommendation intention of vehicle owners," said Atsushi Kawahashi, director of the automotive division at J.D. Power Asia Pacific. "Increasing customer loyalty is important from the perspective of maintaining business growth. For such a high-impact category as exterior, it becomes increasingly important for automakers to consider the perspective of customers at the product planning and design stages."

At the segment level, the mini-car segment, which accounts for 35 percent of new-vehicle sales in Japan, improves by 20 points to 682, partially due to a significant 35-point increase in the engine/ transmission category. The scores for fuel economy in the mini-car and compact segments have increased by 14 points and 21 points, respectively.

There are no significant changes in the compact (677), midsize (716) and minivan (711) segments.

#### **2013 APEAL Ranking Highlights**

Lexus is the highest-ranked nameplate for a second consecutive year, with an overall APEAL score of 831. Mercedes Benz (787) ranks second and Audi (775) ranks third.

The Volkswagen Polo ranks highest in the compact segment for a second consecutive year. The Toyota Alphard and all-new models Honda N-ONE and Subaru Forester also rank highest in their respective segments. The top three models by segment are:

- **Mini-car segment:** Honda N-ONE ranks highest, followed by the Daihatsu Mira Cocoa and Honda N BOX.
- **Compact segment:** Volkswagen Polo ranks highest, followed by Toyota Spade, Nissan Juke, and Suzuki Swift and Toyota AQUA in a tie.
- **Midsize segment:** Subaru Forester ranks highest, followed by Mazda CX-5 and Volkswagen Golf/ Golf Cabriolet/ Golf Variant in a tie.
- **Minivan segment:** Toyota Alphard ranks highest, followed by Toyota Vellfire and Toyota Estima.

The 2013 Japan Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study is based on responses from 11,210 purchasers of new vehicles in the first two to nine months of ownership, and includes 16 automotive brands and 108 models. The study was fielded in May 2013.

The Japan Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study is one of eight consumer-based benchmark studies conducted by J.D. Power Asia Pacific in Japan. Other 2013 studies conducted by J.D. Power Asia Pacific in Japan include:

- The 2013 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index Study, which measures overall customer satisfaction with winter tires, was released in May.
- The 2013 Japan Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) Study, which measures satisfaction with the new-vehicle sales process, was released in August.
- The 2013 Japan Initial Quality Study (IQS), which measures problems experienced by new-vehicle owners during the first two to nine months of ownership, was released in late August.
- The 2013 Japan Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) Study, which measures overall customer satisfaction with service performed at automotive dealer facilities, was released in late September.
- The 2013 Japan Original Equipment Tire Satisfaction Study, which measures customer satisfaction with original equipment tires, will be released in October.
- The 2013 Japan Navigation Systems Customer Satisfaction Index Study, which measures customer satisfaction with OEMs and aftermarket navigation systems, will be released in October.
- The 2013 Japan Replacement Tire Satisfaction Study, which measures customer satisfaction with replacement tires, will be released in October.

#### **About J.D. Power Asia Pacific**

J.D. Power Asia Pacific has offices in Tokyo, Singapore, Beijing, Shanghai and Bangkok that conduct customer satisfaction research and provide consulting services in the automotive, information technology and finance industries. Together, the five offices bring the language of customer satisfaction to consumers and businesses in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand. Information regarding J.D. Power Asia Pacific and its products can be accessed through the Internet at [japan.jdpower.com](http://japan.jdpower.com). Media email contact: [cc-group@jdpower.co.jp](mailto:cc-group@jdpower.co.jp)

#### **About J.D. Power**

J.D. Power is a global marketing information services company providing performance improvement, social media and customer satisfaction insights and solutions. The company's quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power has offices in North/South America, Europe and Asia Pacific. For more information on [car reviews and ratings](#), [car insurance](#), [health insurance](#), [cell phone ratings](#), and more, please visit [JDPower.com](http://JDPower.com). J.D. Power is a business unit of McGraw Hill Financial.

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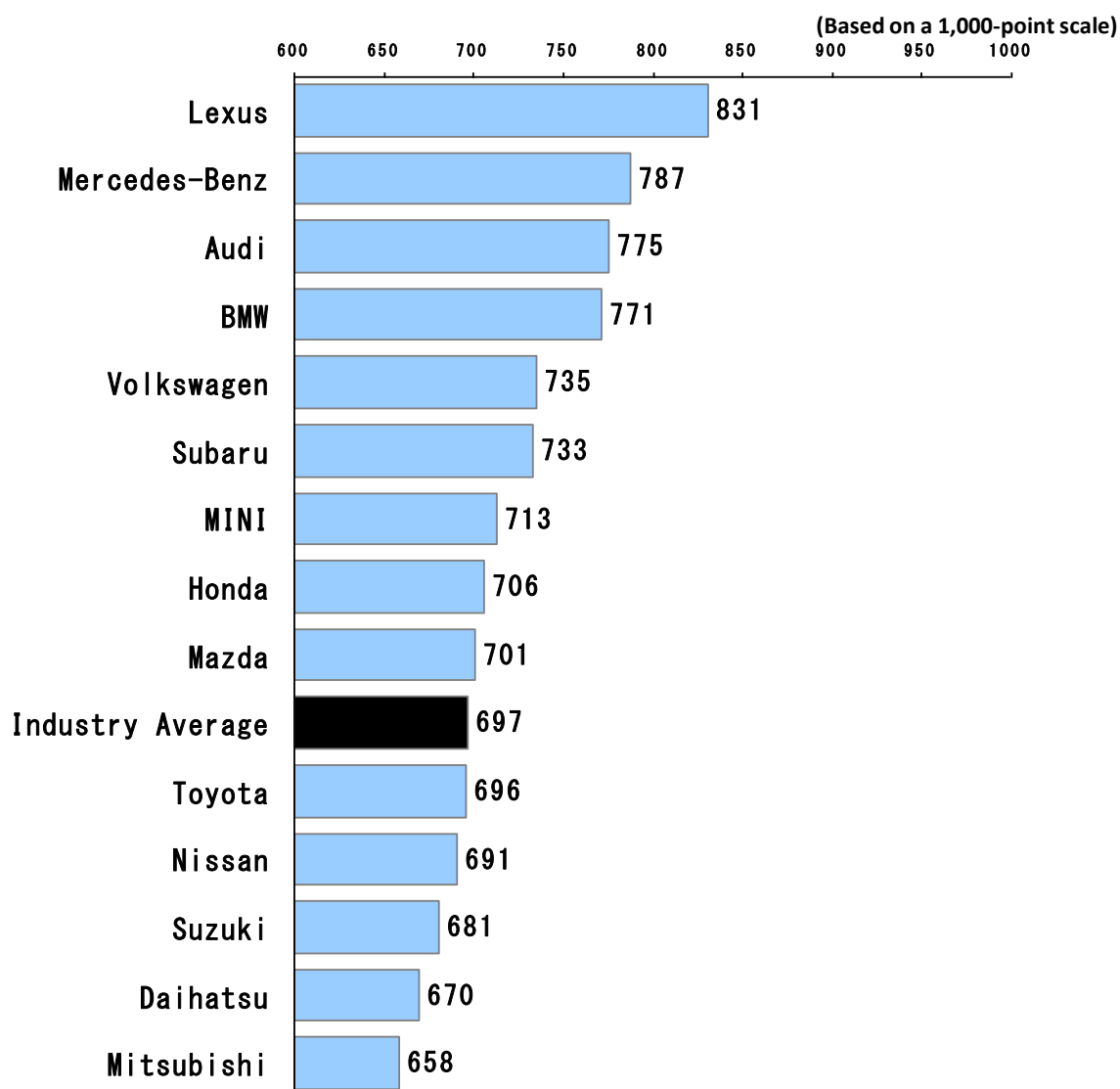
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NOTE: Three charts follow.

# J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2013 Japan Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study<sup>SM</sup>

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## 2013 Nameplate APEAL Ranking



NOTE: Included in the study, but not ranked due to small sample size are Fiat and Volvo.

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Source: J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2013 Japan Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study<sup>SM</sup>

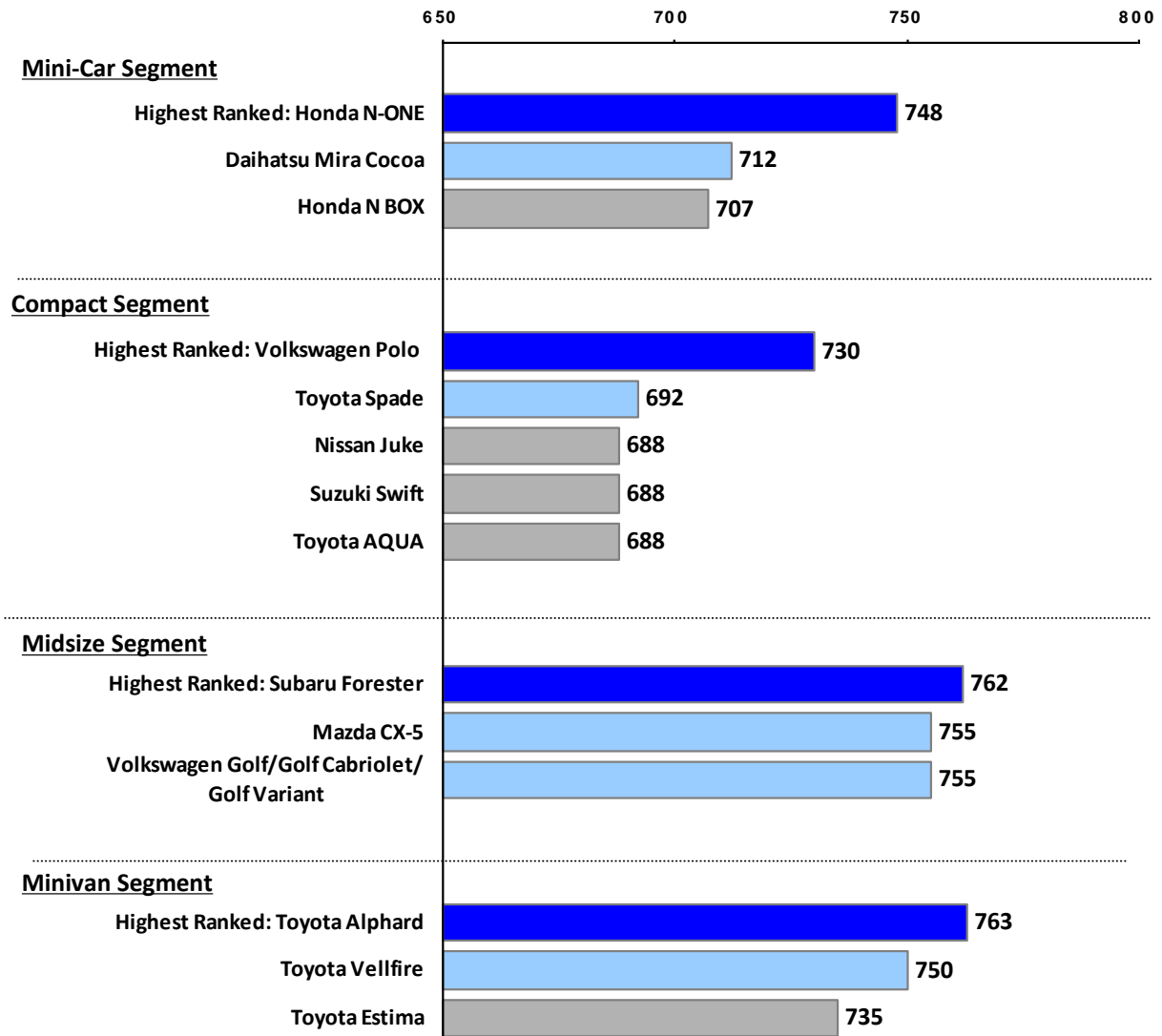
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# J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2013 Japan Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study<sup>SM</sup>

## Top Three Models per Segment

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Note: There must be at least three models with sufficient sample in any given award segment for an award to be issued, thus no large segment awards are issued.

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