



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: A Satisfying Website Experience Leads to a Higher Likelihood to Test Drive a Vehicle

Smart Ranks Highest in Overall Satisfaction among Automotive Manufacturer Websites

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 28 January 2013 — New-vehicle shoppers are more likely to test drive a vehicle following a satisfying experience on an automotive manufacturer’s website on either a desktop or tablet, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2013 Manufacturer Website Evaluation StudySM (MWES)—Wave 1 released today.

The semiannual study, now in its 14th year, measures the usefulness of automotive manufacturer websites during the new-vehicle shopping process by examining four key measures (in order of importance): information/content, navigation, appearance and speed.

The ability of new-vehicle shoppers to find information on a website easily and quickly has a direct impact on their decision to continue to shop that vehicle. For example, the study finds that among automotive shoppers on desktops who are “delighted” with their experience on a manufacturer’s website (satisfaction index score of greater than 900 on a 1,000-point scale), 72 percent are more likely to test drive a vehicle after visiting the manufacturer website, compared with only 25 percent of “disappointed” shoppers (satisfaction index score of 550 or less).

“Finding the right balance of content, ease of navigation and site speed is what ultimately drives new-vehicle shopper satisfaction with the website,” said Arianne Walker, senior director of media & marketing solutions at J.D. Power and Associates. “Satisfaction with a website increases the likelihood that shoppers will visit a dealership and test drive a vehicle.”

In addition to a website that works well across platforms, Walker said the key is for automakers to develop a site that is reflective of their brand image and is able to meet the needs of their shoppers.

“While there are some common elements across all websites, each site should have a unique look and feel and align with the brand’s image,” said Walker.

The study also finds that tablet ownership has risen 23 percent during the past six months among consumers who evaluated a site and is further changing the device mix automakers must accommodate for their online shoppers. To accommodate tablet device shoppers, many automakers direct shoppers to a desktop version of their website; however, depending on the device and automaker, shoppers may also be directed to a mobile version of the website. Overall satisfaction among tablet users who are likely to be directed to a desktop website is 820, compared with 798 among those who are directed to a mobile website. In addition, satisfaction is higher across all four measures when tablet users utilize a desktop website.

“Shoppers on a tablet are able to access all of the shopping information when they’re directed to a desktop website, compared with a mobile site,” said Walker. “However, it is critical that the desktop sites be designed to accommodate tablet navigational needs.”

While some shoppers are using their tablet to explore manufacturer websites while they’re on the go, the study finds that shoppers are more likely to access automotive information while at home (37%) than while shopping or running errands (16%). Regardless of the location where they shop, 92 percent of new-vehicle shoppers who own a tablet, or own both a tablet and a smartphone, expect to have the same content available on a desktop website on all devices.

“Shoppers want the same content-rich experience, whether they’re on a desktop, tablet or smartphone,” said Walker. “The challenge for automakers is creating sites that meet the needs of shoppers across platforms. The industry has generally chosen to maintain two sites, rather than a third one for tablet shoppers, reducing the burden of maintaining and keeping information updated and consistent across three separate sites.”

The smart brand website ranks highest in overall satisfaction with a score of 845. Jeep ranks second with a score of 840, followed by Lincoln (835) and Acura (834). Overall satisfaction with automotive brand websites averages 812.

The Manufacturer Website Evaluation Study—Wave 1 is based on responses from 10,006 new-vehicle shoppers who indicate they will be in the market for a new vehicle within the next 24 months. The study was fielded in November 2012.

About J.D. Power and Associates

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is a global marketing information services company providing forecasting, 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. For more information on car reviews and ratings, car insurance, health insurance, cell phone ratings, and more, please visit JDPower.com. J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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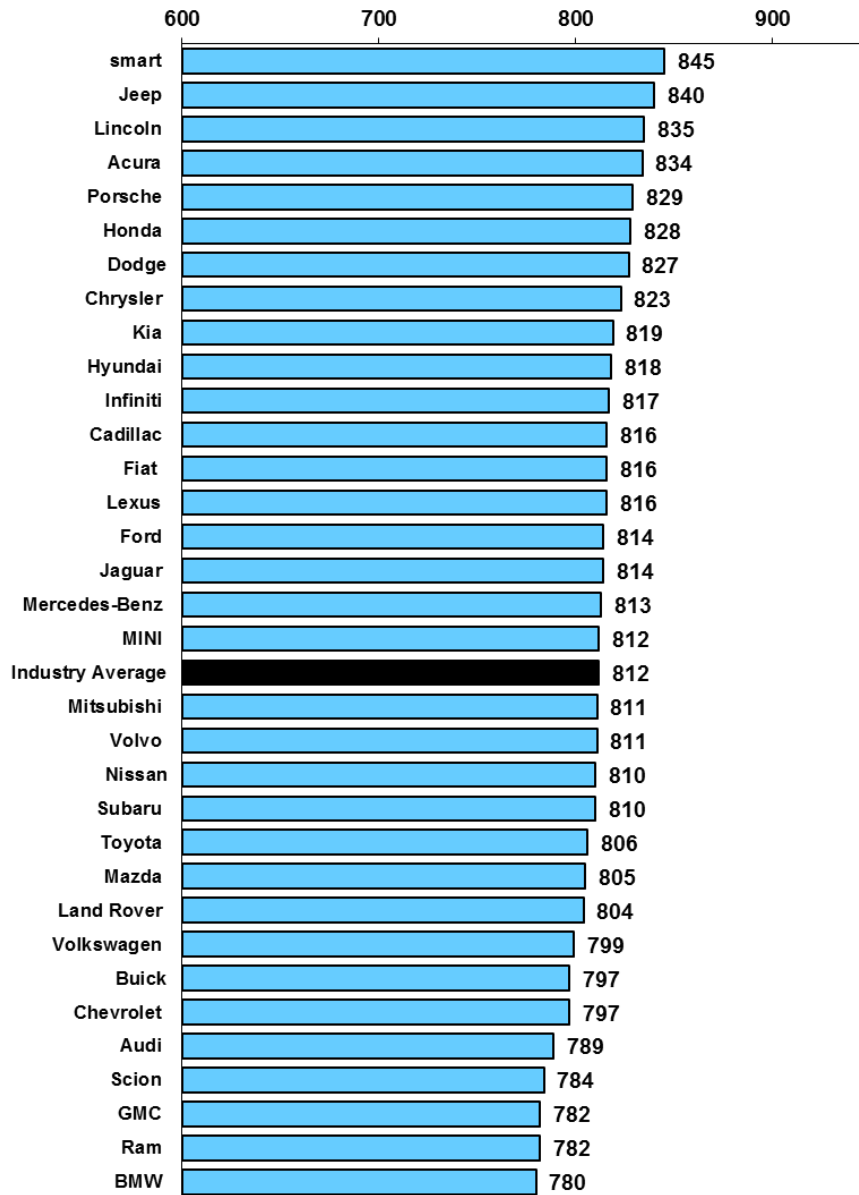
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NOTE: One chart follows.

J.D. Power and Associates 2013 Manufacturer Website Evaluation StudySM —Wave 1

Manufacturer Website Ranking

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2013 Manufacturer Website Evaluation StudySM—Wave 1

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