



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Website Appearance Is a Key Differentiator in Shopper Satisfaction with Auto Manufacturer Websites

Honda Ranks Highest among Manufacturer Websites in Satisfying New-Vehicle Shoppers For a Third Consecutive Time

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 2 August 2011 — Website appearance—including design elements and color schemes—is driving many brand-level increases and decreases in shopper satisfaction with automotive manufacturer websites, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2011 Manufacturer Website Evaluation StudySM (MWES)—Wave 2 released today.

The semiannual study, now in its 12th year, measures the usefulness of automotive manufacturer websites during the new-vehicle shopping process. New-vehicle shoppers evaluate websites in four key areas: appearance, speed, navigation and information/content.

The study finds that many of the automotive brands that have experienced significant improvements in overall satisfaction from the prior wave have also made considerable gains in the appearance measure. These brands, which include Buick, Jeep, Volkswagen and smart, have introduced a variety of changes that have elevated appearance satisfaction with their sites, such as:

- Reducing the amount of visual clutter on the home page to help shoppers find the model they want and quickly access model details
- Streamlining the main models menu by incorporating white space and using fewer links. This reduces the appearance of clutter and makes it easier for shoppers to find model-level content
- Using larger font sizes for menus and more space for links to enhance readability
- Ensuring new text content is well organized and provides ample room for vehicle images on the site
- Incorporating the effective use of accent colors (such as using peach in a predominantly silver color scheme) to add brightness and warmth while still maintaining a luxurious appearance

“Aside from attracting shoppers through aesthetic appeal, well-thought-out aspects of website appearance can also enhance website navigation and the speed with which shoppers locate the specific content they want,” said Arianne Walker, director of marketing and media research at J.D. Power and Associates. “Some of the most effective changes in this wave were relatively minor ones, so enhancing the appearance of a website doesn’t necessarily have to entail an expensive, time-consuming site redesign.”

The study also finds that many of the brands with the greatest declines in overall satisfaction from six months ago have introduced changes that have resulted in lower satisfaction with website appearance. Some of these changes include incorporating darker colors into site design schemes and removing colorful accents from model pages.

“Website appearance will continue to be an important part of the overall design strategy as manufacturers execute their site designs across multiple platforms, including mobile devices and tablet computers,” said Walker.

Honda ranks highest among automotive manufacturer websites for usefulness in new-vehicle shopping for a third consecutive time. Honda achieves an index score of 821 on a 1,000-point scale and performs particularly well in three of four measures: information/content, navigation and speed. Following Honda in the rankings are Ford, Lincoln, Nissan and Porsche, in a four-way tie (809 each).

The 2011 Manufacturer Website Evaluation Study—Wave 2 is based on evaluations from more than 10,400 new-vehicle shoppers who indicated they will be in the market for a new vehicle within the next 24 months. The study was fielded in May 2011.

About J.D. Power and Associates

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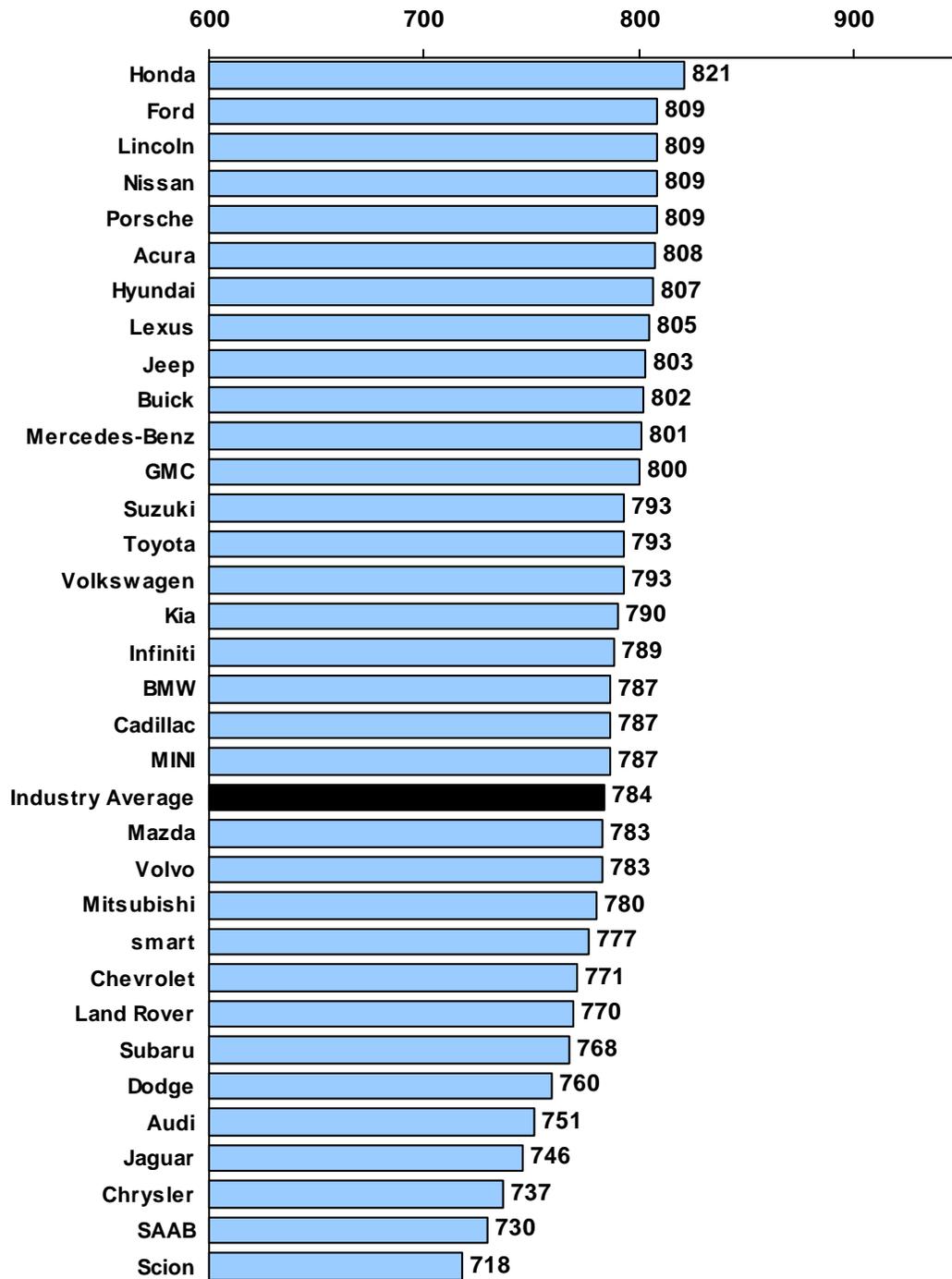
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NOTE: One chart follows.

J.D. Power and Associates 2011 Manufacturer Website Evaluation StudySM—Wave 2

Manufacturer Website Ranking

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2011 Manufacturer Website Evaluation StudySM—Wave 2

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