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INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Many Consumers Don't Like the Alternatives

- Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst, Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com

e are now in the runup to the Los Angeles Auto Show, a show that has come to be known for the introduction of "green" alternative-propulsion vehicles. For decades, California has led the way on environmental protection, often in the form of legislative or regulatory mandates. California consumers have demonstrated an above-average-level taste for "green" vehicles, and so the LA show has taken on a definite tint. The "Green Car of the Year" is named each autumn at the Los Angeles show, and car makers -- always quick to jump on a bandwagon - have decided that California is the place to launch their most environmentally friendly vehicles. At the same time, with even more stringent federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) regulations waiting in the wings, auto manufacturers are more eager than ever to build a market for alternative-propulsion vehicles. If they want to compete in the American market in future years, they are almost compelled

to. Meanwhile, the general media continues to thump the tub for alternative-propulsion vehicles, expressing the opinion that such vehicles will help save the planet from such evils as global climate change and geo-political struggles over oil.

So, as November 2011 dawns, the eyes of the auto industry are increasingly turning to alternative-fuel vehicles. We at Kelley Blue Book expect to see a substantial number of them introduced at the Los Angeles Auto Show. However, the multi-billion-dollar question is, "Will they find the market they need to make them commercially viable?" We're afraid if you asked us at Kelley Blue Book that question today, many of us would have to say no.

Why, you ask? Aren't alternatives the wave of the future? Well, in terms of manufacturer development plans and future marketing efforts they certainly are. In terms of current consumer acceptance and their future prospects with consumers, we'd have to opine that, at best, their future is cloudy.

Two of our recent Kelley Blue Book Quick Polls, fielded and analyzed by Kelley Blue Book Market Intelligence, point out why we are skeptical about future consumer demand for alternativepropulsion vehicles. In one poll we asked our kbb.com visitors, "Would you ever consider purchasing or leasing a hybrid?" A resounding 45 percent of respondents replied, "No, I would never consider a hybrid." That's unequivocal, isn't it? Only 14 percent responded, "Yes, I am thinking about it." And, frankly, that is hardly a statement that yes, they are definitely planning to buy a hybrid.

The other Quick Poll that gives us pause about an easy path to an alternative-propulsion future looked at reactions to a wider swath of vehicles. It asked the question, "Which new high-mileage/greentech vehicle are you most excited about?" Hybrids and plug-in hybrids drew a seven percent response; full electrics drew an eight percent response and, oddly, hydrogen/hydrogen fuel cell vehicles drew a 15 percent positive response,

the equal of EV and hybrids combined. The big winners were "clean diesels" with 20 percent and "40-plus MPG vehicles" with 32 percent. A full 18 percent of poll respondents said they were excited by "none of the above." That should send a cold chill down the spines of car executives who hope to market alternative-propulsion vehicles to the masses in the years ahead.

One might draw two conclusions from this. First, general consumer interest in alternative-propulsion vehicles stems as much from consumers' desire to drive in the carpool lane as it stems from solidly held environmental concerns. Second, as technology for gasoline-powered vehicles improves their miles-per-gallon performance, consumers will see even less reason to buy alternative-propulsion vehicles.

Kelley Blue Book is looking forward to this year's Los Angeles Auto Show, the introduction of the latest alternative-fuel vehicles and tracking these models' performance in today's market.

LATEST NEWS STORIES ON KBB.COM:

Check out the very latest news stories by visiting <u>kbb.com</u> and clicking the the <u>Kbb Top Picks</u> tab on the home page. The following latest news stories by kbb.com's editorial staff went live on the site or were updated during October 2011.

Videos Posted to kbb.com:

Chrysler 200 Video Review

Dodge Charger Video Review

Mercedes-Benz C-Class Video Review

Nissan Leaf Video Review

Written Stories Posted to kbb.com:

10 Tips for First-time Car Buyers

2010 Dodge Viper ACR sets production-car lap record at Nurburgring

2012 Audi TT-RS Track Review

2012 BMW 3 Series Sedan unveiled

2012 Buick Verano: Promising preview drive

2012 Buick Verano First drive

2012 Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 proves its mastery of the Nurburgring

2012 Fiat 500 Pink Ribbon Edition - fashioned to fight breast cancer

2012 Fiat 500 earns top crash marks from IIHS

2012 Fisker Karma gets EPA certified at 52 MPGe, sales begin

2012 Honda CR-V Concept makes first public appearance

2012 Honda Civic Hybrid: The journey of 900 miles

2012 Honda Insight Hybrid -- First look

2012 Lexus CT 200h F Sport Special Edition unveiled

2012 Ram 1500 Mossy Oak Edition revealed

2013 Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 Convertible - LA Auto Show preview

2013 Chevrolet TrailBlazer teased

2013 Ford Escape -- four-cylinder only with two EcoBoost options

2013 Lexus GS 350 with F SPORT Package revealed

ARK Performance Hyundai Veloster - a preview of things to come

Chevrolet EN-V Concept - next generation gets a Bowtie badge

Elon Musk updates Tesla Model S, says Sport variant on the way

Ferrari 599 GTB meets Ferrari F40 in an epic fantasy match race

Ferrari FF Neiman Marcus Special Edition unwrapped

First Drive: 2012 Mazda3 with Skyactiv Technology

GM developing new family of small-displacement Ecotec engines

GM says autonomous vehicle technology could be here by 2020

How to Recommend the Right Compact Sedan

Hyundai developing new 10-speed automatic transmission

IndyCar returning to Detroit in 2012

Mazda Takeri Concept will debut at Tokyo Auto Show

New Chevrolet Colorado mid-size pickup will be sold in America

Nissan's experimental Smart House can get its power from a LEAF

Nissan reveals next-generation CVT and hybrid powertrain

Top 10 Halloween Cars

Toyota prepping hybrid challenger for 2012 Le Mans 24 Hours

NEW-VEHICLE REVIEWS ON KBB.COM:

The following new-vehicle reviews written by kbb.com's editorial staff went live on the site or were updated during October 2011. To see any new-vehicle review from kbb.com's editorial staff, please visit kbb.com and click on the Car Reviews tab, then select the make and model.

2012 Nissan GT-R

When most people think "Nissan," they think of an affordable, fun and rugged line of vehicles. But, there is one Nissan that dares to step into the world of the exotic supercar, delivering performance and a price tag unlike anything Nissan has ever offered, at least in this country. The 2012 Nissan GT-R coupe isn't some base model car with a big motor stuffed under the hood, it's a bona fide high-end performance machine designed from the ground up to take on such lofty names as the Porsche 911, Audi R8 and even the Chevy Corvette Z06...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Honda Pilot

The 2012 Honda Pilot SUV nails the right combination of size, power, ability and value. Not as gargantuan as the Chevy Tahoe or Suburban, the Pilot can still accommodate eight people, has plenty of room for cargo and gets reasonably good gas mileage for its size. On the downside, the Pilot offers only a V6 engine, can't tackle Jeep-style off-road situations, and can only tow up to 4,500 pounds (2,000 pounds for the 2-wheel-drive model). To spur sales, the 2012 Pilot SUV receives new styling that somewhat negates previous complaints about the vehicle's lackluster looks...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Honda CR-Z

The 2012 Honda CR-Z hybrid is a rather special car. In the great tradition of small Honda 2-seaters, the CR-Z hybrid offers a fun, fuel- efficient way to get around. The 2012 Honda CR-Z bristles with flashes of the legendary CRX, with a cozy cabin built for two and big hatchback that opens to a roomy cargo hold. But, unlike the gasoline-only CRX, the 2012 Honda CR-Z hybrid relies on a hybrid gas/electric setup to achieve its miserly fuel consumption figures...

2012 Honda Crosstour

Honda calls its 2012 Crosstour a CUV (Crossover Utility Vehicle), but we're not so sure. The 2012 Honda Crosstour is part wagon, part sedan, part CUV and 100-percent different. Riding on the same platform as the Honda Accord Sedan the Crosstour Wagon is given clearance to do more, with larger springs that elevate it six inches from the ground, and an available all-wheel-drive system that permits the Crosstour safe passage in foul weather...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Nissan Leaf

At a time when the only electric vehicles other manufacturers are showing are the concepts appearing at the auto shows, Nissan has put talk into action by producing the first all-electric mass-produced car. Introduced last year, the Nissan LEAF EV (electric vehicle) ushers in a new dawn of clean, eco-friendly non-oil burners perfect for short jaunts in the urban jungle. While the range of the 2012 Nissan LEAF electric car can't match that of a conventional gasoline-powered hybrid (or even that of a plug-in hybrid like the Chevrolet Volt), it can tackle the normal driving range most people cover in a day, or roughly 100 miles before needing to be recharged...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Honda Accord Sedan

When it comes to family sedans, few cars have the type of owner loyalty and fierce trust as the 2012 Honda Accord Sedan. Generation after generation have come to love Honda's family sedan, a rarity in world where what's hot today is not tomorrow. The 2012 Honda Accord Sedan continues to thrive for a number of reasons. Its design is clean and simple, yet sophisticated enough to attract buyers young and old alike...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

NEW-VEHICLE REVIEWS ON KBB.COM (CONTINUED):

2012 Honda Odyssey

Nobody dreams of growing up one day and driving a minivan, well nobody that we know, anyway. But, like so many things in adult life sometimes circumstances simply dictate need. If you've transitioned from swinging single to swinging a baby basinet, it's time to put away the sports car and climb into a 2012 Honda Odyssey minivan. Why? Because in the world of minivan cool, the Odyssey minivan ranks near the top of its class, and with an excellent reputation for safety, resale and reliability, choosing an Odyssey over a Dodge Caravan or Toyota Sienna won't have you second-guessing your decision...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Mitsubishi i

The recipe for the 2012 Mitsubishi i goes something like this: Take one award-winning small car sold in Europe and Asia, and add an electric powertrain to the mix. Sell 10,000 units. Take everything you've learned from the experience, make a few modifications to meet U.S. safety requirements, and then bring your zero-emissions electric vehicle (EV) to American shores...

2012 Honda Accord Coupe

It wasn't all that long ago that a sporty, affordable coupe was as easy to find as leaves in a forest. But, the rise of the 4-door sports car (think Subaru WRX and Dodge Charger) has left only a scattering of coupes from which to choose. Among the remaining lot are some revived 1960s-era muscle car names from Ford, Chevy and Dodge, and one very unlikely candidate, the 2012 Honda Accord Coupe...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Audi A6

Audi is the Hyundai of the luxury car segment. Which is to say, it's currently enjoying an unprecedented tear. New models and striking designs are generating newfound levels of consumer lust, leading to record sales. The all-new 2012 Audi A6 sedan is not a radical redesign, and the subtle change exemplifies Audi's strategy of going after and BMW and Mercedes-Benz by confidently sticking to its own path...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Scion iQ

You can blame (or thank) MINI Cooper for this. Ever since the cheeky little Brit was reintroduced in 2003, buyers have been going gaga for small, personal city cars. Where small cars used to be cheap, inexpensive transportation, this new breed combines style, personality and performance along with the premium price tag...

2012 Fiat 500 Cabrio

Do you like sipping espressos at sidewalk cafés while chatting above the erratic screams of passing motor scooters? If you answered yes, oui or si, Fiat has a car for you and is bringing it to the States. The Italian automaker is returning to the U.S. after a 27-year absence – a move facilitated by its new relationship with Chrysler – this time as the small-car brand under the Chrysler umbrella...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click <u>here</u>.

2012 Chevrolet Sonic

Some buyers will be drawn to the all-new 2012 Chevrolet Sonic because it's the only subcompact built in the U.S. Far more will be won over by the fact that it's the most well-rounded driver in the segment. As the bow-tie brand's newest answer to subcompact sedans and 5-door hatchbacks like the Honda Fit and Ford Fiesta, the Chevy Sonic comes into the world facing stiff competition...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

NEW-VEHICLE REVIEWS ON KBB.COM (CONTINUED):

2012 Hyundai Veloster

In simplest terms the all-new 2012 Hyundai Veloster is a modestly-priced hatchback with an unusual asymmetrical door arrangement, but in Hyundai's eyes, the Veloster is much more. Hyundai views the Veloster as something of a halo car, albeit at the bottom end of the pricing spectrum. That might sound like a lofty view of what is essentially a restyled Elantra, but having driven the 2012 Veloster and seen the public react to it, we think Hyundai might be onto something with all this halo talk...

2012 Ford Edge

The midsize CUV (Crossover Utility Vehicle) has comfortably stepped into its role as the new family wagon of old. Offering a high seating position, generous ground clearance and excellent use of interior space, vehicles like the 2012 Ford Edge have become indispensable to many. And, thanks to renewed emphasis on ride quality, handling, safety and overall comfort (not to mention attention to detail), large numbers of former sedan and SUV owners are also making the switch...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Ford Escape

In the world of compact CUVs (Crossover Utility Vehicle) the 2012 Ford Escape stands out for a number of reasons. Fresh from a complete makeover that spanned the 2010 and 2011 model run, the 2012 Ford Escape may look like an old friend, but it's been pretty much remade from the ground up. Unlike its closest competitor, the 2012 Honda CR-V, the Escape offers the option of a V6 engine, which not only gives it more power when needed, but provides more towing ability...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Ford Escape Hybrid

Hybrid cars, for the most part, emphasize fuel efficiency over capability. In the real world, however, Americans need their cars to do all manner of chores, which is why so many have switched to some form of CUV or SUV. Believing you shouldn't have to sacrifice one benefit for another, Ford has created the 2012 Escape Hybrid, a rugged, roomy CUV with a hybrid drivetrain that is as easy on the planet as it is on your monthly gasoline budget...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Ford Expedition

Full-size SUVs may no longer be all the rage in cash-strapped America, but like it or not, the need for such vehicles has not gone away. For families with more than four kids, or the need to tow a boat or trailer, a 6-cylinder CUV isn't going to cut it. Thankfully, the 2012 Ford Expedition has plenty of muscle and room to spare, and although the Expedition's fuel economy is not great, it is tolerable considering big Ford's herculean capabilities...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

2012 Ford Explorer

Twenty-odd years ago, Ford's Explorer introduced America to the new wagon, a truck-based SUV large enough to carry the family and all their gear, but not much larger than average mid-size sedan of the day. Over its long run the Explorer had its up and downs, but while the Explorer name carries on into the 21st century, the vehicle that now wears it couldn't be more different from the original. Instead of a truck chassis, the Explorer is wrapped in a unit body, meaning its construction is stamped and welded into a single frame making it both lighter and stronger...

2012 Ford Fusion Hybrid

The hybrid version of Ford's popular Fusion mid-size sedan is a competitive player in the growing hybrid market, offering all the eco-friendly perks that come with hybrid ownership plus a few extra goodies unique to the Ford brand. Where once only the Toyota Camry Hybrid stood in the 2012 Ford Fusion Hybrid's way, it must now contend with newer, more stylish hybrids from Kia (Optima) and Hyundai (Sonata)...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click here.

NEW-VEHICLE REVIEWS ON KBB.COM (CONTINUED):

2012 Ford Flex

The 2012 Ford Flex is not your typical 7-passenger CUV, at least not if looks count for anything. Where most CUVs attempt to mirror SUVs, the Flex takes a decidedly different approach. Its long and boxy silhouette is reminiscent of the big station wagons of the 1960s and 1970s, plus it's lower to the ground than an SUV. And, while competitors like the 2012 Honda Pilot, Dodge Durango and Chevrolet Tahoe may boast about their max towing or off-road ability, the Flex makes no such claims...

2012 Ford F-Series Super Duty

Not only does the full-size heavy-duty pickup truck business continue to thrive, it is the last remaining vehicle category solely controlled by the domestic Big Three. To this end, the 2012 Ford F-Series Super Duty has only three opponents: the Chevrolet Silverado HD/GMC Sierra HD twins, and the Ram 2500/3500...

2012 Ford Taurus

During its long history, the Ford Taurus has experienced both boom years and bust. The original car took the industry by storm and revolutionized the American car industry. But, over time Ford allowed its modern family sedan to grow old and rather long in the tooth. Eventually, the Taurus moved from innovator to rental fleet regular...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click <u>here</u>.

WHAT'S NEW:

Kelley Blue Book Announces 2011 W3 Award Wins for Website and Video Car Review

Kbb.com and Mercedes Benz SLS AMG Video Review Receive W3 Silver Award Recognition

IRVINE, Calif., Nov. 1, 2011 / PRNewswire / -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces two 2011 W3 Award wins. Kelley Blue Book's recently redesigned kbb.com and a 'Mercedes Benz SLS AMG' editorial video review received W3 Silver Award recognition in this year's competition... MORE

Kbb.com Commemorates Chevrolet's 100th Anniversary; Names Top 10 Chevys of All Time

IRVINE, Calif., Nov. 1, 2011 / PRNewswire / -- Kelley Blue Book, the leading provider of new car and used car information today names the Top 10 Chevys of All Time, including the most significant product and design developments in the company's long and storied 100-year history... MORE

Kbb.com Reveals Best Total Cost of Ownership Vehicles among Some of Its Most Researched Cars and Their Biggest Competition

Those Shopping a Chevrolet Cruze or Honda CR-V May Find Toyota Corolla, Hyundai Tucson Offer Better Value

IRVINE, Calif., Oct. 27, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today reports the vehicles with the best Total Cost of Ownership among cross-shopped models for the Chevrolet Cruze and Honda CR-V, two of the most researched models on kbb.com. Both top-selling models, the Cruze and CR-V, offer a diverse list of cross-shopped vehicles on kbb.com. Using cross-shopping data across all segments on kbb.com, Kelley Blue Book determined the best buys against these models for the first five years of ownership... MORE

Kbb.com Names Top 10 Halloween Cars

Kelley Blue Book Expert Editors Provide Vehicles to Complete Favorite Costumes

IRVINE, Calif., Oct. 25, 2011 / PRNewswire / -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today names the Top 10 Halloween Cars, which spells out the makes and models that complete this year's favorite Halloween costumes... MORE

Kelley Blue Book Launches the AutoTrader.com Powered 'Trade-In Marketplace' to Provide Consumers with Instant Offers for Their Trade-In Vehicles

IRVINE, Calif., Oct. 19, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Kelley Blue Book's www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information today announces a partnership with AutoTrader.com to provide the Trade-In Marketplace tool on kbb.com. Consumers can visit the Trade-In Marketplace on the Kelley Blue Book website to generate instant offers for their current vehicles, which can be used towards the purchase of their next vehicle or redeemed for cash. Consumers can use the instant trade-in offer, which is backed by a check from AutoTrader.com, to easily trade in or sell a car to a participating dealer. If the vehicle description provided is accurate, consumers never have to accept less for their trade-in... MORE

Hyundai Maintains No. 1 Spot for Brand Loyalty on Kbb.com for Second Consecutive Quarter; Toyota Closing In

Latest Q3 2011 Analysis from Kelley Blue Book's Kbb.com Reveals Honda's First-Time Fall from Top Five Brands

IRVINE, Calif., Oct. 17, 2011 / PRNewswire -- Kelley Blue Book's www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today reports that Hyundai upheld its No. 1 spot for brand loyalty on kbb.com for Q3 2011, marking its second consecutive quarter on top.

For Q3 2011, Hyundai's brand loyalty was at 48 percent, with **Toyota** nearly closing in at 47.9 percent and **Subaru** at 45.9 percent. Rounding out the top-five brands for Q3 2011 are **Kia** in the fourth spot at 45.3 percent and **Ford** in fifth at 45.2 percent... **MORE**

Kbb.com Wins 2011 WebAward for Outstanding Website in Automobile Category

Recently Redesigned Kelley Blue Book Site Offers Total Cost of Ownership Information, Consumer and Expert Reviews and Ratings

IRVINE, Calif., Oct. 10, 2011 / PRNewswire/ -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces its 2011 WebAward win for Outstanding Website in the Automobile category. With more than 2,000 entries from 45 countries for 2011, each nomination was judged on design, copy writing, innovation, content, interactivity, navigation and use of technology... MORE

Blue Book Market Report: Japanese Brands Losing Ground Due to Supply; Domestics, Hyundai Benefit Most

Revenue, Volume at Stake as Japanese Replenish Inventory

IRVINE, Calif., Oct. 4, 2011 / PRNewswire/ -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today reports that Japanese automotive brands are losing ground due to supply, while the domestics and Hyundai benefit, as covered in the company's Blue Book Market Report for October 2011. The Japanese brands' revenue and volume are at stake as they replenish inventory... MORE

