Kelley Blue Book Announces 2014 Brand Image Award Winners

Honda Holds Reign for Best Overall Brand, Most Trusted Brand; Kia, GMC, Jaguar Win First Brand Image Awards

IRVINE, Calif., April 9, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- The 2014 Brand Image Award winners, based on annual new-car buyer perception data, are announced today by Kelley Blue Book, www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used car information. The Kelley Blue Book® Brand Image Awards recognize automakers' outstanding achievements in creating and maintaining brand attributes that capture the attention and enthusiasm of the new-vehicle buying public. Award categories are calculated among luxury, non-luxury and truck shoppers.

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"The classic saying 'perception is reality' falls true with the Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Awards, as more than 12,000 in-market new-car shoppers have voiced their opinions about today's automakers," said Hwei-Lin Oetken, vice president of market intelligence for Kelley Blue Book. "With strong marketing communications coming from auto manufacturers and dealers, and the increased importance of peer reviews and ratings, consumers today are more influenced than ever to take interest in a brand, ultimately affecting their vehicle purchase decisions."

2014 Brand Image Award Winners: Non-Luxury Brands

Honda	Best Overall Brand
Honda	Most Trusted Brand
Kia	Best Value Brand
GMC	Most Refined Brand
MINI	Best Performance Brand
Chevrolet	Best Car Styling Brand

2014 Brand Image Award Winner: Truck Brand

Ford	Best Overall Truck Brand

2014 Brand Image Award Winners: Luxury Brands

Mercedes-Benz	Best Overall Luxury Brand
Lexus	Most Trusted Luxury Brand
Buick	Best Value Luxury Brand
Mercedes-Benz	Most Refined Luxury Brand

Porsche	Best Performance Luxury Brand
Jaguar	Best Car Styling Luxury Brand

For two years running, Honda has been named the Best Overall Brand, securing the highest average scores among all 12 Brand Watch factors, including affordability, "cool" factor, driving comfort, driving performance, durability/reliability, exterior styling, fuel efficiency, interior layout, prestige/sophistication, reputation, ruggedness and safety (listed in alphabetical order). Strong consumer perception of the Accord, Civic, CR-V and Odyssey helped drive Honda's success in earning the top honor among all automakers.

This year, Mercedes-Benz captured the Best Overall Luxury Brand title from 2013 winner BMW by obtaining the top average Brand Watch factor scores among all luxury makes and being highly regarded with its strong lineup and performance AMG variants.

Reclaiming the top spot among truck shoppers, Ford ousts last year's winner, Toyota, from the Best Overall Truck Brand category. Ford has won five out of six times Kelley Blue Book has announced this award. The F-150 and Super Duty F-250 and F-350 helped the manufacturer earn back the award for 2014, as truck shoppers ranked the brand highest among all other truck brands.

For three years in a row, Honda has earned the award for Most Trusted Brand, and for 2014, the Accord, Civic, CR-V and Odyssey supported the boost in Honda's scores. Meanwhile, Lexus holds its ground as the Most Trusted Luxury Brand for the second consecutive year with help from the ES, IS, LX and RX models.

Kia earns its first-ever Brand Image Award in 2014 for Best Value Brand, taking the crown from last year's winner Honda. Kia received high marks on affordability and fuel efficiency, primarily driven by the Optima, Rio, Soul and Forte models. Buick is a repeat winner for the Best Value Luxury Brand, and the manufacturer's entire lineup, including the LaCrosse, Regal, Verano, Enclave and Encore, has positively influenced car shoppers' perceptions.

"Kia has come a long way in the eyes of the consumer," said Arthur Henry, senior analyst for Kelley Blue Book. "Once known only as an economy car with good gas mileage, the brand has evolved through product growth and maturity into a high-value brand. This is a similar path fellow import brands Honda and Toyota took in the 1970s. In fact, Kia edges out Honda this year for the Best Value Brand title."

Benefitting from its upscale Denali trim models, GMC also wins its first Brand Image Award as 2014's Most Refined Brand, with high ratings for comfort, interior layout and prestige/sophistication. Mercedes-Benz has a second consecutive win for this category among luxury brands, and historically has scored very high in prestige/sophistication since the inception of the Brand Image Awards in 2008.

MINI wins Best Performance Brand for the second year in a row, with help from the MINI Cooper for its high ratings for "cool" factor and driving performance. Like MINI, Porsche holds steady as a repeat winner as Best Performance Luxury Brand since 2010, due to strong ratings for a number of models in its lineup, including the 911, Cayman, Panamera and Cayenne.

Jaguar earned its first Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Award as 2014 Best Car Styling Luxury Brand for its attractive F-TYPE, XK, XF and XJ series, while Chevrolet reclaimed the Best Car Styling Brand title from last year's winner Ford.

"Chevrolet had a slew of redesigns during the past year, which have captured the consideration of car shoppers," said Henry. "Chevrolet decided to take a daring approach with its styling and it paid off. The models primarily driving the success of Chevrolet's expressive design efforts are the Corvette Stingray and Camaro."

The 2014 Brand Image Awards are based on consumer automotive perception data from Kelley Blue Book Market Intelligence's Brand Watch study. Brand Watch is an online brand and model perception tracking study tapping into 12,000+ in-market new-vehicle shoppers annually on Kelley Blue Book's

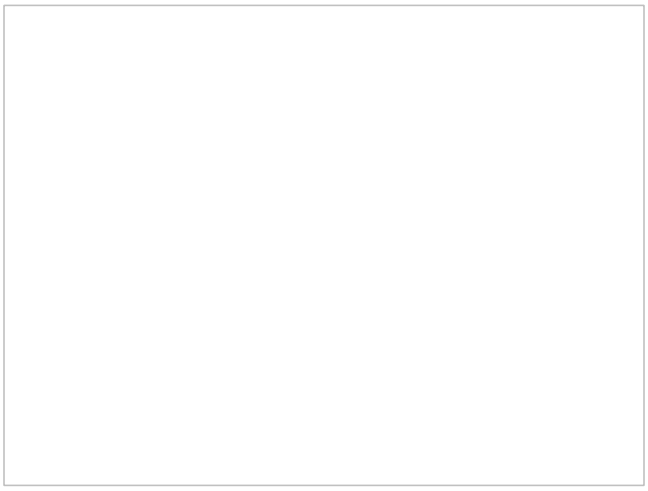
KBB.com. The highly comprehensive study offers insight into how shoppers perceive important factors driving their purchase decisions, and captures brand/model familiarity and loyalty among new-car shoppers.

For more information about the 2014 Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Awards, please visit http://www.kbb.com/new-cars/brand-image-awards/.

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