

Consumer Perceptions of New Vehicle Brands With Best Exterior Styling Revealed

Kelley Blue Book Marketing Research's 'Brand Watch' Finds Ford's Exteriors Lead Among New Truck and SUVs Shoppers

Kelley Blue Book (www.kbb.com) and Kelley Blue Book Marketing Research today announce the results of the 'Exterior Styling' segment of its newest automotive research study, Brand Watch. The results hold some surprises. Nissan was singled out for exceptional exterior styling of its sedans, besting all contenders including import-brand sales leaders Honda and Toyota, which finished second and third respectively. Even though Ford Motor Company is having well-publicized challenges, their trucks and SUVs are perceived as having the best exterior stylishness among active shoppers in those categories. Domestic brands took the top spots for exterior styling in the truck segment with GMC second, Chevrolet in third, and Dodge fourth putting import truck brands Toyota in fifth place, Nissan in eighth place and Honda in eleventh place for exterior styling.

In four of the seven segments, import brands were perceived by consumers as having superior styling. BMW took the top slot among consumers regarding exterior styling for both luxury SUVs and luxury sedans. In both luxury segments and the convertibles/sports cars category, active shoppers placed Mercedes-Benz in the top three, although the German luxury brand did not rank No. 1 in any of the categories. Porsche, Lexus and Infiniti also garnered top-three finishes in various categories.

"As vehicle reliability reaches near-parity in the market, we predict that exterior styling will play an even bigger role in building new-vehicle sales and brand equity," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst, Kelley Blue Book. "The results of the Brand Watch study demonstrate that the industry is, and should be, placing great emphasis on what their vehicles look like."

Kelley Blue Book Brand Watch Study: Exterior Styling

Convertibles/Sports Cars	Trucks	Minivans	
1. Porsche	1. Ford	1. Dodge	
2. Mercedes-Benz	2. GMC	2. Toyota	
3. Jaguar	3. Chevrolet	3. Honda	
Luxury SUVs	Non-Luxury SUVs	Luxury Sedan	Non-Luxury Sedan
1. BMW	1. Ford	1. BMW	1. Nissan
2. Lexus	2. Toyota	2. Mercedes-Benz	2. Honda
3. Mercedes-Benz	3. GMC	3. Infiniti	3. Toyota

"Exterior styling is one of the top decision factors among vehicle shoppers, and consumers' perceptions can add or eliminate a brand from someone's consideration list," said Rick Wainschel vice president, marketing and market research, Kelley Blue Book. "The real-time reporting of the Brand Watch data and the ability to see these brand perceptions can be extremely helpful in tracking shifts in new vehicle shopper attitudes and developing responses to those shifts."

Available to vehicle manufacturers and auto industry professionals, Brand Watch taps into active shoppers to determine their perceptions of automotive brands within specific automotive segments. Brand Watch further delves into how each manufacturer's brand equity differs across vehicle segments, compares the relative standing of each make vs. competitive makes, and reveals the decision factors of car-buyers within each make and segment. Detailed demographic and psychographic information is also collected, reported and detailed throughout Brand Watch's comprehensive study which is available quarterly from Kelley Blue

Book Marketing Research.

For sales inquiries on any vehicle segment or brand, please contact Kelly Gim, director of marketing research services at 949-268-2756 or via e-mail at kgim@kbb.com.

About Kelley Blue Book (kbb.com)

Since 1926, Kelley Blue Book, The Trusted Resource®, has provided vehicle buyers and sellers with the new and used vehicle information they need to accomplish their goals with confidence. The company's top-rated Web site, kbb.com, provides the most up-to-date pricing and values, including the New Car Blue Book® Value, which reveals what people actually are paying for new cars. The company also reports vehicle pricing and values via products and services, including software products and the famous Blue Book® Official Guide. Kbb.com is rated the No. 1 automotive information site by Nielsen//NetRatings and the most visited auto site by J.D. Power and Associates eight years in a row. No other medium reaches more in-market vehicle shoppers than kbb.com; nearly one in every three American car buyers performs their research on kbb.com.

SOURCE: Kelley Blue Book

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