

AutoPacific®

Michelin, Pirelli, Nitto keep up with changing replacement tire buyer demands

TUSTIN, Calif. (January 22, 2015) – Michelin and Pirelli do it again. According to the results of the latest installment of AutoPacific’s annual Replacement Tire Brand Dynamics and Satisfaction Study, Michelin ranks 1st in replacement tire owner satisfaction, followed by Pirelli ranking 2nd. It’s the 4th year in a row that these tiremakers have held their respective rankings. Nitto moved up 3 spots to 3rd place in the rankings this year, while former 3rd ranking Goodyear slipped to 5th. Of the 21 brands surveyed, 7 moved up in satisfaction rank, 10 moved down and 4 stayed the same. Big movers were Fuzion, up 10 places to rank 11th, and GTRadial, up 8 places to rank 14th.

“Nitto’s movement into 3rd place overall is exceptionally interesting because it speaks to the brand’s ability to satisfy the younger generation,” said George Peterson, president of AutoPacific. Nitto’s median buyer age is 30 – tied as the youngest buyer with GTRadial, and 14 years younger than the median age of 44 for all study respondents.

“Our study results show that the “under 40”

age group is the most difficult to satisfy. Overall, those under the age of 40 have below average satisfaction ratings for nearly all surveyed attributes, including dry traction, wet traction, warranty, price and tire noise,” continued Peterson.

Satisfaction Score Ranking	2012	2013	2014	Change From 2013
Michelin	1	1	1	Unchanged
Pirelli	2	2	2	Unchanged
Nitto	4	6	3	+3
Firestone	6	7	4	+3
Goodyear	3	3	5	-2
BFGoodrich	4	4	6	-2
Bridgestone	6	5	7	-2
Yokohama	8	8	8	Unchanged
Toyo	12	12	9	+3
Cooper	10	10	10	Unchanged
Fuzion	21	21	11	+10
Uniroyal	9	9	12	-3
General	18	15	13	+2
GTRadial	---	22	14	+8
Continental	14	11	15	-4
Dunlop	16	13	16	-3
Kumho	11	19	17	+2
Hankook	15	16	18	-2
Kelly	19	14	19	-5
Falken	13	18	20	-2
Nexen	17	17	21	-4

2014 Overall Winner: Michelin

2014 Top Mainstream Replacement Tire Brand: Nitto

2014 Top Enthusiast Replacement Tire Brand: Michelin

Vehicle Segment Winners

Luxury Car:	Yokohama
Large Car:	Pirelli
Mid-Size Car:	Michelin
Compact Car:	Kelly
Compact/Mid-Size SUV:	Michelin
Compact/Mid-Size XSUV:	Pirelli
Van/Minivan:	Yokohama
Full-Size Pickup:	Goodyear

AutoPacific’s 2014 Replacement Tire Brand Dynamics and Satisfaction Study contains responses from 7,728 recent replacement tire buyers about their satisfaction with 17 different attributes pertaining to their new tires, as well as many other topics including purchase process, brand image, retailer selection and satisfaction, and media consumption. Brand awareness is captured from 70,169 respondents.

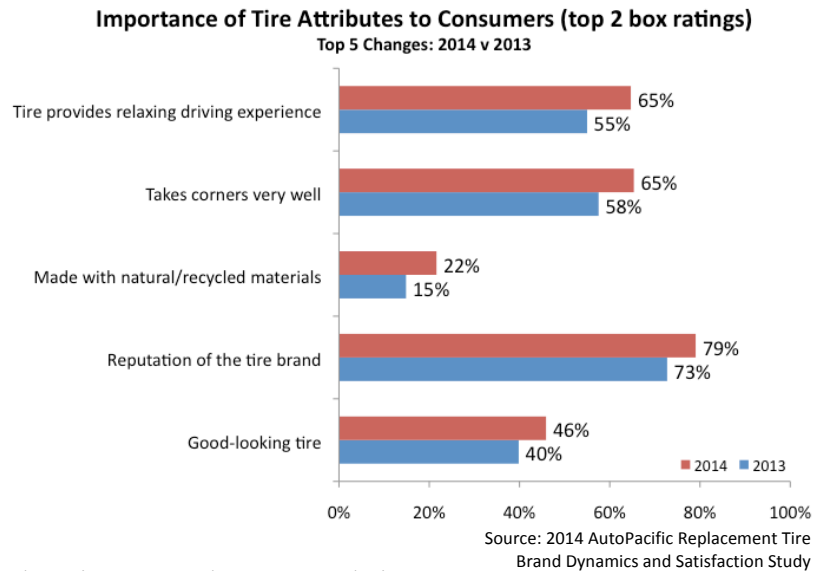
What Drives Owner Satisfaction?

AutoPacific’s method of calculation for tire satisfaction scores uses consumer ratings for both how important an attribute is, and how satisfied consumers are with that same attribute. “Using both

importance and satisfaction ratings in our calculation provides an accurate weighting, but also speaks to the importance of a tire manufacturer really knowing its consumer,” explains Peterson.

For example, the importance of a tire made with natural or recycled materials increased by 7%pts over last year’s study results. For top-moving brands Fuzion and GTRadial the increase was even greater, 13%pts and 22%pts, respectively. “Safety, dependability, performance – those are the price of entry for any tire manufacturer, but when the importance of attributes like cornering, material makeup, and even looks begin to jump, a manufacturer can really capitalize on the knowledge of just how important those are to their specific consumer through product development and advertising.”

In the case of natural/recycled materials, Fuzion ranked 1st in satisfaction while GTRadial ranked 4th.



About AutoPacific’s Replacement Tire Buyer Dynamics and Satisfaction Study

Now in its 4th year, AutoPacific’s Replacement Tire Buyer Dynamics and Satisfaction Study provides tire manufacturers, retailers and buyers with pertinent information to assist in making the right decisions. Tires are one of the most important purchases a person makes when keeping their car or light truck in safe operating condition during its lifetime. For manufacturers and retailers, understanding consumer shopping behavior, brand awareness and satisfaction is critical. For consumers, knowing which tire brands provide the most satisfying tire helps to break down the choices and assist with the purchase decision.

About AutoPacific

AutoPacific is a future-oriented automotive marketing research and product-consulting firm. Every year AutoPacific publishes a wide variety of syndicated studies on the automotive industry. The firm, founded in 1986, also conducts extensive proprietary research and consulting for auto manufacturers, distributors, marketers and suppliers worldwide. Company headquarters and its state-of-the-art automotive research facility are in Tustin, California, with an affiliate office in the Detroit area. Additional information can be found on AutoPacific's websites: <http://www.autopacific.com> and <http://vehiclevoice.com/>

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