

2014 FINDINGS

UTA
BRAND
STUDIO

AUTOMOTIVE BRAND DEPENDENCE INDEX™

Understanding the attachment between
consumers and automotive brands



Driven by brand

It's often said that you are what you drive. For decades, millions of consumers have identified with one automaker more than others. While marketers emphasize luxurious styling, safety, and fuel economy the truth is that many people drive what they do because they feel a deep connection to the brand. Brand attachment occurs when this strong emotional bond leads a consumer to see a brand as a reflection of their own identity. In numerous independent, peer-reviewed studies, brand attachment has been proven to be the best predictor of consumer behaviors that matter most to automakers, such as willingness to pay a premium price, defend the brand when it is under attack, and to voluntarily spread the word about their passion for their car. We developed the Brand Dependence™ research methodology to help companies measure and harness the power of brand attachment.

In the **2014 Automotive Brand Dependence Index,™** UTA Brand Studio, in partnership with uSamp, surveyed thousands of consumers to understand how attached they were to their car brand and to identify the underlying bonds between drivers and their cars. The Brand Dependence Index™ reveals how each brand ranked. Highlights from the study show the power of this revelatory new methodology in understanding where a brand may be underperforming, where a brand is succeeding, and where automotive marketers can focus their attention to improve brand attachment.

01

BDI RATINGS – How the brands stack up



Ratings takeaways



Audi has developed a strong attachment with its drivers. Although it has a shorter luxury history than its German competitors, BMW and Mercedes-Benz, Audi out-performs them in virtually every important measurement in our study.



At the other end of the spectrum, Buick scored lowest among the 23 brands studied. Buick's low attachment score is also reflected in the brand's lagging performance in other key predictors of consumer behavior.



Among U.S. luxury brands, Cadillac's strong attachment score may be indicative of the bold moves that General Motors has taken in recent years to re-establish the brand. Lincoln's mid-pack score reflects Ford's ongoing efforts to reshape the brand's image.

02

ATTACHMENT VS OTHER BRAND METRICS — Predicting behavior

 Attachment

 Attitude*

 Satisfaction**

All numbers are based on a scale of 0-1.
1 would be a perfect correlation between the driver and the behavior.
0 is no correlation at all.

*Defined as a consumer's overall evaluation of the brand

**How satisfied the consumer is with the brand

CORRELATION

Willingness to pay
a premium price



Willingness to
repurchase



Willingness to repurchase
despite negative incident



Willingness to forgive
over negative incident



Willingness to defend
over negative incident



0,0 0,1 0,2 0,3 0,4 0,5 0,6 0,7 0,8



Attachment success takeaways



Attitude and satisfaction ratings are traditional ways of trying to predict valuable buyer behavior, but they were strikingly less reliable than attachment in anticipating consumer actions.

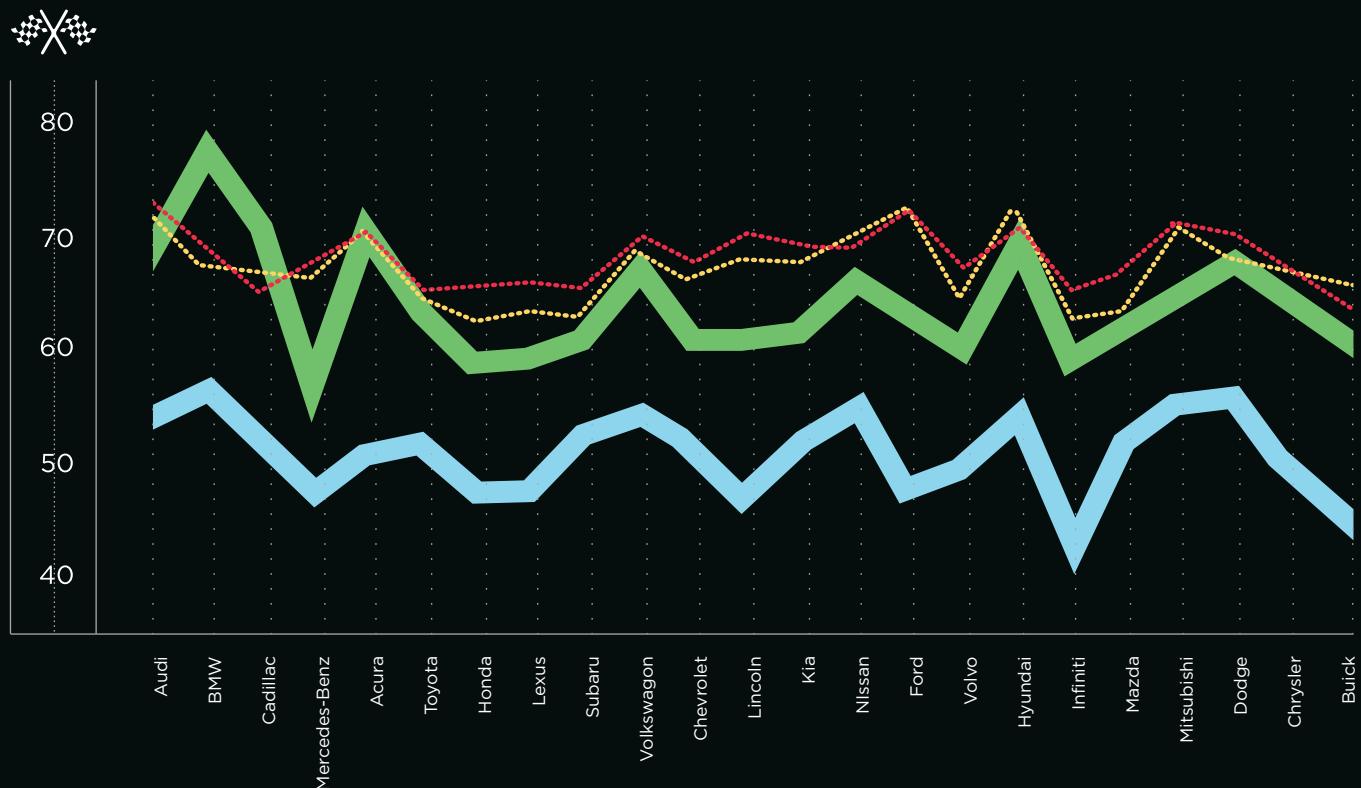


Willingness to repurchase is critically important to automakers—particularly with their luxury brands, but attitude and satisfaction were less reliable than brand attachment in predicting this vital behavior.

03

ATTACHMENT VS
OTHER BRAND METRICSPredicting willingness
to repurchase

- Attachment
- Attitude
- Satisfaction
- Willingness to repurchase



Attachment vs. other brand metric takeaways



Compared to attitude and satisfaction, attachment correlates better with consumers' "willingness to repurchase" from the brand.



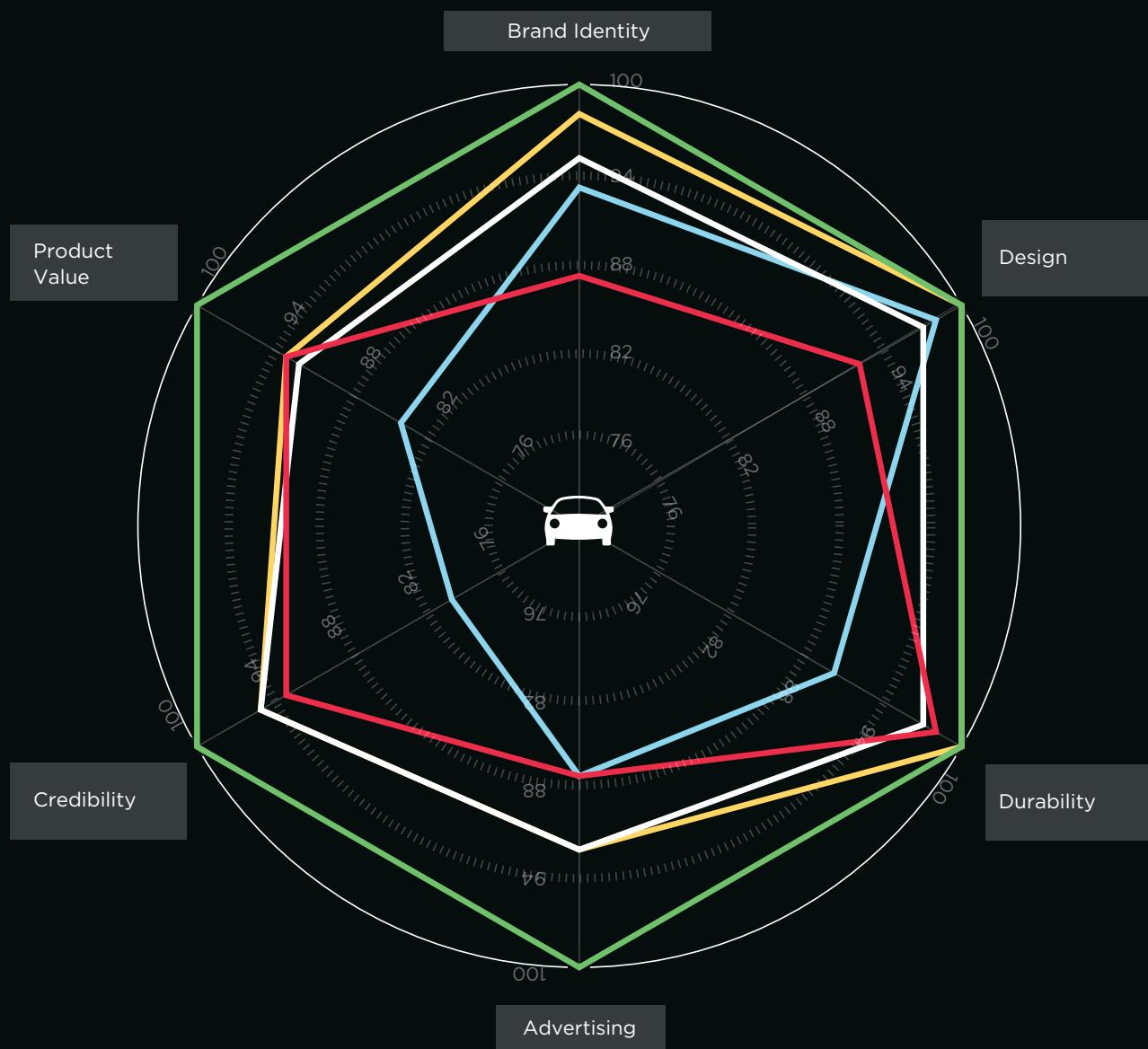
For example, Lincoln and Ford's high attitude and satisfaction scores would suggest that their drivers have a high likelihood of repurchase, when in fact the opposite is true. Attachment accurately reflects true repurchase intent.

04

ESSENTIAL

Attachment drivers

- Audi
- Mercedes-Benz
- BMW
- Cadillac
- Acura



Attachment driver takeaways



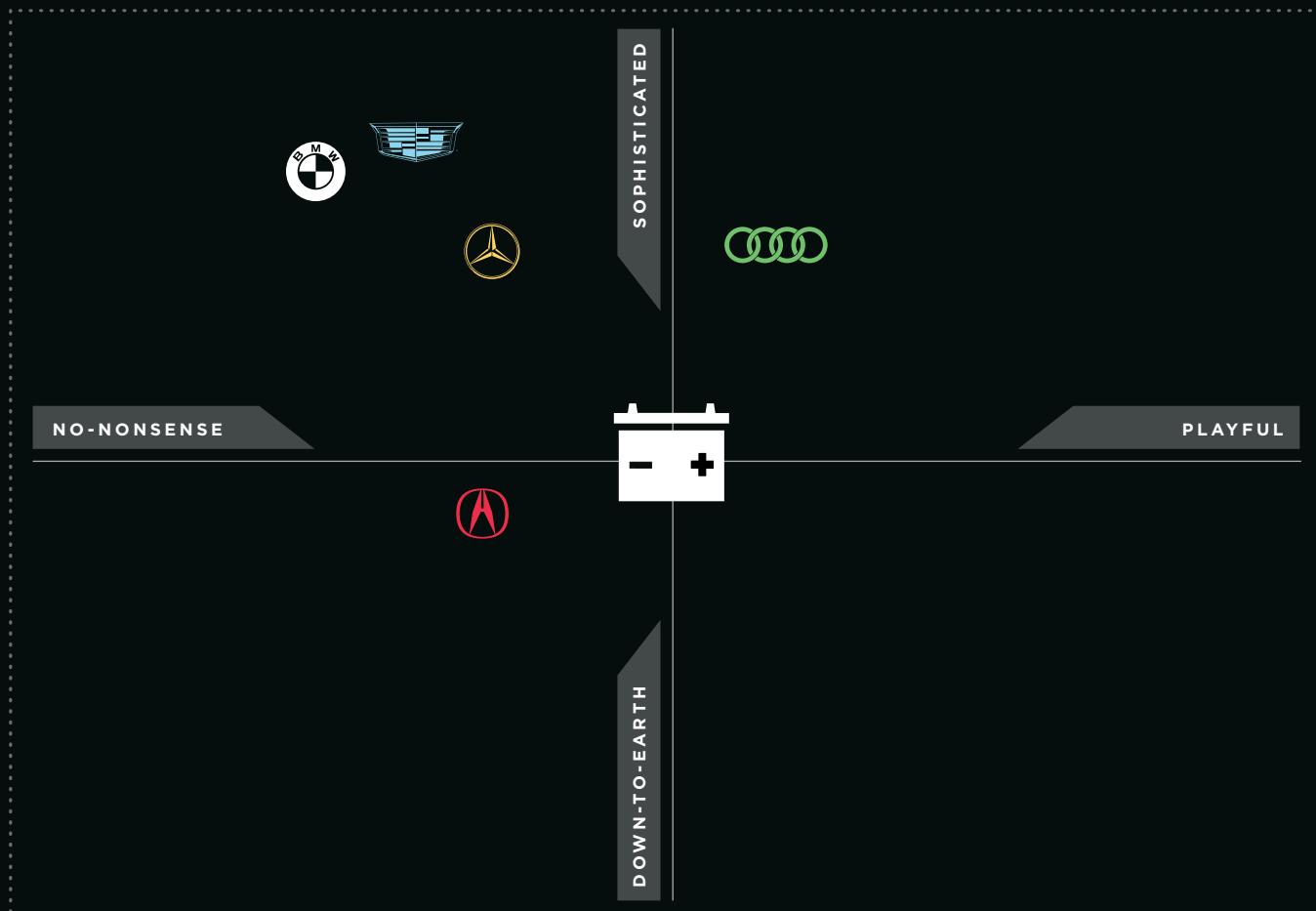
For the car category, the strongest drivers of attachment are (1) Brand Identity, (2) Durability, (3) Design, (4) Product Value, (5) Credibility, and (6) Advertising.



Audi statistically outperforms its closest competitor, BMW, on five out of these six drivers (on everything but Durability). This explains why Audi's attachment score is so high compared to its competitors'.

05

BRAND PERSONALITY PERCEPTIONS – What makes Audi's brand identity unique?



Brand personality takeaways



Audi has a unique brand personality that combines the perceived sophistication of a luxury brand with a fun and playful image.



Audi is as sophisticated as the other brands; in contrast, Acura is seen as more Down-to-Earth.

06

ADDITIONAL Findings



Environmentally conscious brand attributes lift attachment in some model extensions of a maker's brand.



Consumers are more attached to luxury than non-luxury car makes.



A likable car model name increases attachment toward the car.

For additional findings and implications to your brand, contact **UTA Brand Studio**
310.385.6778

UTA Brand Studio helps companies create and sustain brand attachment. Whether it's creating a new name or identity, uncovering rich insights about what attaches people to a brand, or enabling an entire brand experience, our approach is the same. We connect the story of the brand to the story of the customer, creating lasting attachment between the two and a sustainable competitive advantage.

Are you interested in learning more about how Brand Dependence™ can improve attachment to your brand?

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