



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Customer Satisfaction with the New-Vehicle Sales Experience Improves Significantly from 2010, Despite Lengthier Sales Process

Lexus Ranks Highest among Luxury Brands;
MINI Ranks Highest among Mass Market Brands for a Second Consecutive Year

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 1 December 2011 — Satisfaction with the new-vehicle sales process has improved notably from 2010, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2011 U.S. Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) StudySM released today.

The study is a comprehensive analysis of the new-vehicle purchase experience and measures customer satisfaction with the selling dealer (satisfaction among buyers). It also measures satisfaction with brands and dealerships that were shopped but ultimately rejected in favor of the selling brand and dealership (satisfaction among rejecters). Among buyers, satisfaction is examined across four measures (listed in order of importance): working out the deal (17%); salesperson (13%); delivery process (11%); and dealership facility (10%). Among rejecters, satisfaction is examined across five measures (listed in order of importance): salesperson (20%); fairness of price (12%); facility (6%); inventory (6%); and experience negotiating (5%).

Overall sales satisfaction averages 648 on a 1,000-point scale in 2011, improving by 13 points from an average of 635 from 2010. This gain suggests that, as market conditions improve, automotive manufacturers and dealers are placing renewed focus on and investment in providing buyers with satisfying retail experiences.

All measures improve notably from 2010, with the greatest gain in the delivery process, despite the fact that the average length of time to complete the delivery portion of a new-vehicle sale has increased by four minutes to an average of 32 minutes in 2011, from an average of 28 minutes in 2010. Overall, the average length of time a buyer spends at the dealership has increased by 11 minutes, to an average of 4.3 hours in 2011 from 4.1 hours in 2010.

A primary reason for the lengthened delivery process is the increasing proportion of buyers who are receiving more in-depth demonstrations of technology in their new vehicle (including audio, entertainment, navigation and communications systems). Approximately 88 percent of buyers in 2011 say they received a technology demonstration at vehicle delivery.

“Although technology demonstrations add time to the delivery process, those explanations substantially improve satisfaction, as well as customer loyalty and advocacy,” said Jim Gaz, director of automotive research at J.D. Power and Associates. “It would intuitively seem that buyers are most satisfied when the sales process is completed in the shortest amount of time possible. However, buyers actually appreciate it when sales staff spends additional time with them, as long as that time provides them with added value.”

According to Gaz, an increasing proliferation of technology demonstrations may also help improve perceptions of new-vehicle quality. The J.D. Power and Associates U.S. Initial Quality StudySM (IQS) has found that rates of owner-reported problem incidence with audio/entertainment/navigation technology systems have increased steadily between 2009 and 2011. Some of these perceived problems may stem from users not understanding how

to operate features, so technology demos provided by sales staff can be a powerful tool in lowering problem rates and improving satisfaction with vehicle design.

Lexus ranks highest among [luxury brands](#) in satisfaction with the new-vehicle buying experience. Cadillac and Mercedes-Benz follow in the luxury-brand segment rankings. The luxury brands with the greatest improvement from 2010 are Lincoln (moving from ninth rank position to sixth) and Audi (moving from 11th rank position to ninth).

MINI ranks highest among [mass market brands](#) for a second consecutive year. Buick and GMC, respectively, follow MINI in the mass market segment rankings. The mass market brands with the greatest improvement from 2010 are Volkswagen (moving from 13th rank position to fourth), Scion (moving from 11th rank position to fifth) and Nissan (moving from 18th rank position to 12th).

The 2011 U.S. Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) Study is based on responses from 24,045 buyers who purchased or leased their new vehicle in May 2011. The study was fielded between August and October 2011.

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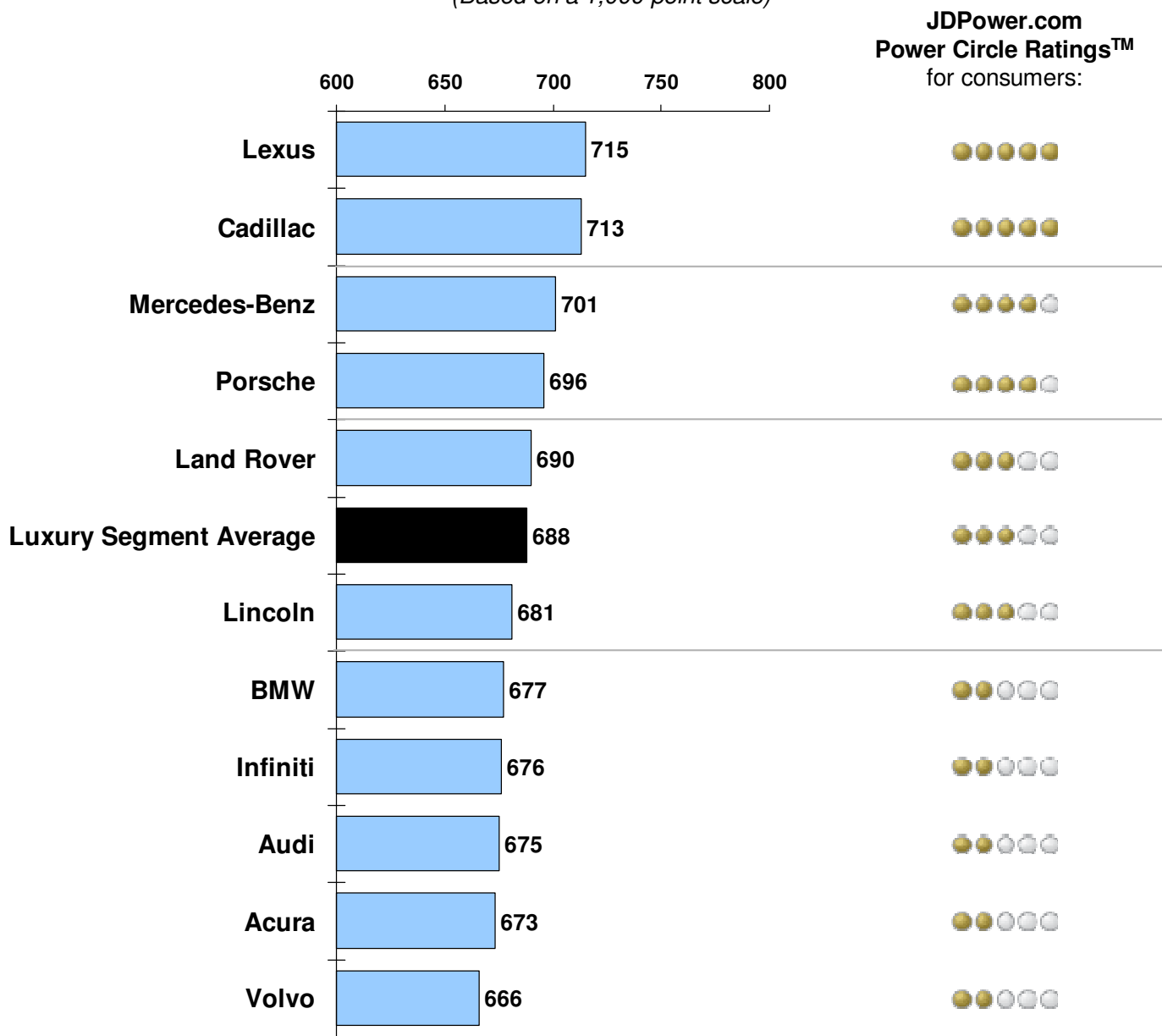
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NOTE: Two charts follow.

J.D. Power and Associates 2011 U.S. Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) StudySM

Sales Satisfaction Index Ranking Luxury Brands

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Included in the study but not ranked due to small sample size are Jaguar and SAAB.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2011 U.S. Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) StudySM



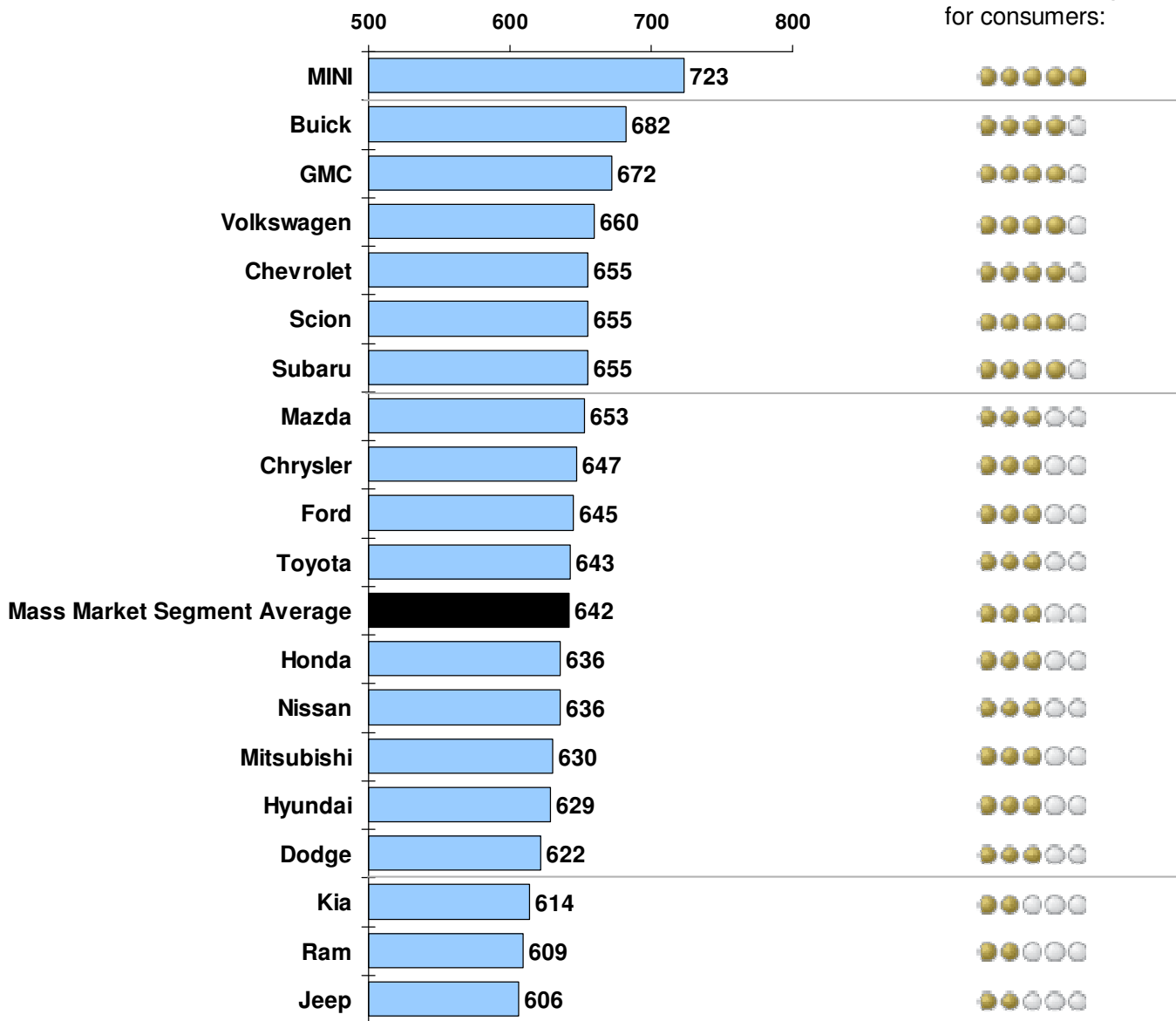
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J.D. Power and Associates 2011 U.S. Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) StudySM

Sales Satisfaction Index Ranking Mass Market Brands

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

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NOTE: Suzuki is included in the study but not ranked due to small sample size.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2011 U.S. Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) StudySM



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