



## Press Release

### **J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Many New-Vehicle Buyers Avoid Certain Brands Due to “Conventional Wisdom” about Reliability, Rather Than Specific Information**

#### Avoidance of Models Due to Foreign Origin Increases to Historically High Level

**WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 26 January 2012** – More than 40 percent of new-vehicle buyers who avoided a particular model due to quality or reliability concerns say they based their opinions on conventional wisdom or common knowledge rather than personal experience, reviews, ratings or recommendations, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Avoider Study,<sup>SM</sup> released today.

The study, now in its ninth year, examines the reasons consumers fail to consider—or avoid—particular models when shopping for a new vehicle.

Perceptions of vehicle reliability have consistently been a prominent reason for avoiding a particular brand or model. The study finds that, among buyers who avoid a particular model due to concerns about quality and reliability, a sizable proportion—43 percent—say their avoidance was due to “the brand’s vehicles, in general, are known to have poor quality/reliability.” A smaller percentage—38 percent—based their avoidance decision on ratings and reviews, while an even smaller proportion—14 percent—based their decision on prior ownership of the model.

“The fact that so many new-vehicle buyers may be basing their opinions about quality and reliability on pre-conceived notions, rather than concrete information or data, demonstrates how important it is for automakers to promote the quality and reliability of their models,” said Jon Osborn, research director at J.D. Power and Associates. “For some brands, namely those that have created marked improvements in their quality and reliability in recent years, it’s even more vital to tell their improvement story, rather than just waiting for perceptions to change over time.”

According to Osborn, it’s also important for consumers to challenge their perceptions about what they may think they know about the quality and reliability of a particular model. The automotive industry has undergone significant quality and dependability improvement during the past decade, and fierce competition has created an environment in which only the strongest brands and models can survive. Although a brand or model may have had a poor reputation for quality or reliability in the past, actual quality or reliability performance may have improved since then. Seeking reviews and recommendations from trusted sources is particularly helpful in making consideration or avoidance decisions.

The study also finds that the percentage of buyers who avoided import models because of their origin has increased to 14 percent in 2012—the highest level since the inception of the study in 2003. Conversely, the percentage of buyers who avoided domestic models due to their origin has declined to 6 percent, a historically low level.

“The decline in avoidance of U.S. models due to their origin reflects a buy-American sentiment that surfaced as the economic recession led to domestic job losses and adversely affected major U.S. institutions such as the Detroit Big Three,” said Osborn. “In addition, the quality, dependability and appeal of domestic models has improved during the past several years, as well, and this may also be a cause for declining avoidance.”

The study finds that gas mileage is the most influential reason for purchasing a particular vehicle model in 2012, surpassing the influence of other key reasons such as reliability, the deal and exterior styling, which were the most influential purchase reasons in 2010.<sup>1</sup>

With the emphasis of the importance of gas mileage affecting both the automotive market and consumer purchase decisions, certain alternative fuel vehicles—the Chevrolet Volt, Nissan Leaf and Toyota Prius—captured much attention from new-vehicle buyers. While both gas mileage and environmental impact were among the two most-often-cited purchase reasons for each of these models, there were marked differences between the models for the next-most-cited reason. For the Volt, the image the model portrays is a prominent reason for purchase, while buyers cite low maintenance costs for the Leaf and reliability for the Prius.

Among buyers who avoided the Volt, purchase price was the most-often-cited reason, while the most prominent avoidance reason for the Leaf and Prius is exterior styling. For the Volt and Leaf, a notable proportion of buyers cited the models' small size as an avoidance reason. For the Prius, performance is a prominent reason for avoidance.

The 2012 Avoider Study is based on responses from approximately 24,045 owners who registered a new vehicle in May 2011. The study was fielded between August and October 2011.

#### **About J.D. Power and Associates**

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is a global marketing information services company providing performance improvement, social media and customer satisfaction insights and solutions. The company's quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. For more information on [car reviews and ratings](#), [car insurance](#), [health insurance](#), [cell phone ratings](#), and more, please visit [JDPower.com](http://JDPower.com). J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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<sup>1</sup> J.D. Power and Associates last issued the Avoider Study in December 2010. Comparisons between the 2010 and 2012 studies span a one-year period, rather than a two-year period. The study was not published in 2011.