



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Vehicle Tire Satisfaction Influences Vehicle Brand and Dealership Service Loyalty

Performance Sport Tire Segment Overtakes Luxury Segment with Highest Customer Satisfaction

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 29 March 2012 — When customers are highly satisfied with their vehicle's original tires, they are more likely to be loyal to the vehicle brand at the time of their next purchase, according to the 2012 J.D. Power and Associates U.S. Original Equipment Tire Customer Satisfaction Study.

In addition to increasing the likelihood of them re-purchasing the same vehicle brand, highly satisfied customers are also more likely to return to the dealership for maintenance/repair services and use the dealership for future service on tires.

Among owners that rate the quality and appeal of their vehicles as "truly exceptional," and that rate their tires as "truly exceptional" — when compared to owners that do not rate their tires as highly — they are:

- More likely to say they "definitely will" re-purchase the same vehicle brand – 67% vs. 59%
- More likely to say they "definitely will" return to the dealer for maintenance and repair work – 89% vs. 82%
- More likely to return to the dealer for future tire service work – 44% vs. 32%

"It is important for tire and vehicle manufacturers to understand how tire satisfaction affects both vehicle brand and dealer loyalty," said Brent Gruber, senior manager of the tire practice at J.D. Power and Associates. "High tire satisfaction positively influences owner perceptions of their vehicle. By choosing a better performing tire for its vehicles, not only are manufacturers in a position to build greater loyalty for their brand, but they're also increasing the potential for future service business at dealerships."

Performance Sport Tire Satisfaction on the Rise

Overall, satisfaction increased 29 points to 686 on a 1,000 point scale. This significant increase is attributed to improvements across all satisfaction factors: tire ride; tire traction/handling; tire wearability; and tire appearance. Tire ride and tire wearability have the largest year-over-year improvements at 30 and 29 points, respectively.

For the first time since the redesign of the study in 2009, the performance sport tire segment earned the highest satisfaction scores among the four segments included in the study, increasing by 38 points in 2012 to 748 points on a 1,000 point scale, compared to 2011. Previously, the luxury segment has reported the highest satisfaction scores. This year, however, the Performance Sport segment overtook the Luxury segment by 13 points (748 vs. 735).

Although satisfaction is the highest for the performance sport tire segment, owners in this segment also have the most problems at 85.5 problems per 100 (PP100). Owners of performance sport tires anticipate problems including poor traction/grip on snow covered roads, fast tread wear and a rough ride. The report shows that when a performance sport tire owner experiences a specific problem with their tires, satisfaction drops by 102 points compared with performance sport tire owners who do not experience a tire related problem (797 vs. 695, respectively). In comparison, the industry average declines 119 points for owners who experience a specific tire problem compared with those who do not report any problems (741 vs. 622, respectively).

At the industry level, problems averaged 76 PP100, down from 84 in 2011. Among the most frequently cited problems are road hazard/punctures, slow leaks and fast tread wear.

Highest-Ranked Tires

Michelin ranks highest in three of the four segments: luxury (777), passenger car (726) and truck/utility (740). Pirelli ranks highest in the performance sport segment with an index score of 788.

The 2012 U.S. Original Equipment Tire Customer Satisfaction Study is based on responses from more than 27,000 new-vehicle owners who purchased a 2010 or 2011 model-year vehicle. The study was fielded between October and December 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 forecasting, 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. J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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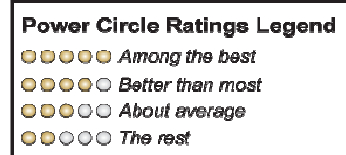
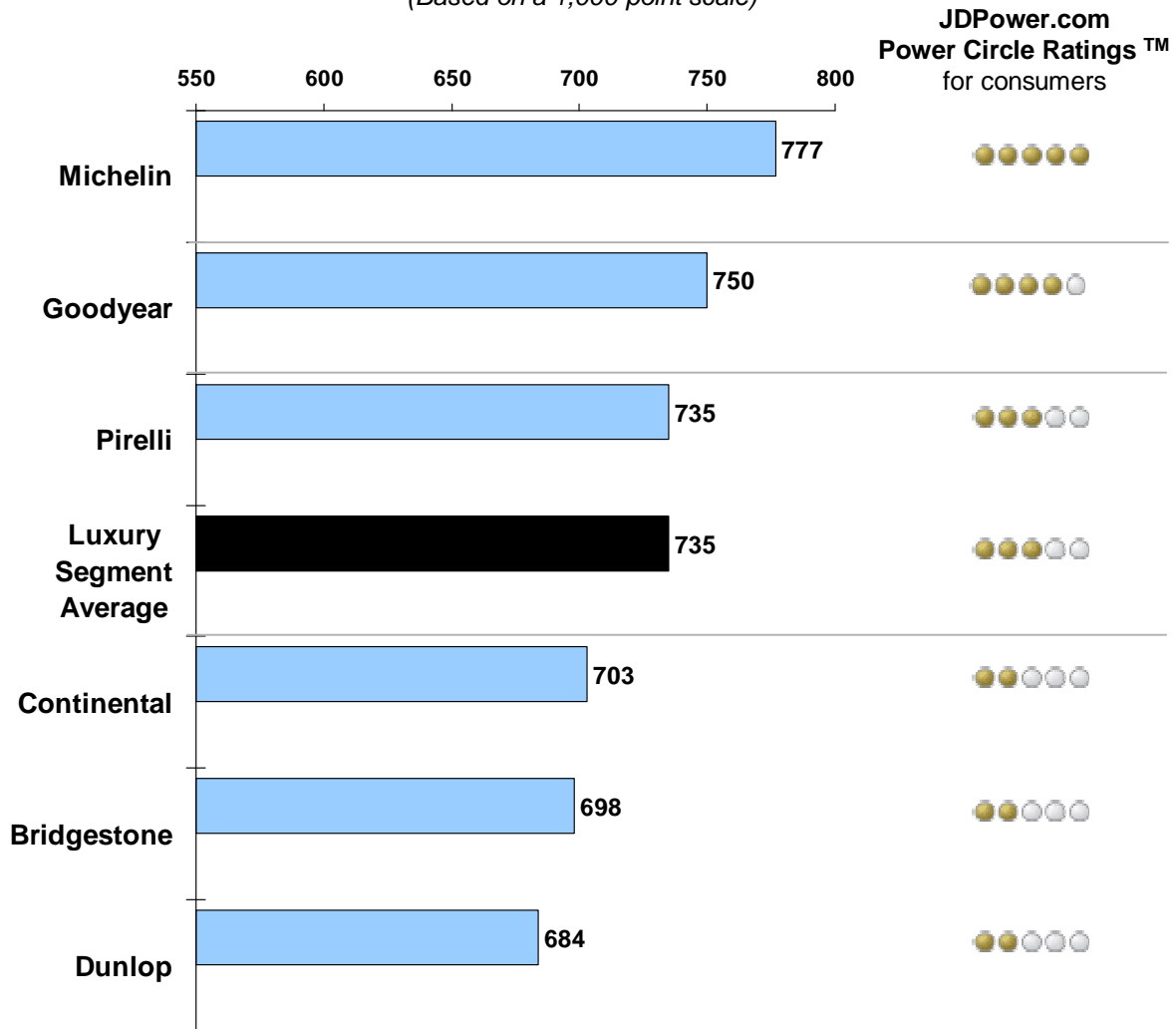
(Page 2 of 2)

Note: Four charts follow.

J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Original Equipment Tire Customer Satisfaction StudySM

Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking *Luxury Segment*

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



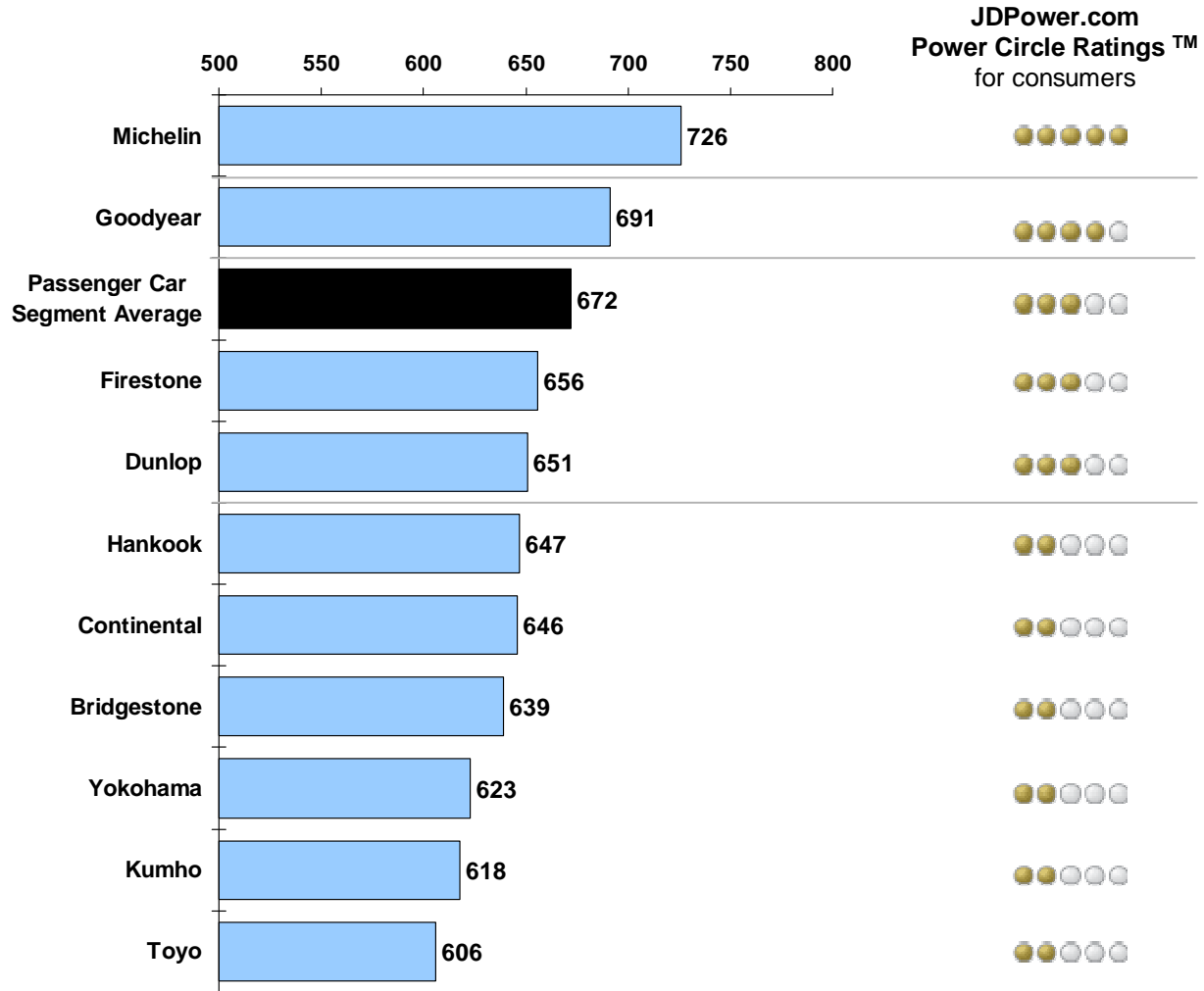
Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Original Equipment Tire Customer Satisfaction StudySM

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Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking Passenger Car Segment

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Power Circle Ratings Legend

- Among the best
- Better than most
- About average
- The rest

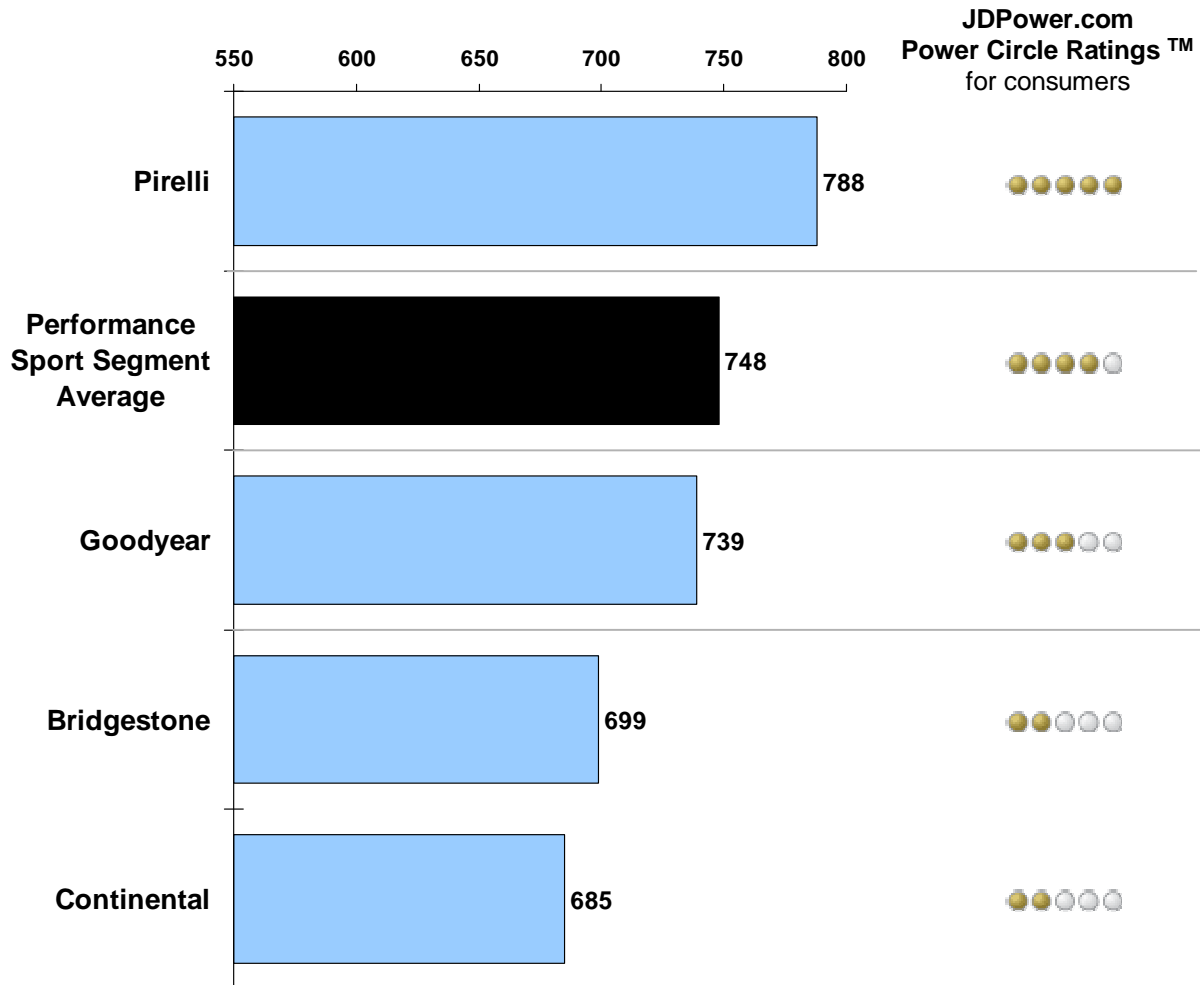
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Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking Performance Sport Segment

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Power Circle Ratings Legend

- Among the best
- Better than most
- About average
- The rest

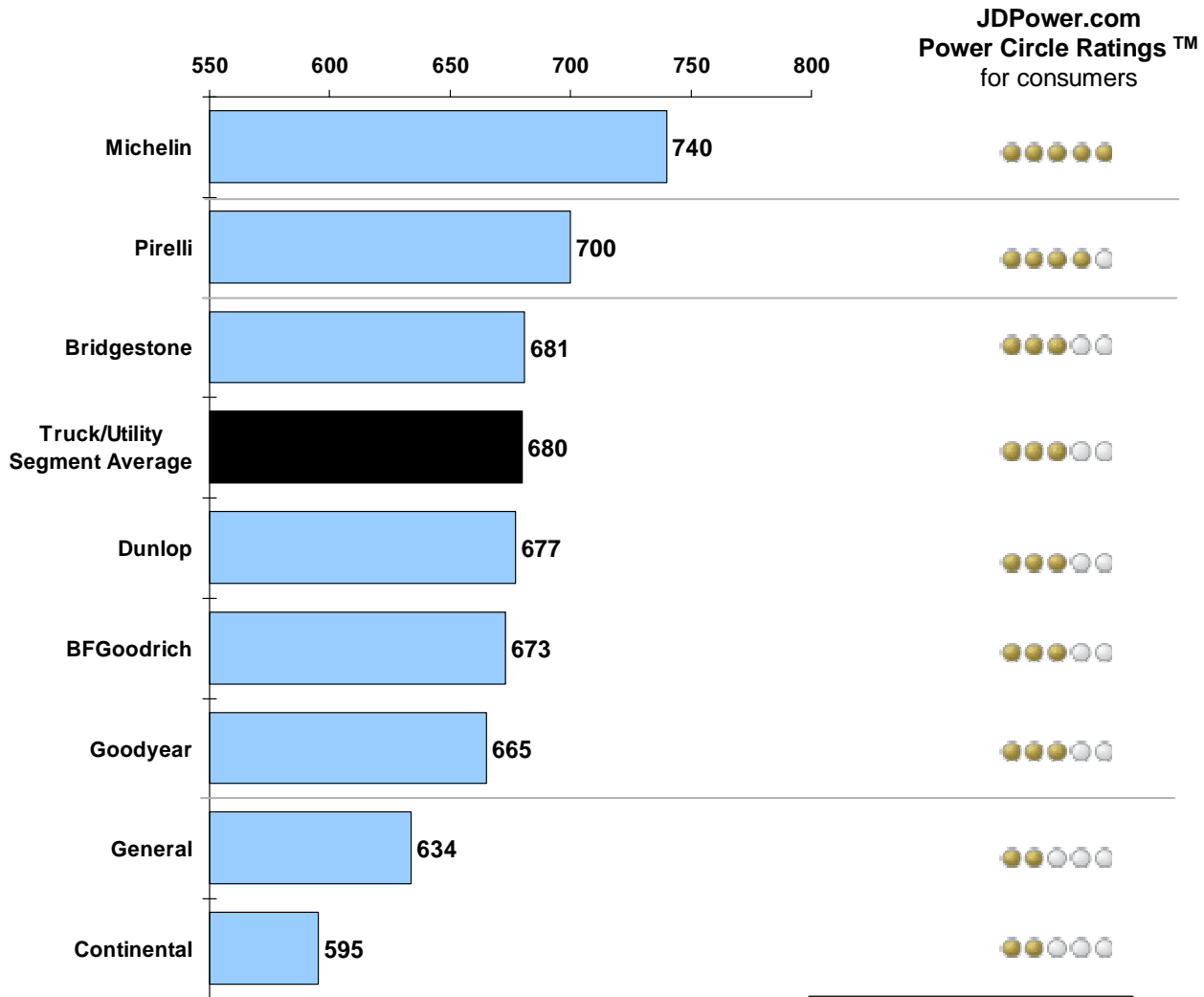
Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Original Equipment Tire Customer Satisfaction StudySM

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J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Original Equipment Tire Customer Satisfaction StudySM

Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking *Truck/Utility Segment*

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Power Circle Ratings Legend

- Among the best
- Better than most
- About average
- The rest

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Original Equipment Tire Customer Satisfaction StudySM

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