

New-Vehicle Buyers Applaud Product Specialists' Advice on Product Features, J.D. Power Finds

Ford and Mazda Rank Highest among Mass Market Brands; Mercedes-Benz Ranks Highest among Luxury Brands

SYDNEY: 14 Nov. 2019 — Customers who interact with product specialists during their new-vehicle purchase experience are more satisfied, according to the J.D. Power 2019 Australia Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) StudySM, released today. The study finds that overall satisfaction is higher among new-vehicle buyers who interact with product specialists than among those who do not (859 vs. 811 points, respectively, on a 1,000-point scale).

In the mass market segment, interaction with product specialists increases satisfaction (851 vs. 809 points among those who do not). However, only one in five (20%) of mass market buyers state they interacted with a product specialist while purchasing their new vehicle. Among new-vehicle buyers of luxury brands who interact with product specialists, satisfaction is 897 vs. 833 among those who do not. Interactions with product specialists are more common in the luxury segment (37%).

“Dealers should take the opportunity to demonstrate new features, from the moment customers go onto dealership websites to the time they purchase and not just engage at the final delivery stage. Product specialists, with their in-depth knowledge, are an important lever for dealers to do this,” said **Bruce Chellingworth, Director and Country Manager of Australia, J.D. Power**. “As vehicle manufacturers offer new technologies and electric vehicles become more affordable to consumers, helping them understand these technological changes will be crucial to maintaining loyalty and trust.”

The study also finds that, post purchase, around one-third (37%) of customers received additional information on features such as vehicle communications, audio and safety features, navigation systems and Bluetooth connections. Satisfaction is higher among customers who receive these follow-up explanations versus those who do not (871 vs. 792 index points, respectively).

Following are additional key findings of the 2019 study:

- **Short test drives are the norm, but not the best:** More than half (56%) of customers who experience a test drive do so for less than 20 minutes, while the average test drive duration is 23 minutes. Longer test drives result in higher satisfaction: among customers whose test drive is more than 30 minutes, satisfaction is 31 points higher than among those whose test drive is 20 minutes or less.
- **Digital demonstrations augment satisfaction:** Increased and wider use of digital devices during various stages of the sales process drives higher satisfaction. Among the 60% of mass market customers who experience a sales process that includes use of a tablet, smartphone or touchscreen monitor, there is a subsequent uplift on satisfaction of +55 points (839 vs. 784 index points among those who do not). Among luxury brand customers, 73% experience a sales process that includes such devices, which results in a lift in satisfaction of +69 points (875 vs. 806 index points among those who do not).
- **No need to be pushy:** Some customers in both luxury and mass market segments say their sales experience was “pushy”, 21% and 13%, respectively. There are negative impacts when customers perceive a pushy sales experience; among them a 75-point decline in overall satisfaction. Dealer advocacy scores also drop; the proportion of customers stating they “definitely will” recommend their dealer is lower among those who experience a pushy sale vs. those who do not (luxury 48% vs. 63%; mass market 34% vs. 54%).

Study Rankings

Ford and **Mazda** rank highest among the mass market brands in a tie, each with a score of 835, followed by **Toyota** (827).

Mercedes-Benz ranks highest among the luxury brands, with a score of 878. **BMW** (855) ranks second and **Audi** (822) ranks third.

Now in its fourth year, the study examines six factors that contribute to overall customer satisfaction with their new-vehicle purchase experience. The factors are (in order of importance): dealer sales consultant (25%); delivery process (25%); dealership facility (16%); working out the deal (15%); paperwork completion (12%); and dealership website (7%).

The 2019 Australia Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) Study is based on responses from 3,217 buyers who purchased or leased their new vehicle between February 2018 through August 2019. The study is a comprehensive analysis of the new-vehicle purchase experience and measures customer satisfaction with the selling dealer. The study was fielded from February 2019 through September 2019.

The study also includes the Net Promoter Score® (NPS),¹ which measures customers' likelihood to recommend their vehicle brand on a 0-10 scale.

J.D. Power is a global leader in consumer insights, advisory services and data and analytics. These capabilities enable J.D. Power to help its clients drive customer satisfaction, growth and profitability. Established in 1968, J.D. Power has offices serving North America, South America, Asia Pacific and Europe.

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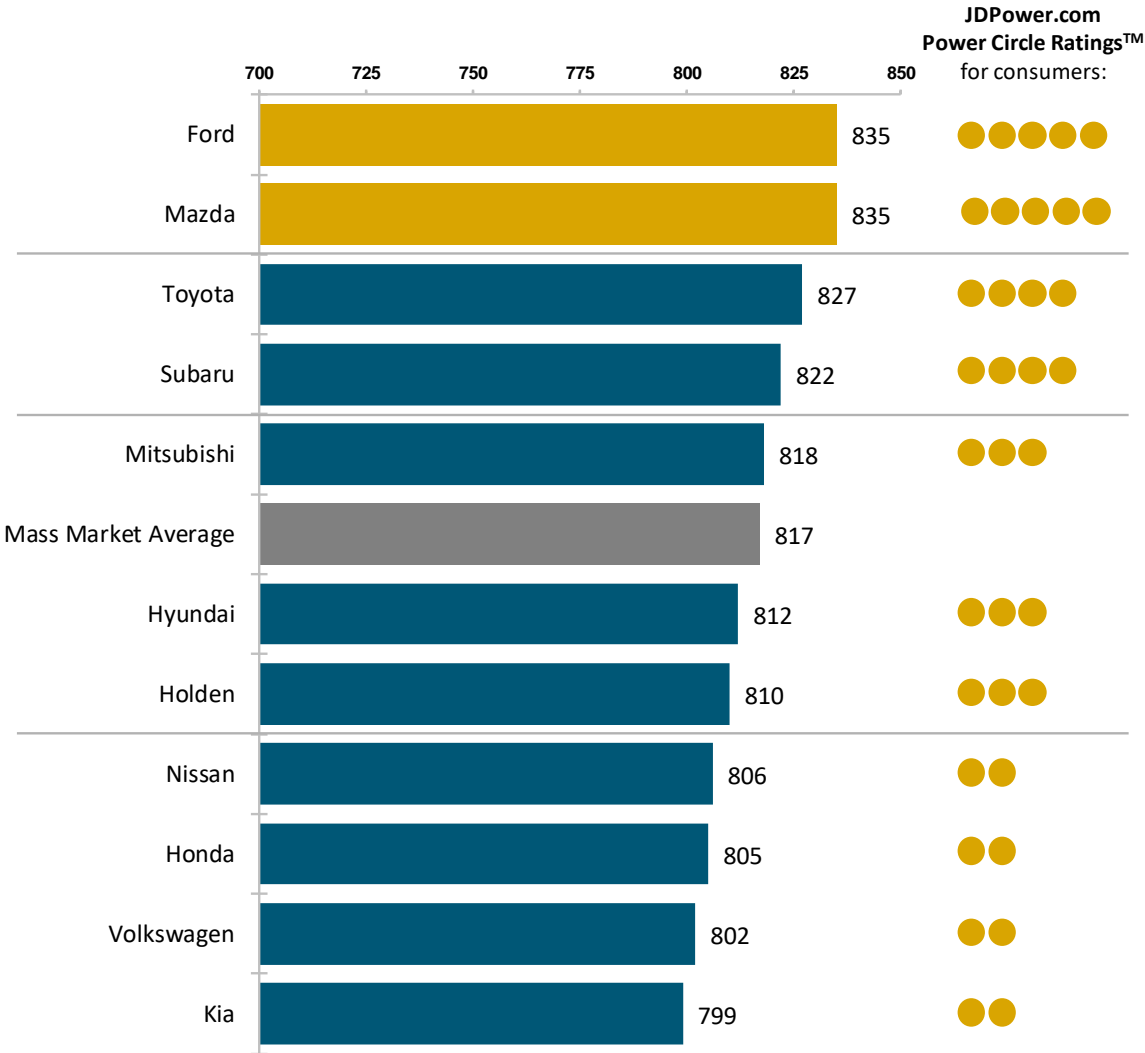
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NOTE: Two charts follow

¹ Net Promoter,® Net Promoter System,® Net Promoter Score,® NPS,® and the NPS-related emoticons are registered trademarks of Bain & Company, Inc., Fred Reichheld and Satmetrix Systems, Inc.

J.D. Power 2019 Australia Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) StudySM

Sales Satisfaction Index Ranking – Mass Market (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Note: Included in the study but not ranked due to small or insufficient sample size are Suzuki, Isuzu Ute, Renault & Jeep.

Source: J.D. Power 2019 Australia Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) StudySM

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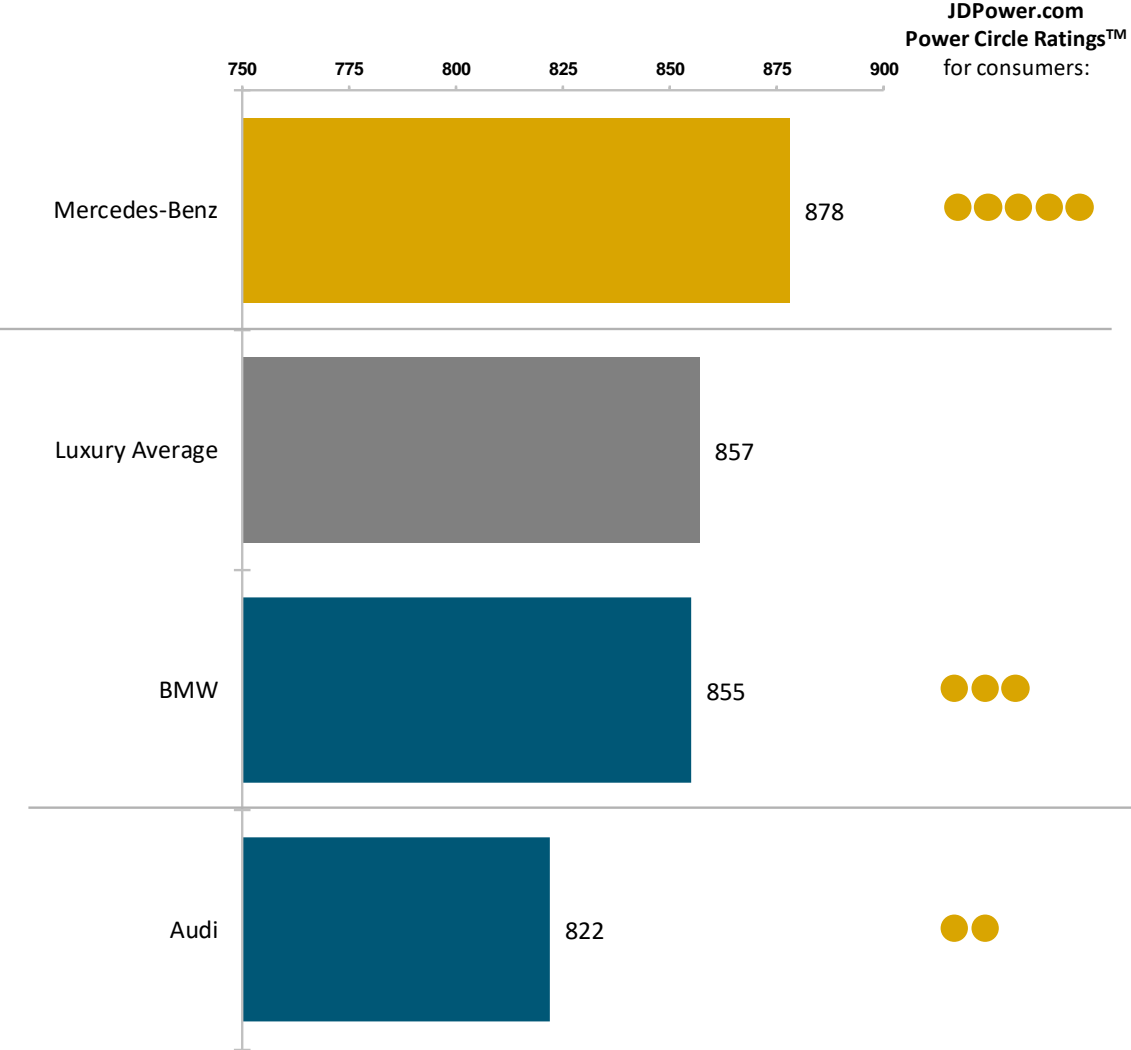
Power Circle Ratings Legend

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

J.D. Power 2019 Australia Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) StudySM

Sales Satisfaction Index Ranking – Luxury

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Note: Included in the study but not ranked due to small or insufficient sample size are Lexus, Land Rover & Volvo.

Source: J.D. Power 2019 Australia Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) StudySM

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