



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Embattled U.S. Automakers Make Substantial Gains in Initial Quality, Outpacing Industry-Wide Improvement

While Quality Gap Continues to Narrow, Import Nameplates Capture 15 of 22 Segment Awards

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 22 June 2009 — New vehicles sold by Chrysler, Ford and GM's domestic brands have improved in initial quality by an average of 10 percent, compared with 2008, surpassing the 8-percent rate of improvement by the industry overall, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2009 Initial Quality StudySM (IQS) released today.

Overall, the industry average for initial quality is 108 problems per 100 vehicles (PP100) in 2009, down from 118 PP100 in 2008. Initial quality for domestic brands has improved to an average of 112 PP100 in 2009 from 124 PP100 in 2008. Lower PP100 scores indicate a lower rate of problem incidences and higher quality.

“Even in the face of unprecedented challenges, the Detroit automakers are keeping their focus on designing and building high-quality vehicles, which is a precondition for long-term success,” said David Sargent, vice president of automotive research at J.D. Power and Associates. “High quality generally translates into reduced re-engineering costs and lower warranty expenses during a vehicle's life cycle. High quality also enhances an automaker's reputation for reliability, which is a critical purchase consideration for many consumers.”

In addition to the marked improvement by domestic automakers, many import brands continued to perform well in 2009. Lexus leads the overall nameplate rankings, averaging 84 PP100. Following in the rankings are Porsche, Cadillac (which moves from 10th rank position in 2008 to third in 2009), Hyundai (improves from 13th rank position in 2008 to fourth in 2009) and Honda, rounding out the top five. Suzuki posts the largest improvement in ranking, moving from 32nd place in 2008 to ninth in 2009.

The study finds that initial quality for newly launched and redesigned models in 2009 has improved compared with previous years. Historically, all-new models have typically launched with below-average levels of initial quality. However, several all-new models in 2009, including the Hyundai Genesis, Kia Borrego, Toyota Venza and Volkswagen CC, perform considerably better than their respective segment averages. Many redesigned models in 2009 also show notable improvement from the previous generation—particularly the Acura TL, Ford F-150, Honda Pilot and Nissan Z.

“Achieving high levels of initial quality in all-new models is one of the greatest challenges for manufacturers,” said Sargent. “Now that more manufacturers are getting their launch quality right straight out of the gate, consumers can expect the quality of new vehicles to continue to rise.”

The Initial Quality Study serves as the industry benchmark for [new-vehicle quality measured at 90 days of ownership](#). The study is used extensively by manufacturers worldwide to help them design and build better vehicles and by consumers to help them in their vehicle purchase decisions. Initial quality has been shown over the years to be an excellent predictor of long-term durability, which can significantly impact consumer purchase decisions. The study captures problems experienced by owners in two distinct categories—design-related problems and defects and malfunctions.

2009 IQS Ranking Highlights

Toyota Motor Corporation captures 10 segment awards—more than any other corporation in the 2009 study—including five for [Lexus](#), four for [Toyota](#) and one for [Scion](#). Lexus receives awards for the [IS](#), [GS](#), [GX](#), [LS](#) and [LX](#) models. The Lexus LX has the fewest quality problems in the industry, with just 52 PP100. Toyota models receiving awards in their respective segments are the [4Runner](#) (in a tie); [Sienna](#); [Tundra](#) (in a tie); and [Yaris](#).

[Ford](#) receives three awards for the [Edge](#) (in a tie); [F-150](#) (in a tie); and [Mustang](#). Garnering two awards each are [Nissan](#) ([Altima](#) and [Z](#)); and [Honda](#) ([CR-V](#), in a tie, and [Ridgeline](#)).

Also receiving segment awards are: [Chevrolet Trailblazer](#) (in a tie), [Chrysler PT Cruiser Wagon](#) (in a tie), [GMC Yukon](#), [Hyundai Elantra Sedan](#), [Mercury Sable](#) and [Scion tC](#).

Assembly Plant Awards

The Toyota Motor Corporation assembly plant in Higashi-Fuji, Japan, receives the Platinum Plant Quality Award for producing vehicles yielding the fewest defects and malfunctions. Averaging just 29 PP100, the plant produces the [Lexus SC 430](#) and [Toyota Corolla](#). Plant awards are based solely on average levels of defects and malfunctions and exclude design-related problems.

Among North and South American plants, the Honda plant in East Liberty, Ohio, which produces the [Civic Sedan](#), CR-V and [Element](#), achieves the Gold Plant Quality Award.

In the Europe and Africa region, Daimler's East London, South Africa, plant, which produces the [Mercedes-Benz C-Class](#), receives the Gold Plant Quality Award.

The 2009 Initial Quality Study is based on responses from more than 80,900 purchasers and lessees of new 2009 model-year cars, trucks and multi-activity vehicles surveyed after 90 days of ownership. The study is based on a 228-question battery designed to provide manufacturers with information to facilitate identifying problems and drive product improvement. The study was fielded between February and May 2009.

Find more detailed results on new-vehicle quality performance as well as model photos and specs by [reading an article](#), [browsing a photo gallery](#) and [reviewing quality ratings](#) at [JDPower.com](#).

About J.D. Power and Associates

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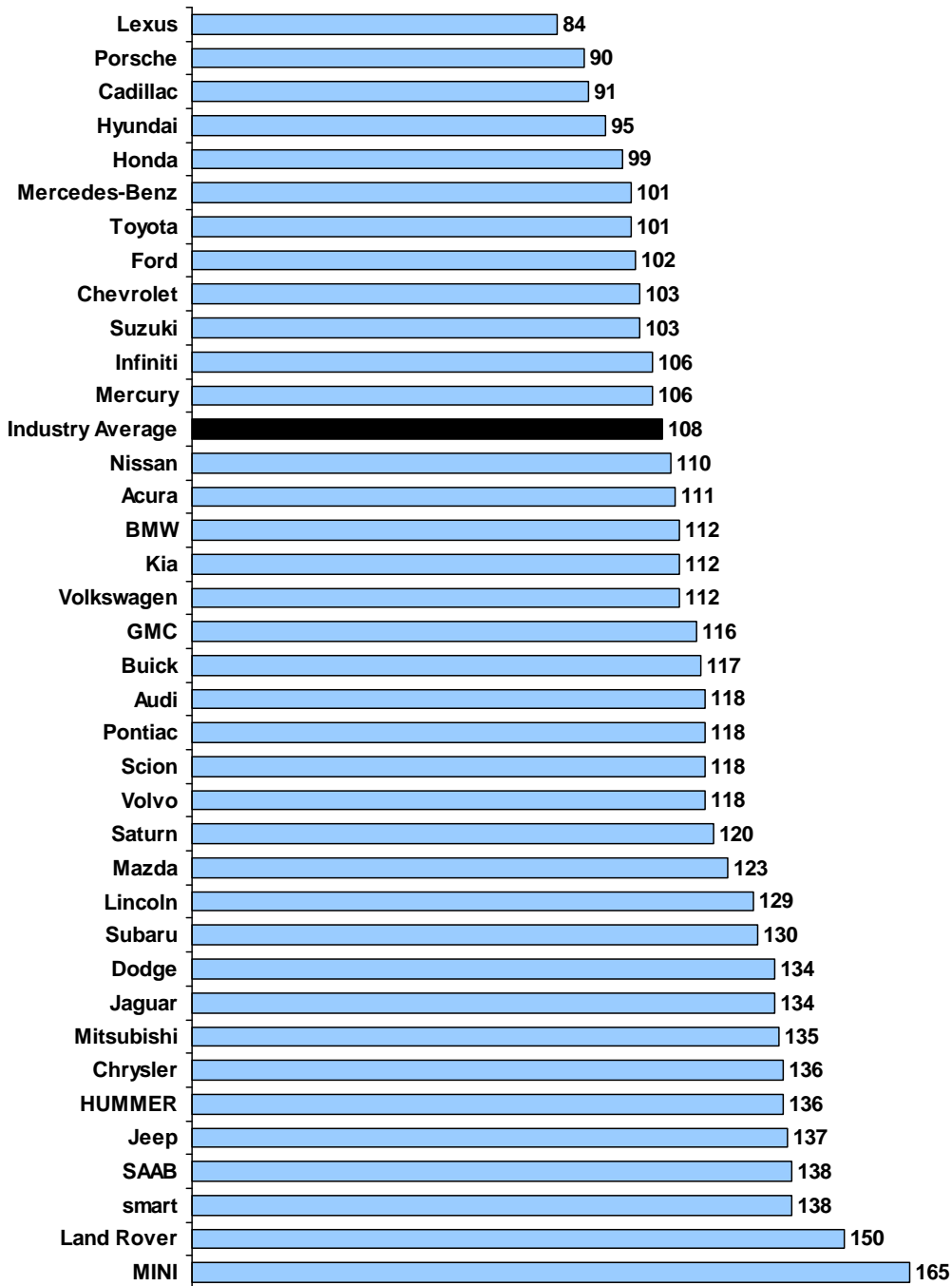
(Page 2 of 2)

NOTE: Four charts follow.

J.D. Power and Associates 2009 Initial Quality StudySM (IQS)

2009 Nameplate IQS Ranking

Problems per 100 Vehicles



Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2009 Initial Quality StudySM

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