

Ford Brand Scores Highest in Polk Loyalty Survey

SOUTHFIELD – An analysis of 2010 year-end automotive loyalty rates finds Ford Motor Company ended the year with a 63.1 percent owner loyalty rate, the highest among vehicle manufacturers, according to Polk.

Ford improved its loyalty rate 3.9 percentage points over 2009 and overtook General Motors' 2009 leading position. GM and Toyota rounded out the top three manufac-

turers for 2010, with 59.9 percent and 58.8 percent loyalty respectively.

Results reflect choices among 5.2 million new vehicle buying households during the 2010 calendar year, a 13 percent increase over 2009, based on Polk's analysis.

Loyalty is determined when a household that owns a new vehicle returns to market and purchases or leases another new vehicle of the same mod-

Automaker Improves Loyalty Rate In 2010 to Take Over GM's '09 Lead

el or make.

Polk tracks owner loyalty monthly and works with automakers and their retailers to effectively manage owner loyalty through the in-depth analysis of automotive shopping behaviors, related market influencers and development of retention strategies.

try brand loyalty in 1996. The top five brands and their loyalty rates for 2010 are as follows:

"Loyalty measurements are an important aspect of any customer retention strategy, but the real value is derived from the various consumer marketing and field training strategies created from the measurements," said Brad Smith, director of Polk's loyalty management practice.

"Manufacturers have been placing greater emphasis on owner loyalty over the last several years and these efforts can be seen with the increases during 2010."

Among all vehicle segments, luxury brands achieved the highest increases in owner loyalty year over year. Land Rover had an 8.2 percentage point increase to lead the segment in

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The Ford Escape was part of Ford's most recent "Swap My Ride" TV ad campaign. The ads feature TV host Mike Rowe.

Ford Launches New 'Swap Your Ride' Ad Campaign

by Gerald Scott
Editor
U.S. Auto Scene

They say that success breeds success and on the auto advertising front, at least, nowhere is this more clear than with Ford's latest auto ad campaign.

In its third iteration of the "Swap Your Ride" campaign, Ford maintains that there is nothing like literally swapping your ride – putting down the keys to a Toyota and test-driving a Ford – to change consumers' opinions.

Ford says that's how consumers are reacting to Ford's recently launched "Swap Your Ride" campaign, which fol-

lows earlier runs in 2007 and 2010 with this same theme.

"We've found that challenging people's perceptions head-on is the best way to change their minds about Ford," said Matt VanDyke, Ford's director of U.S. Marketing Communications.

"We're tapping real people, allowing them to experience our vehicles for themselves and then capturing their enthusiasm for the products. We're telling the Ford story through the eyes of the people who matter most – real consumers."

VanDyke and other Ford officials kicked off the campaign with a media briefing last week at the Team Detroit offices at 550 Town Center, which is across from Fairlane Mall in Dearborn.

The Swap Your Ride campaign kicked off nationally on April 5, and its goal is to change consumer perceptions about Ford by giving consumers the chance to exchange their competitive-make vehicles and experience a new Ford for a week.

Swap Your Ride participants are expressing surprise

and delight with the class-leading fuel efficiency, smart technology, advanced safety features and head-turning design of Ford products, the automaker says.

All of this candid feedback from people who were given the opportunity to swap their competitive-make vehicles for a week behind the wheel of a Ford is at the heart of the Swap Your Ride marketing campaign.

So, after driving Ford vehicles for a week – Fiesta, Focus, Fusion, Taurus, Mustang, Escape, Edge, Explorer, F-150 and Super Duty – the participants gathered in small groups to discuss their experiences and were surprised to find themselves talking to none other than Mike Rowe, host of the Discovery Channel's hit show, "Dirty Jobs."

"Mike immediately engages them in a conversation about vehicles they drove, and we capture that spontaneous interaction on camera," said VanDyke.

In one of the TV ads, Rowe talks to a consumer who swapped his Toyota Yaris for a Ford Fiesta.



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

Ford's director of U.S. Marketing Communications, Matt VanDyke, briefed the media in Dearborn last week about the launch of the automaker's latest national car ad campaign.

"How do you compare the Fiesta to the Yaris?" Rowe asked. "It's a complete upgrade," the young man responds. "When it comes to the design of the outside and the design on

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CEO Mulally Accepts Prestigious 2011 Edison Award on Behalf of Ford Motor

By MIKE HOUSEHOLDER
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) – The legacies of Henry Ford and Thomas Edison are once again intersecting, 115 years after the legendary American innovators struck up what would become a lifelong friendship.

Alan Mulally, president and CEO of the company Ford founded, the Ford Motor Co., received the Edison Achievement Award at a ceremony in New York last week.

"I'm really excited about the recognition that Alan Mulally is receiving as a 2011 Edison Achievement Awards recipient. The Ford Motor Company has an extraordinary history," said Sarah Miller Caldicott, Edison's great-grandniece and chairwoman of the Edison Awards steering committee.

Caldicott said the awards, which honor innovation and date back to 1987, haven't honored the automaker previously.

Ford, the company, also is nominated for a number of awards at the April 5 ceremony – for its MyFord Touch, MyKey, SYNC AppLink and rear inflatable seat belt technologies.

Mulally, who has been Ford's CEO since 2006, said he will accept the award "on behalf of the skilled and motivated Ford team."

"The relationship between Henry Ford and Thomas Edison inspired generations to dream of the possible," he

said in a statement. "Through the spirit of innovation and the commitment to continuous improvement, we are delivering on the original and compelling vision of Henry Ford to 'Open the Highways to All Mankind.'"

Caldicott said it's fitting to reconnect the Ford and Edison names in this way.

"Henry Ford was really pivotal in ensuring that America remembered Edison as one of the world's greatest inventors and innovators," she said, noting the automotive pioneer's efforts to reconstruct his friend's Menlo Park, New Jersey, laboratory in Dearborn in the 1920s.

To this day, Edison's reconstructed lab still has a home at The Henry Ford historical attraction in Dearborn.

Ford and Edison met in 1896 at the annual meeting of the Association of Edison Illuminating Companies, which took place in New York. Edison later became a mentor to Ford and encouraged his friend's work as an inventor and businessman.

The Edison Awards steering committee said it picked Mulally because of "the boldness of vision and leadership he has brought" to Ford and that he's "widely credited with having led the turnaround in the company's performance during the worst economic crisis in decades."

John Hendricks, founder and chairman of Discovery Communications, also was awarded the Edison Achievement Award. He created the

Discovery Channel in 1985. Its stable of companies now encompasses more than 100 networks, representing 27 entertainment brands, including Science Channel, TLC and Animal Planet.

Job Opportunities Flourish as LTU Hosts Career Event

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. – On a day when University of Michigan economists projected the state will add more than 125,000 jobs this year and next, Lawrence Tech students attending a networking reception for employers found that many Michigan companies have shifted hiring into high gear.

More than 20 companies signed up for the career week mixer hosted by the Office of Career Services (OCS) as part of Face Your Future Week at Lawrence Tech. Many companies were looking for new employees with engineering and IT skills.

Of the 261 active postings at OCS this week, 185 are in engineering, according to OCS Director Peg Pierce.

"In the past year, we've seen a steady increase in employment opportunities, but the big difference with this career fair was that everyone here was actively recruiting for positions that need to be filled," Pierce said.

Joseph Miller, an engineering manager at the Bosch facility in Plymouth, said he came to Lawrence Tech looking for new hires with strong engineering qualifications,



PHOTO: ERIC POPE

Bosch recruiter Jens Hoffman, right, talks to a job candidate during the networking reception for employers held at Lawrence Tech University in Southfield on April 5.

not just candidates for internships and co-op programs. To emphasize that point, he brought along two employees in his department who are Lawrence Tech alumni.

Tony Farrell, who earned

his degree in mechanical engineering in 2001, and Jim Darkangelo, who earned an electrical engineering degree in 2005 and a master's degree in mechatronics in 2008, both work on electronic stability

control systems for ABS brakes.

Miller said he and his team identified three or four good candidates at Lawrence Tech's career mixer. He pointed out that Bosch currently has 56 positions posted at www.boschjobs.com and urged job seekers to look for positions that fit their skill sets. "There are constant new opportunities, and not just in automotive," he said.

Keith Huck of Proper Tooling, an injection molding company in Warren that supplies tooling for the automotive industry, said he has hired between 50 and 60 new employees in the past year. He was at Lawrence Tech looking for engineers to help deal with growing demand for his company's products in the automotive sector.

It's a dramatic rebound from two years ago. "We experienced a huge drop in sales and had to lay off 30 percent of our workforce. Now, we are overwhelmed with work," Huck said.

Tara Umlah, a talent acquisition associate for Tata Technologies in Novi, had a similar story. She was laid off during

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Artist's rendering of the new Science facility at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, to be completed by next April.

HFCC's Updated Science Center To be More in Tune with the Times

The official groundbreaking ceremony for the Henry Ford Community College's new Science Center project was held on April 1 and marks another critical step for the college as a place of research, learning and as an organization dedicated to the economic development of Southeast Michigan.

Dr. Gail Mee, president at HFCC, said she was pleased that the Board of Trustees has granted approval to move forward on this high-profile project.

"This is one of our most important improvements to the college, but more significantly, the impact of this new facility will extend into the classroom and beyond as HFCC works to enhance our local, regional and state econ-

omy," she explained.

"We have a tremendous wealth of technical talent in Southeast Michigan, as well as many corporations seeking technical talent trained in the sciences for a number of positions. This center of excellence will further the sustainability goals of the college with a science center that models, teaches and promotes sustainability.

"And it will ensure that HFCC is at the forefront of preparing these students for the many new, cutting-edge careers awaiting them in Southeast Michigan and indeed throughout the state."

SHW Architects will design the new Science Center facility for HFCC.

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