

America, Japan and Korea Lead Medal Count in AutoTrader.com Automotive Games

Vehicles from seven countries competed across 10 events in the first-ever AutoTrader.com Automotive Games.

ATLANTA, Aug. 8, 2012 [PRNewswire](#) -- In the first-ever AutoTrader.com Automotive Games, we pitted vehicles from seven countries across 10 events and leveraged shopper activity on the site to determine the winners. With the total medal count in, some interesting trends emerged, pointing to a healthy dose of interest in vehicles from America, Japan and Korea. Across 10 events, American vehicles secured nine medals while Korea and Japan tied for the second most number of medals, with six each.

"While the number of American vehicles coming out on top was significant, we were particularly impressed with the strong showing for both Japanese and Korean vehicles," said Brian Moody, site editor at AutoTrader.com. "The Japanese automakers have recovered well from the disasters that nearly stopped them in their tracks last year, and the Korean brands, which many shoppers just weren't considering ten years ago, continue to generate excitement and interest from shoppers."

Events in the automotive games included Safety, Agility, Luxury, Versatility, Family Friendly, Off Road, Hauling – Trucks, Hauling – SUVs/Crossovers, Green – Alternative Power and Green – Gasoline Powered. For a description of each event's criteria and a list of why the vehicles were selected, go to www.autotrader.com/autogames.

America Leads on Strength of Ford

For the Americans, Ford secured the most medals, winning gold in the following events: Safety (Ford Taurus), Agility (Mustang GT) and Versatility (Escape); a surprise silver medal in the Hauling – Trucks event with the F-250; and a bronze in the Green – Alternative Power event for the Fusion Hybrid.

Ford's strong showing in the Automotive Games is not surprising, as it has remained one of the most-viewed brands on the AutoTrader.com site. In fact, statistics from the AutoTrader.com brand tracking study show that new car shoppers who are rating Ford as a brand that is "On the Rise" has increased for a second straight month to 68 percent—its highest level since January 2012. Among non-luxury brands Ford had the lowest amount of these same shoppers viewing the brand as "On the Decline" (6 percent).

Toyota and Honda Tie

Of Japan's six medals, Toyota and Honda tied with two each, though it was Toyota that secured both of the country's gold medals. Not surprisingly, the Toyota Prius bested the competition to win gold in the Green – Alternative Power event, but the big surprise was the last minute comeback from the Toyota Tundra, which beat out the Ford F-250 for the gold medal in the Hauling – Trucks event. According to AutoTrader.com site activity, which was used to determine the rankings in each event, the Tundra's share of shopper interest increased 22 percent from April to May and another six percent from May to June, toppling the more traditionally favored full-size truck from Ford.

In respect to brand perception among new car shoppers, Toyota is in the second tier among non-luxury brands, with 44 percent of new car shoppers seeing the brand as "On the Rise." Twelve percent see the brand as "On the Decline," which is down from 18 percent in February.

Strong Showing from Hyundai and Kia

Out of all the brands tracked by AutoTrader.com, Hyundai and Kia are two of the top three that have been "On the Rise" since January 2012. Of the two Korean brands, Hyundai secured the most medals for its homeland, with three silver (the Sonata Hybrid in the Green – Alternative Power event and the Genesis in the Safety and Agility events) and one bronze (Equus in the Luxury event). Hyundai's perceived brand trajectory is the strongest of any brand—luxury and non-luxury—with around 70 percent of new vehicle shoppers seeing the brand as "On the Rise." Simultaneously, its "On the Decline" score has dropped in that timeframe—exactly the scenario desired.

Competition Methodology

1. To begin the competition, the AutoTrader.com editorial team chose two vehicles from each country to compete in each of the ten events.
2. Elimination Round: For each event, the vehicle from each country with the highest number of June sales advanced to the finals.
3. Finalists: Gold, Silver and Bronze medalists were awarded to the vehicles that garnered the most shopper interest from January to June 2012.

To view the full medal count and a snapshot of these trends, check out the first August edition of the Shopper Insights report from the AutoTrader.com Trend Engine [here](#).

About AutoTrader.com

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