February Traffic on AutoTrader.Com Shows Hyundai's Assurance Campaign Pays Off

Increase of Interest in Hyundai Sonata, Pontiac G8 Show Marketing Matters

ATLANTA, March 3 /PRNewswire/ -- AutoTrader.com's February Trend Engine report shows that Korean automaker Hyundai's Assurance Program may be paying off. The automaker started off 2009 with an aggressive marketing campaign promoting its Assurance program, which allows a buyer who loses his or her job to return a newly-purchased vehicle with no affect to credit. The program has been highlighted on Super Bowl and Oscars ad buys and through online media buys on sites like AutoTrader.com that directly target in-market car-shoppers. As a result, in February the Sonata midsize sedan saw interest rise 143% over February 2008, pushing it from 82nd to 20th place among all new vehicles viewed on AutoTrader.com. Additionally, interest in Hyundai as a manufacturer doubled year-over-year, making Hyundai the 7th most-viewed new car brand on AutoTrader.com in February.

"Hyundai's Assurance Program shows that there is still an interest in buying cars, and that the challenges in new-car sales are in-part driven by uncertainty around the economy," said AutoTrader.com President and CEO Chip Perry. "While most manufacturers have been scaling back marketing activities, Hyundai has been one of a handful that has instead increased its spend, allowing it to communicate compelling messages on-line and in traditional media about the Assurance program and the Genesis luxury sedan's recent selection as the 2009 North American Car of the Year."

Another winner this month was the Pontiac G8 sedan, which makes its debut on AutoTrader.com's list of the 20 most-viewed new vehicles at number 14. General Motors has been promoting the G8 during the NCAA basketball finals, high-profile, high-engagement events that provide Pontiac a platform by which it can target a large number of buyers.

"With successful repetition of advertising messages targeting the right media buy, companies can break through the clutter and stimulate interest among consumers, even in a poor sales market," continued Perry. "AutoTrader.com has adopted a similar advertising strategy in 2009, spreading our advertising spend across multiple high-engagement events, including the NBA All-Star Game and Daytona 500, rather than just focusing on a single ad buy, to bring consumers to our site and offer more value to our customers."

Other new vehicles that saw an increase in interest levels from 2008 included Nissan's new 370Z sports car, which saw a 165.41% increase in views from the 350Z that it replaces, and Honda's Pilot SUV and Odyssey minivan, which saw increases of 91% and 36%, respectively, year-over-year.

Used Vehicle Market Grows in Tough Economy

The used vehicle market continued to show improvements begun in January of this year, with most models either flat or up slightly in terms of views on AutoTrader.com, though average asking prices decreased slightly. For example, interest levels in the Dodge Ram 1500 full-size pick-up increased 22%, though average asking prices fell 11%. Similarly, used Infiniti G-Series sedans and coupes saw interest levels rise 14% while average asking prices decreased 11%.

"The used market will continue to improve in the first half of this year," said Perry. "We should start seeing asking prices for used vehicles leveling off as some consumers continue to choose pre-owned over new in light of concerns about the economy."

On both the new and used lists, the continued revival in popularity of large models like the Ford F-150, the Chevy Silverado and Tahoe, the Dodge Ram and the Toyota

Tacoma speak to the need for these vehicles among many U.S. car buyers.

"When gas prices spiked last year, people who didn't really need these large vehicles sold them and bought more fuel efficient models, while those who did need them stopped buying, but that didn't mean their need went away," said Perry. "If your job or lifestyle demands one of these larger vehicles, you can put off the purchase for a while, but there really isn't a good replacement for these types of vehicles. It will be interesting to see what lessons consumers and manufacturers learned from last year and how those lessons are applied going forward to address any future gas price spikes."

About AutoTrader.com

AutoTrader.com, created in 1997 and headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., is the Internet's leading auto classifieds marketplace and consumer information website. AutoTrader.com aggregates in a single location about 3.5 million new cars, used cars and certified pre-owned cars from 40,000 dealers and 250,000 private owners and the site attracts about 14 million unique monthly visitors. Through innovative merchandising functionality such as multiple photos, videos, detailed descriptions and comprehensive research and compare tools, AutoTrader.com unites new and used car buyers and sellers online to improving the way people research, locate and advertise vehicles. AutoTrader.com is a majority-owned subsidiary of Cox Enterprises. The venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers is also an investor. For more information, please visit www.autotrader.com.

MAKE	MODEL	Rank 02/09	Rank 02/08	Rank Change from 02/08	Avg Price - 02/09	Avg Price - 02/08	Change from 02/08
			New Cars				
Ford	F-150	1	3	-6.07%	$33,242.28	$32,278.83	2.98%
Honda	Accord	2	2	-12.09%	$25,871.68	$25,294.60	2.28%
Honda	Civic	3	6	-1.12%	$20,895.57	$19,932.50	4.83%
Dodge	Challenger	4	#N/A	#N/A	$37,090.99	#N/A	#N/A
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	5	1	-40.34%	$31,848.41	$29,791.94	6.90%
Dodge	Ram 1500	6	18	52.21%	$33,851.53	$31,547.73	7.30%
Ford	Mustang	7	4	-26.23%	$32,495.91	$30,579.24	6.27%
Toyota	Camry	8	5	-24.75%	$24,173.57	$24,787.57	-2.48%
Nissan	Altima	9	7	-19.38%	$24,544.49	$24,554.65	-0.04%
Jeep	Wrangler	10	10	7.12%	$27,337.18	$27,213.44	0.45%
Nissan	350Z/370Z	11	60	165.41%	$35,657.84	$34,869.59	2.26%
Chevrolet	Corvette	12	15	14.15%	$60,925.46	$60,626.19	0.49%
Honda	Odyssey	13	28	35.71%	$33,951.21	$32,952.66	3.03%
Pontiac	G8	14	#N/A	#N/A	$31,949.60	#N/A	#N/A
Honda	Pilot	15	58	90.64%	$35,333.39	$32,520.87	8.65%
Toyota	Tacoma	16	12	-20.12%	$25,141.20	$25,030.00	0.44%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	17	14	-17.35%	$47,709.91	$44,694.42	6.75%
Toyota	Corolla	18	26	13.44%	$18,718.62	$17,852.89	4.85%
Ford	F-250	19	25	9.06%	$42,261.61	$43,016.99	-1.76%
Hyundai	Sonata	20	82	142.92%	$21,828.39	$21,616.60	0.98%
			Used Cars				
Ford	F-150	1	1	9.91%	$16,495.26	$18,367.08	-10.19%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	2	3	6.95%	$16,082.87	$18,512.59	-13.12%
Ford	Mustang	3	2	0.19%	$16,063.85	$17,481.26	-8.11%
Honda	Accord	4	4	-0.13%	$15,119.13	$16,433.46	-8.00%
Dodge	Ram 1500	5	6	21.93%	$14,898.53	$16,807.43	-11.36%
Infiniti	G35/G37	6	7	14.43%	$20,380.81	$22,788.56	-10.57%

Honda	Civic	7	5	-8.90%	$13,512.40	$14,282.79	-5.39%
Ford	F-250	8	8	6.99%	$20,305.38	$24,303.69	-16.45%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	9	11	9.51%	$20,586.32	$22,024.16	-6.53%
Jeep	Grand Cherokee	10	9	4.00%	$14,505.73	$16,537.03	-12.28%
Jeep	Wrangler	11	15	14.24%	$16,171.96	$18,241.90	-11.35%
Nissan	Altima	12	10	-3.77%	$13,976.05	$14,878.56	-6.07%
Ford	Explorer	13	12	-3.65%	$14,011.62	$15,798.18	-11.31%
Audi	A4	14	14	-1.61%	$20,268.76	$21,896.21	-7.43%
Toyota	Tacoma	15	13	-3.13%	$17,188.78	$18,791.11	-8.53%
Chevrolet	Silverado 2500	16	16	-0.05%	$19,829.73	$23,267.11	-14.77%
Toyota	Camry	17	18	0.73%	$15,735.49	$16,703.54	-5.80%
Chevrolet	Corvette	18	21	19.48%	$35,344.85	$38,775.86	-8.85%
Dodge	Ram 2500	19	20	7.37%	$20,874.87	$24,235.10	-13.87%
Chevrolet	Impala	20	19	0.27%	$12,952.93	$14,562.21	-11.05%

Top 10 Most Viewed New Vehicle Manufacturers

MAKE	Rank 02/09	Rank 02/08	Change from 02/08
Chevrolet	1	1	-15.30%
Ford	2	2	-6.18%
Toyota	3	3	-15.00%
Dodge	4	6	42.18%
Honda	5	4	3.65%
Nissan	6	5	7.11%
Hyundai	7	13	95.55%
GMC	8	7	-13.49%
Jeep	9	9	-6.32%
Mercedes-Benz	10	10	-1.58%

SOURCE: AutoTrader.com

Web site: http://www.AutoTrader.com/

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