

## Ford Considered Most Innovative Automaker by Shoppers on AutoTrader.com

ATLANTA, Jan. 10, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- According to a December survey of shoppers on AutoTrader.com, Ford was overwhelmingly selected as the most innovative automaker, with 38% choosing the domestic darling. BMW came in second with 19% and Toyota rounded out the top three at 13%.

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Innovation is a key factor underlying many of the primary drivers of shopper interest in new cars—from innovation in styling to technological innovation and new ways to deliver exceptional fuel efficiency. Ford has made progress in all three areas, according to AutoTrader.com experts, and has continually captured significant interest from shoppers on AutoTrader.com. With a few exciting all-new and newly redesigned models slated to hit dealer lots this year, including the new Ford Focus Electric and 2013 Ford Escape, it is very likely that Ford will further solidify its place as a leading innovator in the industry in the coming year.

"Ford has long been the most-searched manufacturer on AutoTrader.com and has increased its share of new vehicle shopping over the past year," said Rick Wainschel, vice president of automotive insights at AutoTrader.com. "Over the last couple of years, Ford has continued to introduce exciting new vehicles, enhancements and redesigns and has been leading the charge in utilizing unique online methods to reach shoppers, which have combined to bolster their image substantially."

AutoTrader.com experts weighed in on what makes Ford such an innovative automaker, and their top five favorite innovations are:

1. **Sync** – This is a voice activated, driver interface with the car that uses text-to-speech technology. It enables a driver to access and control an iPod, make and receive phone calls and even use third-party apps via Bluetooth (like Pandora)—all by voice control. When there is a connected iPod, the driver (or other vehicle occupant) can use a string of commands to hear a specific song, artist, album or even genre of music. Sync also allows basic turn-by-turn navigation, even in cars that don't have a built-in, screen based navigation system. The really amazing thing about Sync is that it is not expensive – many cars come with it as standard, but adding it often costs only around \$400.
2. **Hybrid and Electric Vehicles** – The Ford Fusion is one of the best hybrid sedans available, according to AutoTrader.com's experts. It gets better than 40 mpg but doesn't feel slow or underpowered. The new Fusion, making its debut at the 2012 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, will get better than 45 miles per gallon. Also, the Ford Focus Electric will soon be available. It uses zero gasoline and charges its battery in about half the time as other pure electric EVs.
3. **MyFordTouch** – This technology was introduced in January of 2010 and was first implemented in the 2011 Ford Edge. MyFordTouch uses a touch screen to control and access various in-car features such as navigation, satellite radio, climate control and wirelessly connected phones. The technology also includes a media hub with two USB inputs, RCA style jacks and an SD card slot. MyFordTouch also allows the vehicle to be turned into a WiFi hotspot, although owners will need their own USB modem or smartphone with tethering.
4. **EcoBoost** – This is Ford's brand name for a line of turbocharged engines. The best example is Ford using an EcoBoost V6 in the F-150

and some SUVs instead of a V8. By using turbocharging, Ford can put a smaller engine in a truck or SUV, giving it excellent fuel economy but with the kind of horsepower buyers expect from full-size trucks and SUVs.

5. **MyKey** – Ford's MyKey Technology allows a vehicle owner to have a master key that controls certain vehicle parameters. For example, a master key user can set a speed chime or lower the vehicle's top speed. When MyKey is engaged, the fasten seat belt chime will never time out unless the seat belt is fastened and the radio is muted until the seatbelt is fastened. MyKey also lowers the overall radio volume, and certain Sirius satellite radio stations can be blocked.

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