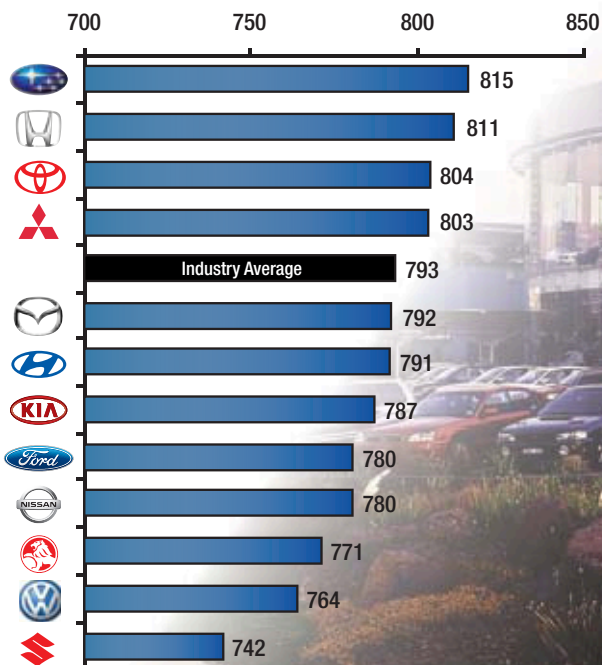


## 2011 JD Power Customer Service Index Ranking\*



# Subaru serves best

Mazda down, but Japanese brands again dominate Australian car servicing study

By TERRY MARTIN

**SUBARU** has emerged as the standout performer in the second annual Australian customer service index (CSI) study released today by respected global marketing information firm JD Power.

Struck by limited supplies of vehicles due to the Japanese earthquake and tsunami this year, but determined to return to record sales in 2012, Subaru scored an impressive 815 points out of a maximum 1000 in the influential study, which measures new-vehicle buyer satisfaction with the aftersales service process.

The Japanese brand has long fostered customer loyalty with its unique boxer engine and all-wheel-drive policy for its vehicles – although the latter could change next year if the new rear-drive

BRZ sports car comes here.

After ranking fourth last year on 790 points, Subaru was one of only four brands to place above this year's industry average of 793, with Honda second on 811, Toyota on 804 and Mitsubishi on 803, a significant improvement on last year's below-average result of 777 points for eighth place.

Notably, last year's inaugural CSI winner Mazda slipped below the industry average to place fifth with a score of 792 (down from 806).

Mazda scored just one point more than Hyundai, whose improved CSI result this year has come in parallel with its continuing strong performance in the sales charts – where it is in a tightly fought race with Mazda for fourth place

overall and top full-line importer status.

Last year, Hyundai was well below the industry average (on 774, in ninth place) and behind the top-four Japanese brands, as well as Ford, Nissan, Volkswagen and Mitsubishi.

While Ford has slipped from fifth to eighth in the CSI ranking and is struggling in sales terms this year – down 4.7 per cent to the end of October, due largely to its locally built vehicles falling 24.3 per cent – the Blue Oval's 780 points (down five) in this year's study maintains its position ahead of Holden, which scored 771 points (up three) to remain in a lowly 10th place.

Continued next page

\*Source: JD Power Asia Pacific. CSI ranking based on 1000-point scale.

NOTE: Included in the study but not ranked due to small and insufficient sample size are:

Audi, BMW, Chrysler, Jeep, Land Rover, Lexus, Mercedes-Benz, Peugeot, Renault and Volvo.

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# Subaru serves best

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Nissan and Volkswagen, which both have ambitions of becoming the top import brands in Australia and have enjoyed sales increases this year of 8.2 and 17.2 per cent respectively, placed well below average in the latest CSI study.

Nissan scored the same 780 points as last year, but dropped three rungs to ninth, while Volkswagen fell sharply from 780 points and seventh place last year to 764 to be outside the top 10 in 11th position.

VW, Mazda and Ford were the only brands to post lower CSI scores this year.

Suzuki again placed 12th (up one point to 742), while the improving status of Kia in Australia – sales of which are up 3.4 per cent this year, despite demand for key models outstripping supply – was reflected in its rise up the table to seventh position on 787 points (up from 747 and 11th place last year), just behind fellow Korean brand Hyundai.

As was the case last year, several other brands – Audi, BMW, Chrysler, Jeep, Land Rover, Lexus, Mercedes-Benz, Peugeot, Renault and Volvo – were included in the study but were not



ranked due to insufficient sample size.

The study results were based on responses from 4137 owners who purchased vehicles between August 2006 and August 2011 and who had their vehicle serviced between August 2010 and August this year.

Conducted by JD Power Asia Pacific, the study was fielded between August and September this year and measured owner satisfaction with the aftersales service process by examining authorised dealership performance across five factors.

In order of weighting, these were: service quality (25 per cent), vehicle pick-up (20 per cent), service advisor (20 per cent), service initiation (18 per cent) and service facility (17 per cent).

The 793-point industry average represents a slight increase over last year's average of 786.

There were, however, other significant findings that will be noticed in corporate offices and dealerships across Australia, including the fact that 59 per cent of survey participants – almost six out of 10 customers – were required to wait more than three hours to collect their vehicle from the time

they dropped it off for service.

This led to a corresponding drop in satisfaction from 817 points for those whose cars were completed inside three hours, to 776 for those forced to wait longer.

“Customers wait an average six hours for their vehicle to be serviced,” said JD Power Asia Pacific executive director Mohit Arora.

“Dealers that provide expedient service not only delight their customers, but also benefit from dealership profitability as a result of higher levels of asset utilisation.”

The study also found that owners who are highly satisfied with the overall service experience – that is, with scores averaging above 897 – tend to have higher levels of advocacy and loyalty toward the dealership, compared with less-satisfied owners (scores averaging below 713).

Among owners who are highly satisfied with their service experience at the dealership, 86 per cent said they “definitely will” return to the same dealership for paid service, while only nine per cent of less-satisfied owners said they will definitely do likewise.

**FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)**

John Mellor's

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