

Consumers rate Michelin and Pirelli at the top

Two tire brands are clear winners in the J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Original Equipment Tire Customer Satisfaction Study: Michelin and Pirelli. Michelin rated highest in three of the study's four categories. Pirelli was tops in the "Performance Sport Segment." "It is important for tire and vehicle manufacturers to understand how tire satisfaction affects both vehicle brand and dealer loyalty," says Brent Gruber, senior manager of the tire practice at J.D. Power and Associates. "High tire satisfaction positively influences owner perceptions of their vehicle." In the 2011 study, Michelin finished first in all four segments. The three segments in which Michelin finished first were "Luxury," "Passenger Car" and "Truck/Utility." Here were the results among original equipment brands, all based on a 1,000-point scale. Luxury Segment (average is 735 points): Michelin, 777; Goodyear, 750; Pirelli, 735; Continental, 703; Bridgestone, 698; Dunlop 684. Passenger Car Segment (average is 672 points): Michelin, 726; Goodyear, 691; Firestone, 656; Dunlop, 651; Hankook, 647; Continental, 646; Bridgestone, 639; Yokohama, 623; Kumho, 618; Toyo, 606. Truck/Utility Segment (average is 680 points): Michelin, 740; Pirelli, 700; Bridgestone, 681; Dunlop, 677; BFGoodrich, 673; Goodyear, 665; General, 634; Continental, 595. Overall satisfaction in the fourth segment, "Performance Sport," is on the rise. For the first time since the redesign of the study in 2009, the performance sport tire segment earned the highest satisfaction scores among the four segments included in the study (previously, the luxury segment has reported the highest satisfaction scores). "This result is evidence that a combination of state of the art technology and design can result in high performance tires that no longer sacrifice our consumer's needs," says Tom Gravalos, vice president of motorsports and OE marketing. "Our scientific advancements have eliminated compromises in performance, comfort, acceleration, braking and handling in wet and dry conditions." The segment average increased 38 points in 2012 to 748 points on a 1,000 point scale. Here are the results. Performance Sport Segment (average is 748 points): Pirelli, 788; Goodyear, 739; Bridgestone, 699; Continental, 685. "By choosing a better performing tire for its vehicles, not only are manufacturers in a position to build greater loyalty for their brand, but they're also increasing the potential for future service business at dealerships," adds Gruber.