

Revolution

Luxury car brands focus on pleasing existing customers

Elizabeth Clifford-Marsh, revolutionmagazine.com, 09 July 2009, 09:45am

LONDON - Luxury car brands are investing in the web to keep existing customers happy during the recession rather than attempting to attract new ones, finds new research.

A study into the web presence of eight leading car brands found that the service offered to current owners has improved significantly over the last year, indicating motor manufacturers are investing more in customer retention and building brand loyalty.

Overall, the average score for the online service offered to prospective buyers improved slightly from 62 per cent to 63 per cent. In contrast, scores for the service offered to current vehicle owners improved significantly, from 30 per cent last year to 38 per cent this year.

This marks a major strategic shift for the majority of automotive firms, which have previously focused on improving the information available to prospective buyers on their websites.

According to the *Comparing Car Sites* benchmark report from Global Reviews, Volvo, BMW and Volkswagen have always invested heavily online, but are now being rivalled by Audi and Mercedes, which have significantly improved the offerings on their websites.

While Volvo's overall web experience remained unchanged, rated at 63 per cent, BMW and VW improved their performance by 6 and 4 per cent respectively.

The report found VW and Audi offer the best site navigation, while BMW offers the best customer support online. VW also tops the table for the best experience for prospective buyers with a score of 70 per cent.

At the other end of the scale, Jaguar, Porsche and Lexus failed to meet basic standards.

The *Comparing Car Sites* benchmark report measures customer experience based on 500 criteria including the information available to prospective buyers, customer support, service offered to vehicle owners, and general site usability.

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