

Category: *Automotive OEM*

Methods: *Quantitative Research, Intender Survey, New Buyer Survey, Competitive Buyer Survey*

Summary

A global automotive OEM was launching a redesigned version of its best-selling vehicle in the U.S. The vehicle was among the leaders in its segment. Some would consider it a “benchmark” vehicle. Because of the importance of its role within their portfolio, our client was keenly interested in how the redesigned vehicle would perform upon introduction. In order to provide a holistic view of the market reaction, Decision Analyst partnered in designing and implementing a research program that provided insights from among three key groups of consumers: in-segment new vehicle intenders; buyers of the new vehicle; and buyers of key competitive vehicles.

Strategic Issues

This client was facing a fiercely competitive and dynamic environment. The stakes were particularly high because the vehicle segment in which it competed was high volume. It had some strong competitors to contend with as well. The vehicle had done well traditionally, but had recently drawn some criticism. It was, therefore, particularly important that the new version of this vehicle buttress its reputation and grow its share of the segment sales.



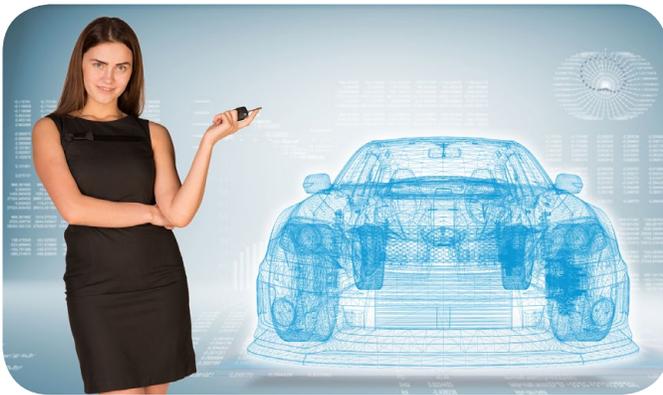
Research Objectives

The client needed to determine to what degree the launch had met the marketing goals they had set for it. This included measuring the strength of the new vehicle on various measures of brand health, such as customer retention, conquest, and purchase consideration, in comparison with key competitors. They also were very interested in determining whether or not the vehicle excelled with the target market they had defined for it. This included understanding precisely where the sales volume was

coming from. The final key objective was determining how the new vehicle was received from a design and feature standpoint. Decision Analyst's automotive research team identified perceived strengths and weaknesses of the vehicle and these were put into a competitive context for suggesting next-generation product improvements.

Research Design and Methods

The study was conducted primarily online, using independent samples of new vehicle purchase intenders, recent buyers of the test vehicle, and recent buyers of key competitor vehicles. Three different questionnaires were used. The "Intender" study was conducted as a continuous interview over a six-week period that coincided with launch advertising.



Results

The launch was a success. Information provided from the study was used in tailoring the message and in developing detailed conquest strategies and suggestions for next-generation product improvements. The vehicle and parent brand were strengthened, and this model continues to perform as one of the leaders in its segment.