

AUTO INDUSTRY

Quality Survey

Results of passenger car product quality survey unveiled

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Research house Ipsos has announced the winners in its newest Ipsos Passenger Car Product Quality Survey.

The survey is voluntary, with 17 vehicle brands participating, representing 77% of the new passenger cars and light commercial vehicles sold through retail channels in South Africa.

The survey looked at new-vehicle sales in 2015, interviewing owners on gripes about their vehicles, not only in terms of defects, but also perceived design flaws.

Combined, this data produced a vehicle quality survey (VQS) score. The lower the score, the better.

Awards were made in several categories.

The Nissan Micra was awarded gold in the entry-level segment, while the Toyota Yaris clinched the top spot in the small hatchback segment, and the Audi A1, the Audi A3 Sportback and the Toyota Auris shared first place in the top hatch segment.

The award for the best small sedan went to the Toyota Corolla Quest and the Volkswagen Polo, with the Audi A4 and the Audi A5 Sportback tied for gold in the medium sedan segment.

Gold in the top sedan segment went to the Audi A3, and in the top executive segment to the Mercedes-Benz E-Class. The Audi A5 took top honours in the sports coupe segment, and

the Mercedes-Benz B-Class in the multipurpose vehicle segment.

Audi was named the best luxury passenger car brand overall, with best volume passenger car brand overall a tie between Nissan and Toyota.


The best local plant manufacturing passenger cars was General Motors South Africa's Struandale facility, in Port Elizabeth.

Gold for the best small recreational vehicle went to the Audi Q5 and the Volvo XC60. The best large recreational vehicle was the Volkswagen Touareg.

The Ipsos survey named the Nissan NP200 the best three-quarter-ton bakkie and the Toyota Hilux the best petrol single cab.

Gold for the best diesel single cab went to the Toyota Hilux and the Isuzu KB, with the Toyota Hilux the best diesel double cab bakkie.

The best light commercial vehicle brand was Toyota, with Toyota South Africa Motors' Durban plant also the best local plant manufacturing light commercial vehicles.

Toyota also took gold as the best one-ton single-cab and best one-ton double-cab bakkie brand. 

EXPORT ASSISTANCE

African exporter finance support guide published

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AFRICA House and Spoke Consulting recently unveiled a new information document outlining the financial instruments available to South African exporters to unlock their competitive edge in Africa.

The new 'Finance Compendium: Guideline of Funding and Investment Support for South African Registered Exporters of Goods and Services' unpacks the numerous government-led and private-sector financial products and services available to exporters.

Many South African companies are unaware or have insufficient

knowledge of the finance, incentive and support instruments available to South Africa-based exporters.

"We are losing deals in Africa, and not [necessarily] because of price, quality and delivery," Africa House projects and development FD **Paul Runge** told attendees at the launch, held at WorleyParsons' Johannesburg offices. The live and growing electronic compendium contained basic information and contact details relevant to manufacturers, traders, contractors, consultants and service providers.

Spoke Consulting director and Manufacturing Circle executive director **Philippa Rodseth** explained that the more informa-

tion a company had, the better equipped it would be to make key decisions and position itself competitively and relevantly in Africa.

Unpacking the context of the baseline report, she provided an overview of the structure of the report, which included advisory, funding and insurance service options, and the "big picture" of the categories of sources of export assistance and funding-types.

The document lists the support options of specialist organisations, relevant government departments and agencies, major export councils, chambers of commerce, development finance institutions and service providers.

These include the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Industrial Development Corpora-

tion, the Development Bank of Southern Africa; Nedbank Corporate and Investment Banking, the Export Credit Insurance Corporation, Sanlam and Santam, the Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni North Chambers of Commerce and Industry; the Built Environment Professions Export Council, the Credit Guarantee Insurance Corporation and the Southern Africa Stainless Steel Development Association, besides others.

DTI strategic partnerships and customer care chief director **Tsepiso Makgothi** said the DTI was working to mitigate the current industry challenges of low growth, high unemployment and social issues, and to stimulate local output through the offering of various incentives. 

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for about 300 km, with 130 km of the total distance on its 9 l range extender petrol engine.

BMW South Africa's **Alan Boyd** says that, since the March 2015 launch of the group's fully electric vehicles, it has sold 142 in South Africa and 60 000 worldwide.

Boyd says BMW expects to sell more when the economy improves and when the number of EV charging stations increases as more are installed for easy access at companies, business estates,

shopping centres and apartment complexes. Many developers are already including EV charging facilities in their new buildings.

EV vehicle batteries have a life of eight to ten years, at which point they drop to between 50% and 60% capacity and can then be recycled or repurposed for lower-energy needs, such as lighting, and used for several more years.

They are then submitted to recycling processes that can extract core materials, which can be put back into the battery

manufacturing process.

"We are confident that this is an attractive business opportunity for a local or international commercial role-player to partner with us in taking it to mass commercialisation. We have developed the intellectual property for this energy management system, and the added advantage is that the equipment we have used to create this facility is 90% South African technology," says Palmar.

"To date, the South African roll-out of EV charging infrastructure

has been primarily driven by the original-equipment manufacturers and the private sector. In 2015, BMW South Africa and Nissan South Africa signed a memorandum of understanding stipulating their collaborative efforts in the national implementation of EV charging infrastructure.

"We are ready to join hands with suitable partners to exponentially expand and revolutionise the current e-mobility landscape in South Africa and internationally," says Palmar. 