

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: David Myhrer, Vice President, Automotive Brand Strategy, 248.539.5284

**Morpace Reports: Feelings about Ownership Experience
Drive Automotive Brand Buzz**

FARMINGTON HILLS, MI, October 13, 2008 – Automotive manufacturers ignore the effect of the vehicle owning experience on future sales at their own peril, according to results from a recent Morpace Omnibus Study.

The study examined consumers’ feelings about the vehicle they own, and their resulting willingness – or unwillingness – to recommend that model and brand to others. Results document the rewards of positive vehicle experiences and the penalty of negative experiences. “Ultimately, consumers’ feelings about their ownership experience drive the buzz and word of mouth about the brand,” said David Myhrer, Vice President of the Morpace Automotive Brand Strategy Practice.

In the survey, consumers chose among 22 feelings – ranging from outrage, worry, and depression to surprise, happiness, and delight – to describe their vehicle experience. Positive feelings predominate, with 84 percent choosing only positive feelings. In contrast, 16 percent report negative or mixed feelings.

Consumers with mixed or negative feelings are about three times less likely than those with positive feelings to recommend the brand, and four times less likely to recommend the particular vehicle, according to Myhrer. “That’s very significant,” he added, “but companies that track only traditional purchasing trends miss that fact.”

Owner feelings and willingness to recommend vary greatly across nameplates. “Brands that deliver on the automotive fundamentals, the things that everyone wants, are the brands that win,” Myhrer said.

Meanwhile, consumer expectations are high, and getting higher. Significantly, 60 percent of consumers say that their current vehicle experience is better than their own past experiences, and also better than the vehicle experiences other people have had.

Survey interviews were completed with a national, demographically representative sample of 1,171 adult consumers.

About Morpace Inc.

Morpace is a full-service survey research and consulting organization specializing in automotive, financial services, health care, retail and technology. Morpace has global expertise in providing innovative proprietary solutions to clients in four core areas: market definition and segmentation; product development and pricing; brand and image positioning; and customer satisfaction and loyalty. Its Automotive Brand Strategy Practice conducts both custom ad hoc and tracking research.

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