



## Press Release

### **J.D. Power Asia Pacific Reports:**

### **Owners of Fuel-Efficient Replacement Tires in Japan Are Particularly Satisfied with Tire Contributions to Fuel Economy**

#### Bridgestone, Michelin and Yokohama Each Rank Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Replacement Tires in Their Respective Segments

**TOKYO: 28 January 2010** — Owners of fuel-efficient replacement tires indicate they are highly satisfied with the contributions the tires make to fuel economy, according to the J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2009 Japan Replacement Tire Customer Satisfaction Index Study<sup>SM</sup> released today.

Within the replacement tire market in Japan, fuel-efficient tires have recently emerged as a major product category, in addition to the traditional categories of sporty tires, comfort/luxury tires and standard tires. While overall satisfaction among owners of fuel-efficient tires is approximately the same as the industry average, satisfaction with contribution of these tires to fuel economy is considerably higher—averaging a rating of 6.1 on a 10-point scale, compared with the industry average of 5.7.

Overall, 64 percent of owners of fuel-efficient replacement tires say they place importance on fuel efficiency when selecting their tire model. In addition, 38 percent of these owners say they place importance on eco-friendliness when selecting their tire model.

“The tire labeling system that was introduced in January 2010 by the Japan Automobile Tyre Manufacturers Association may lead to increased competition between tire manufacturers, particularly for fuel-efficient tires,” said Tetsushi Furuya, project manager at J.D. Power Asia Pacific, Tokyo. “This labeling system makes it easier for consumers to compare tire attributes, so it is more critical than ever for tire manufacturers to develop and promote products that meet increasing customer demand for fuel efficiency and eco-friendliness.”

The inaugural study measures customer satisfaction with replacement tires (excluding winter tires) in four segments: mini-car/compact car, passenger car and minivan and SUV.<sup>1</sup> Overall customer satisfaction with replacement tires is based on four factors: appearance, durability/reliability, handling/traction and ride/quietness.

The study finds that the relative importance of each factor varies by segment. Within the mini-car/compact car and passenger car segments, the handling/traction factor has the greatest importance in overall satisfaction, while in the minivan segment, the durability/reliability factor is the most important.

#### **Replacement Tire Customer Satisfaction Rankings**

Among the five brands included in the mini-car/compact car segment ranking, Yokohama ranks highest in customer satisfaction with replacement tires with an index score of 599 on a 1,000-point scale. Yokohama performs particularly well in the handling/traction, appearance and durability/reliability factors. Following Yokohama in the segment ranking are Toyo (594), Bridgestone (589) and Dunlop (588). Toyo performs particularly well in the ride/quietness factor.

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<sup>1</sup>For a segment award to be issued, there must be at least three brands with sufficient sample that comprise 80 percent of market sales within an award segment. There is only one SUV brand with sufficient sample size, thus no SUV award has been presented.

Among the seven brands included in the passenger car segment ranking, Michelin ranks highest with a score of 681 and performs particularly well in all four factors. Following Michelin in the segment ranking are Bridgestone (660) and Pirelli (646).

Among the six brands included in the minivan segment ranking, Bridgestone ranks highest with a score of 618 and performs particularly well in all four factors. Following Bridgestone in the segment ranking are Michelin (612)—which performs particularly well in the appearance factor—and Dunlop (605).

On average, 11 percent of owners say they “definitely would” repurchase the same brand for their next set of replacement tires. This figure increases to 37 percent among owners who are highly satisfied with their current replacement tires (scores averaging 800 or higher).

“It is imperative for tire manufacturers to improve customer satisfaction in order to increase brand loyalty and the market share,” said Furuya. “In doing so, manufacturers may improve the likelihood of creating lifelong customers who will consistently turn to their brand when it comes time to replace their tires.”

The 2009 Japan Replacement Tire Customer Satisfaction Index Study is based on responses from 6,995 vehicle owners during the first four to 15 months of ownership, who purchased their replacement tires between August 2008 and July 2009. The Internet-based survey was conducted in November 2009.

#### **About J.D. Power Asia Pacific**

J.D. Power Asia Pacific has offices in Tokyo, Singapore, Beijing, Shanghai and Bangkok that conduct customer satisfaction research and provide performance analytics services in the automotive, information technology and finance industries. Together, the five offices bring the language of customer satisfaction to consumers and businesses in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Information regarding J.D. Power Asia Pacific and its products can be accessed through the Internet at [www.jdpower.com](http://www.jdpower.com). Media e-mail contact: [cc-group@jdpower.co.jp](mailto:cc-group@jdpower.co.jp)

#### **About J.D. Power and Associates**

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is a global marketing information services company operating in key business sectors including market research, forecasting, performance improvement, Web intelligence and customer satisfaction. The company’s quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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#### **Media Relations Contacts:**

Shizue Hidaka; J.D. Power Asia Pacific; Toranomon 45 MT Bldg. 8F; 5-1-5 Toranomon; Minato-ku, Tokyo; Japan 105-0001; Phone +81-3-4550-8090; [shizue\\_hidaka@jdpower.co.jp](mailto:shizue_hidaka@jdpower.co.jp)

John Tews; Director, Media Relations; J.D. Power and Associates; 5435 Corporate Drive, Suite 300; Troy, MI, 48098 USA; 001 248-312-4119; [john.tews@jdpa.com](mailto:john.tews@jdpa.com)

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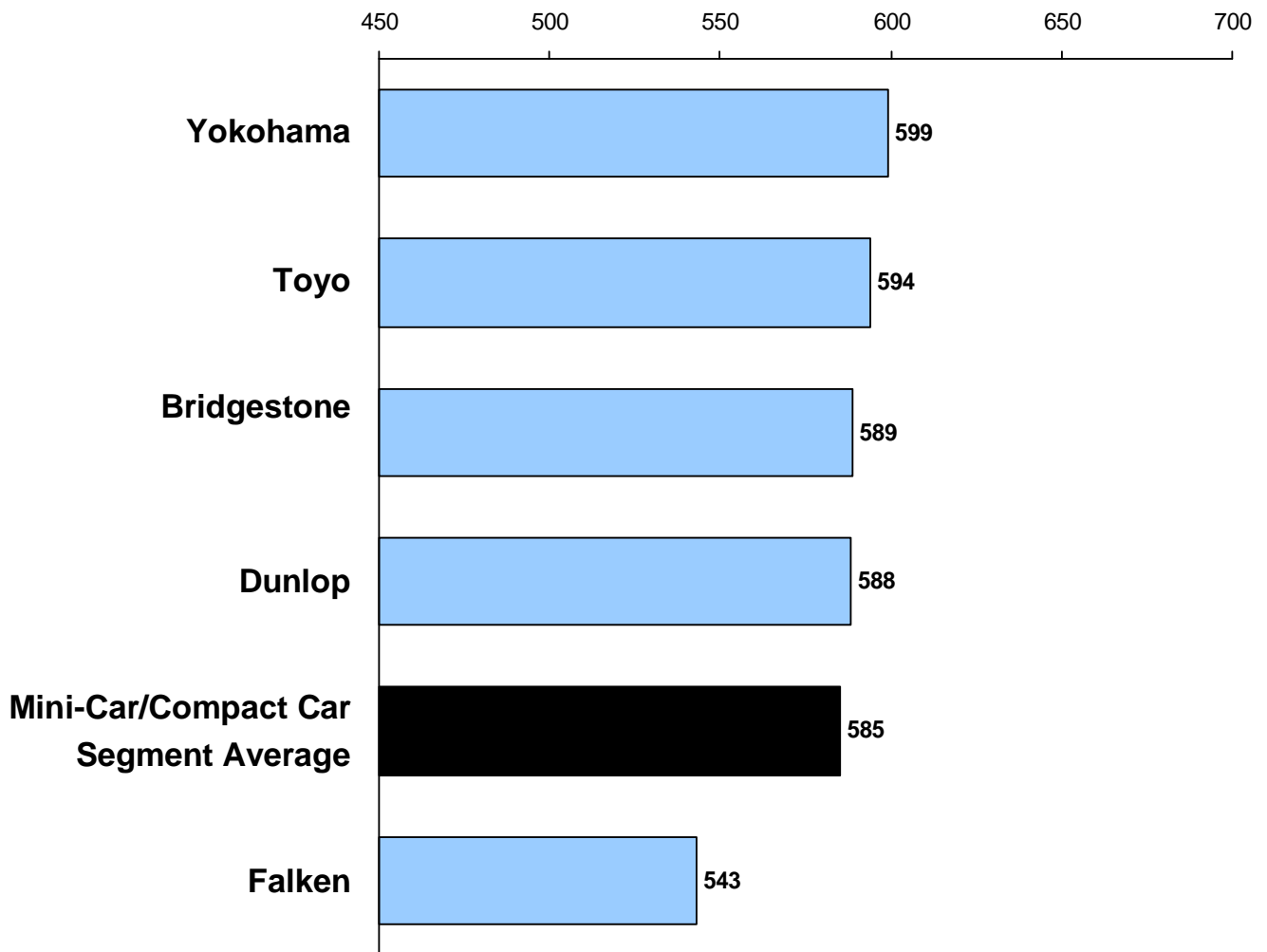
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NOTE: Three charts follow.

# J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2009 Japan Replacement Tire Customer Satisfaction Index Study<sup>SM</sup>

## Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking Mini-Car/Compact Car Segment (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



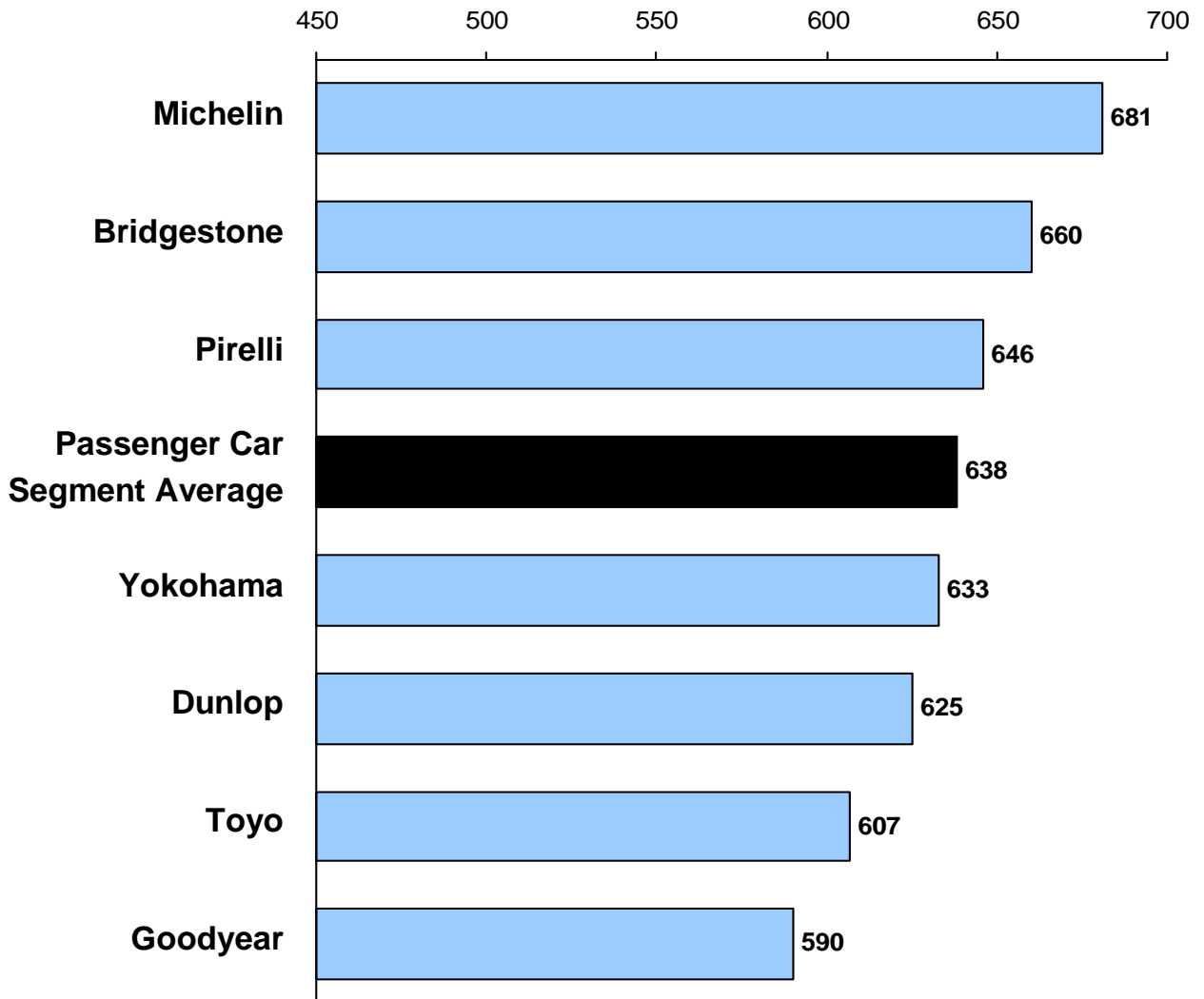
NOTE: Included in the study, but not ranked due to small sample size are: Autobacs, Goodyear, Michelin and Nankang.

Source: J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2009 Japan Replacement Tire Customer Satisfaction Index Study<sup>SM</sup>

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## *Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking Passenger Car Segment (Based on a 1,000-point scale)*



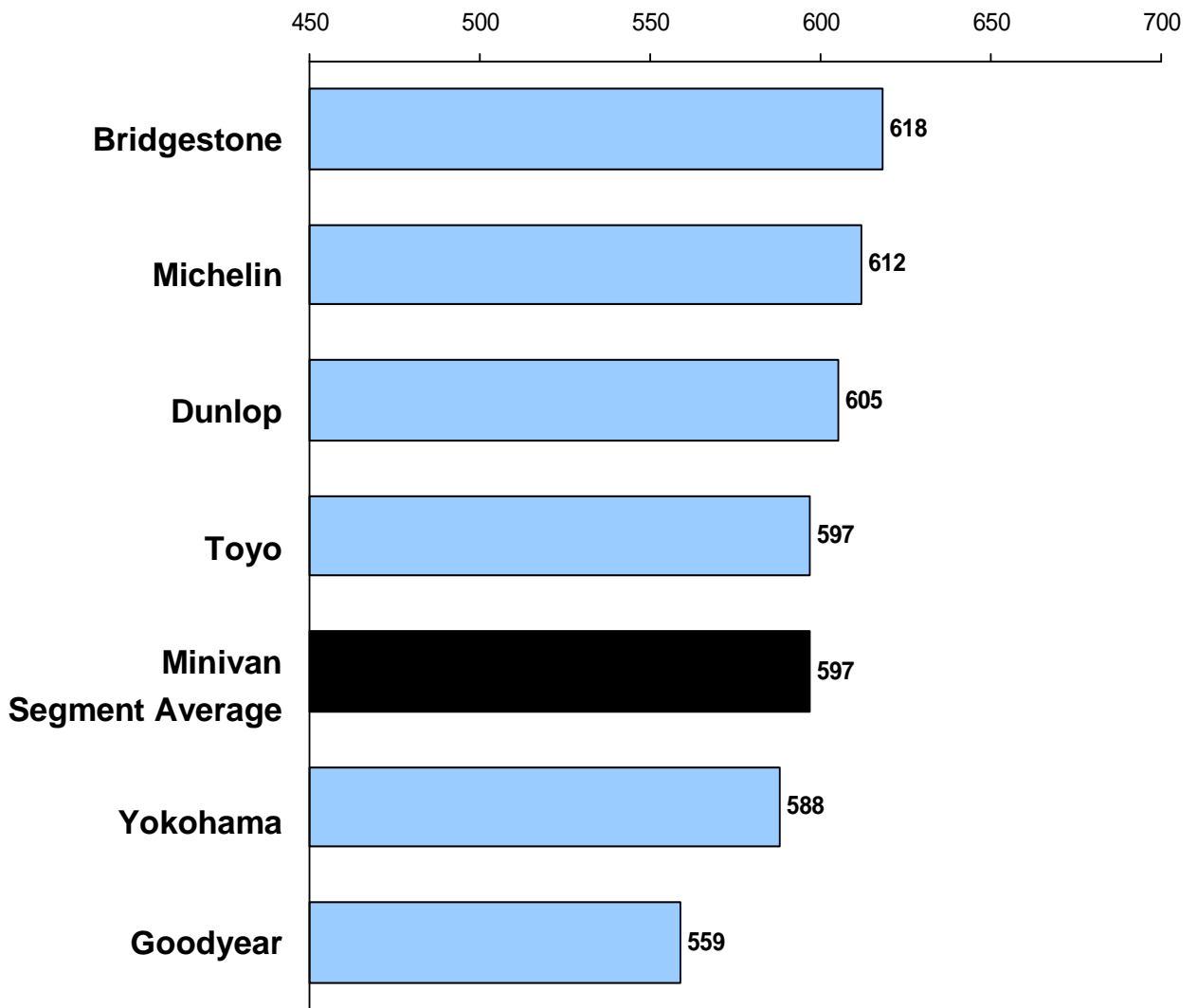
NOTE: Included in the study, but not ranked due to small sample size are: Autobacs, Falken and Nankang.

Source: J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2009 Japan Replacement Tire Customer Satisfaction Index Study<sup>SM</sup>

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## Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking Minivan Segment (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



NOTE: Included in the study, but not ranked due to small sample size are: Autobacs, Falken, Kumho, Nankang, Nexen and Pirelli.

Source: J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2009 Japan Replacement Tire Customer Satisfaction Index Study<sup>SM</sup>

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