

Ram Truck Climbs 20 Spots In J.D. Power Study

The Ram Truck brand is the most improved brand in the J.D. Power and Associates 2013 U.S. Vehicle Dependability Study (VDS).

The Ram Truck brand moved up 20 positions in the brand rankings compared with the 2012 VDS, with 30 percent fewer problems reported per 100 vehicles. VDS measures the problems experienced in the previous 12 months by original owners of three-year-old 2010 model year vehicles based on responses from more than 37,000 surveys, according to J.D. Power and Associates.

"When we redesigned the majority of the Ram lineup in 2009-2010, customers immediately took notice of the interior refinements and improved ride," said Doug Betts, senior vice president - Quality, Chrysler Group.

"After three years in service, owners are now experiencing the benefits of all the behind-the-scenes development we did, including enhanced durability testing and more stringent quality targets.

"The 2010 model year Ram Truck brand improvement bodes well for the Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep brands in the coming years," Betts added. "Many of the quality processes we initiated for the all-new Ram trucks were institutionalized across the board as we prepared to launch 16 new or improved products for the 2011 model year."

The study, now in its 24th year, measures problems experienced during the past 12 months by original owners of three-year-old vehicles (those that were introduced for the 2010 model year). Overall dependability is determined by the number of problems experienced per 100 vehicles (PP100), with a lower score reflecting higher quality.

In 2013, the dependability of models that were new or substantially redesigned for the 2010 model year averages 116 PP100, compared with 133 PP100 for models that were unchanged from the 2009 model-year - also referred to as carryover models.

This is the first year that there are fewer reported problems for all-new or redesigned models than for carryover models since the study was redesigned in 2009. Models that were refreshed in 2010, those with generally minor changes to the interior or exterior, average 111 PP100 in the 2013 VDS.

"There is a perception that all-new models, or models that undergo a major redesign, are more problematic than carryover models," said David Sargent, vice president of global automotive at J.D. Power and Associates. "Data from the 2013 VDS suggests that this is not the case. The rapid improvement in fundamental vehicle dependability each year is more than offsetting any initial glitches that all-new or redesigned models may have."

Chrysler's Barbara Pilarski Earns Leadership Award

Chrysler has in recent years received dozens of awards and commendations for diversity and inclusion, and with 2013 only in its second month, a veteran Chrysler executive has scored another honor in that category.

The Women's Automotive Association International (WAAI) has selected Barbara Pilarski, vice president, Business Development, to receive the Spirit of Leadership Award. The award is presented annually "to professional women in the automotive industry in recognition of their significant accomplishments in their profession, community and family." Pilarski received the award Feb. 9 at a ceremony held in Orlando, Fla.

The focus of the WAAI is on the development and retention of women leaders and the education and support of all those who have an interest in the automotive industry.

"This recognition is very meaningful to me," Pilarski said. "I want to express my sincerest appreciation to the leadership and members of the Women's Automotive Association International for choosing me to receive this honor. I've been fortunate throughout my life and career to have had outstanding support from both my family and friends, which has helped to bring sanity and balance to 'the other side' of my life. This has been a key enabler in allowing me to remain focused in the right direction in my professional life."

Pilarski began her career at Chrysler in 1958 as a financial analyst. Since then, she has distinguished herself in several key positions in various areas, including Controlling, Treasury Mergers and Acquisitions.

Before her current appointment, Pilarski served as executive director of Chrysler Group's Mergers and Acquisitions organization, in which capacity she was responsible for all aspects of mergers, acquisitions and divestiture activities affecting



Barbara Pilarski

North and South American business operations for Chrysler, and formerly for DaimlerChrysler business units.

As vice president - Business Development, Pilarski is responsible for negotiating key strategic partnership arrangements for Chrysler globally, and for managing the company's alliance relationships. She reports directly to Chrysler Group Chairman and CEO Sergio Marchionne.

Pilarski is a leader in her community as well as performing her duties at Chrysler. She serves as executive sponsor of the Chrysler Women's Forum, an employee research group that weighs input from a diverse group of Chrysler employees as a guide to improving the company's products and services. Pilarski is also an active supporter and leader with the United Way for Southeastern Michigan, and the Girls and Boys Club of Southeastern Michigan.

In her acceptance remarks, Pilarski spoke of an automotive industry in transformation.

"We've all made great strides to transform this vitally important industry into a diverse, vibrant and inclusive industry of leaders," she said. "But we still have a long way to go. I'm eager and proud to be with all of you on this important journey."

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