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Inside The Windsor Star

Auto Talk

Chris Vander Doelen, Windsor Star
 Published: Tuesday, August 14, 2007

HYBRID BUYERS AFTER FUEL SAVINGS FIRST

Half of all American consumers are now

Today's Windsor Star



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considering buying a hybrid when they shop for a new [vehicle](#), a survey has found.

And most of those potential buyers -- 80 per cent of them, in fact -- could not care less about the environmental credentials of the gasoline-electric hybrids. It's the fuel savings they're after.

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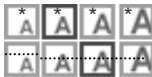


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The survey of 1,023 consumers was conducted by Mindclick Group of Los Angeles. The firm says its findings "prove that American demand for hybrid vehicles has gone mainstream."

Until this year, hybrids were considered a niche vehicle of interest only to those who put their environmental concerns over all other considerations. Mindclick tactfully refers to them as "believers."

But today even "non-believers" and "indifferents" are weighing the potential fuel savings offered by hybrids, Mindclick found.

The company says American advertising for hybrids is mostly a failure because most consumers can't remember any of the ads. Only ads for [Saturn](#) hybrids and Toyota hybrids seemed to have found their marks, the company also found.

Saturn ads were remembered by 27 per cent of respondents; Toyota ads by 20 per cent.

WHO'S ENJOYING A BANNER YEAR IN SALES?

Some interesting sales trends developing in the Canadian automotive showrooms for the past half-year now appear carved in stone.

And you might be surprised at who the biggest winners and losers are shaping up to be in Canada.

With the year more than half over, the following trends appear irreversible for 2007: Volkswagen, [Nissan](#), [Mitsubishi](#), [Land Rover](#), [Hyundai](#) and [BMW](#) are among the carmakers enjoying banner years with double-digit sales increases.

VW sales for the first seven months of the year are up 21.6 per cent over 2006, to 22,850 units; Nissan up 33.4 per cent to 42,609 units, Mitsubishi is up a staggering 52.3 per cent to 9,886, Land Rover up 26.5 per cent to 1,778, Hyundai is up 10.5 per cent to 48,115, and BMW up 25.2 per cent to 14,376 cars and trucks.

Double-digit losers include Smart, down 10.7 per cent to 1,953 units, and Jaguar, down 6.9 per cent to a paltry 497 units.

All figures are quoted from the most recent offering from DesRosiers Automotive Reports.

But percentages are different from actual unit sales, and on that basis, the changes in the Big Three sales are the most important moves.

General Motors is the biggest loser of the year, dropping 6,545 units to sales of 244,062 cars and trucks. While their unit loss is the largest, it still leaves GM the biggest of the big gorillas in Canada, outselling its nearest competitors by more than 100,000 units per year.

They still outsell Toyota, Honda and Nissan combined in Canada.

Just -- by about 2,000 units so far this year.

Ford, Which Has Dropped to Number Three in Canada So Far This Year, Is Down by 2,974 to 138,946 Units Sold in the First Seven Months.

The Biggest Gainer in Terms of Units Sold: Nissan, Up by a Whopping 10,665 Units to 42,609.

Toyota Is Up by 5,248 Cars and Trucks to 116,290 Units So Far This Year. Honda Is Up by a Healthy 5,048 Units. and -- Lo, and Behold -- Daimlerchrysler Is Up by a Whopping 9,058 Units to Sales of 142,359 Cars and Trucks.

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