

French carmaker sees strong 2008 sales growth after 2007 pickup

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Paris - French automaker Renault said on Friday it expected global sales growth of more than 10% this year after a 2007 gain of 2.2% to some 2.49 million vehicles.

It said 2008 would begin with the launch of nine new models and hoped for progress across its three brand lines - Renault, Samsung and Dacia - after last year's performance reversed a 4.0% drop in sales in 2006.

"Our commercial performance in 2007 is in line with our forecasts," sales director Patrick Blain said in a statement.

Despite the 2.2% rise in sales for 2007, Renault lagged global auto market growth and its market share accordingly slipped back to 3.6% from 3.7%.

Renault brand sales rose 1.0% to 2.12 million vehicles last year, with the low-cost Dacia range built in Romania rising 17.4% to 196 378 while Samsung was down 1.4% at 121 660.

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