Most improved commercial vehicle brand revealed

The release of the annual National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) Dealer Satisfaction Index (DSI) survey, as conducted by the independent market research firm Lightstone, reveals FAW as the most improved commercial vehicle brand for 2018.



NADA's DSI survey results are divided into a number of key focus areas: Overall Dealer Satisfaction; Communication & Relationships; Customer Focus; CSI Programme; Vehicle Range; Training; Parts; Goodwill, Policy Claims & Warranty and Labour Rates categories.

A total of 33 independently researched brands participated in the 2018 NADA DSI survey. In total, 1005 completed responses were received, with 165 of these coming from commercial vehicle dealerships across the country.

Improved dealer satisfaction

The survey indicates that FAW SA improved its overall dealer satisfaction score in the Communication & Relationship category, which provides a snapshot of the perceived satisfaction levels of the overall communication between dealer and brand.

The Customer Focus category places emphasis on ease of doing business, setting the standard for excellence in the industry, winning dealer strategy for satisfying customers and attracting and retaining outstanding people (employees and suppliers). In this category, there has been a notable improvement from 2017.

Connecting customer to brand

According to NADA, a CSI programme is the vital window connecting customer's satisfaction with a specific brand. This section probes the perceived effectiveness of a customer satisfaction programme and how a satisfaction programme influences truck supply and quality problems. FAW SA is the most improved brand in this category for 2018.

In terms of vehicle range, dealers were asked: *"Does the range of commercial vehicles over 3,500kg GVM available from your manufacturer/importer allow you to compete adequately in the market?"*

Furthermore, dealers were asked to rate different training programmes provided by their respective manufacturer/importer. These included: technical training; non-technical training; sales training and training for customers' drivers.

In both these categories, FAW SA was once again the manufacturer with the most improved outcome according to the survey.

Availability of parts is crucial

NADA states that parts availability is crucial to dealer profit, turnaround time and ultimately a satisfied customer. The parts category of the DSI survey includes questions probing delivery times on parts, the parts delivery system, parts ordering system; parts return policy and the support provided to the dealer when parts are not readily available.

The Goodwill, Policy Claims and Warranty section covers the support received from the manufacturer/importer regarding goodwill claims, clarity of the warranty claim procedures, the fairness of warranty audits and whether reimbursement payments are made timeously.

This category is the highest rated category overall in 2018. Although most commercial vehicle brands remained relatively constant or showed a slight decline, a significant incline in scores from FAW SA contributed to an overall improvement in the entire category.

Room for improvement

Survey questions in the Labour Rates category of the DSI focused on gross warranty labour rates in the workshop, maintenance contract rates in the workshop and whether the flat rate allowed for adequate compensation for actual time spent on the job.

Although still the lowest-scoring category in the overall survey score, an overall improvement was realised by all commercial vehicle brands in 2018.

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