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Press Contacts: Alexander Edwards / Christopher Chaney 858.576.7141

Press Release

“Nobody Loves Their Cars Like Gen Y,” says Strategic Vision, Announcing the Most Loved Vehicles of 2015.

San Diego, California: November 12, 2015 – “Love” is the holy grail of the customer experience. Strategic Vision research shows that true advocacy and brand loyalty begins not when buyers are simply “satisfied,” but when they truly love their experience. With this in mind, Strategic Vision has created the Customer Love Index (CLI). This new metric continues the company’s rich tradition of cutting-edge research, and reveals in their most recent automotive research which vehicles are doing the best at creating love, and shows why they can be more successful than their competition.

CLI research shows that Gen Y loves their car even more than many suggest. Strategic Vision has always held to the idea that millennials love their vehicles more than everyone else, and the Customer Love Index confirms this. It shows a staggering difference between millennials, who give an average CLI score of 470, and the rest of the industry, which gives an average score of about 400. Not only are their scores higher, but millennials are much more likely to be buying mass-market vehicles designed to maximize value, not love. Essentially, they love their compact hatchbacks so much that they rate them similarly as owners of luxury convertibles.

When younger buyers are able to enter the luxury market, they have a substantial impact. Buyers under forty singlehandedly gave awards to the Infiniti QX80 (Luxury SUV) and the Land Rover Range Rover Evoque 5-Door (Near-Luxury Utility) as their undeniable enthusiasm tipped the scales in favor of those models. “As new younger buyers enter any market they essentially crush hard on their choices, believing that their first love will always be their only,” reports Christopher Chaney, Senior Vice President of Strategic Vision. “Of course, this isn’t new to millennials. Every generation in their youth can remember their first love and the deep emotional impact it had on their lives, and future decisions in life,” Chaney continues. Also shown in the research is that hybrid owners are NOT in love with their vehicles as much as some think, and the sales numbers tend to support this. Hybrid vehicles are billed as innovative and great for both your wallet (via MPG) and planet Earth. Yet even minivans, which are often disparaged as being bland, boring, and completely uncool, obtain higher CLI scores than most hybrid vehicles. No matter the fuel type, a vehicle must first address the values and priorities of the customer. Although hybrid vehicles satisfy the needs of owners in having an environmentally friendly vehicle, most hybrid and many electric vehicles fail to generate enough love to stay viable in the future, because they only satisfy “professed” (MPG) long-term financial benefits or emissions-environmental factors. Focusing on the right product enhancements and messaging, however, these Alternative Powertrain (APT) vehicles have the potential to sell at much higher rates even if they have higher prices. For example, Toyota Prius models may have dominated this space in sales, but not because of being among the first to market, but because of the love customers have professed about unique exterior styling and interior

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innovations such as the instrument panel, and how it displays information at a luxury segment level.

“Most US customers will not spend more than an additional \$50 per month for a vehicle just for MPG enhancing or environmentally friendly powertrain. Instead, creating a product that customers can love will allow buyers to spend significantly more money because it has the right balance of styling, innovation, performance and environmental friendliness,” says Alexander Edwards, President of Strategic Vision.

SUMMARY OF THE WINNERS

Manufacturing origins are equally represented by segment winners, and each one takes advantage of what it does best to create an experience that buyers love. Asian automakers (10 winning models) do well in the more economically minded segments, European automakers (9) do well in the more luxury oriented segments, and Domestic automakers (10) do well in the more “American” segments of trucks, utility vehicles, and convertibles.

Volkswagen Group of America (VWGoA) consistently delivers vehicle experiences customers love. They earned the distinction of being the most loved full-line corporation. It is important to note that the results are based on feedback from people who bought their new vehicle before September 2015. When trust is violated, love is diminished. The good news for VWGoA is that they will be working from a position where customers have initially loved their experience. When love is lost, that’s when the real work begins.

Impressive is Porsche Macan having the highest CLI score in the industry among qualifying models. The Macan’s domination in almost every category gives it a score of 629, making it one of only two models to reach the 600-point plateau.

Many of the winners from this year bring something unique and exciting to the table that may not appeal to everyone but is certainly loved by those who buy them. The Fiat 500 Hatchback (Micro Car), Fiat 500e (Small APT Car), BMW i3 (Near-Luxury APT Car), and Ford Flex all fit into this category. So do the Kia Soul (Small Multi-Function Car), MINI Cooper Hardtop (Specialty Coupe), and Kia Sedona (Minivan) to some extent. In these cases, the uniqueness of the vehicle brings a distinct sense of individuality to buyers.

In some cases, a quality new vehicle has created a buzz and excitement that has led to a high CLI score. The BMW 3-Series Gran Turismo (Luxury Multi-Function Car), Chevrolet Colorado (Standard Pickup), and Jeep Renegade (Entry SUV) all do this and have good enough products to keep momentum going in the near future.

Subaru has grabbed hold of the mid-size car segments. Feelings of love come less from the WRX and Outback themselves and more from the fact that they are a “Subaru.” It turns out that love is what makes a Subaru a Subaru. Since their “Love” marketing campaign started in 2008, Subaru’s sales and market share have almost tripled. That is the power of love. Other winners satisfy everything demanded of a vehicle in their category and add something

leverageable on top. The Mazda3 Sedan (Small Car) typifies this by providing everything buyers need from a small car while adding performance and styling, which gives buyers a sense of excitement. Other cases involve the prestige of the Mercedes CLA-Class (Near-Luxury Car), the value of the Nissan Titan (Full-Size Pickup), the towing capability of the GMC Sierra 2500/3500 (Heavy Duty Pickup), and the refined feeling of the GMC Yukon XL (Full-Size Utility).

Based on Strategic Vision’s quantitative NVES study of over 44,000 owners, the Customer Love Index results presented below represent the Most Loved Vehicles in their segments as rated by new vehicle buyers:

Micro Car	Fiat 500 Hatchback	449
Small Car	Mazda3 Sedan	438
Small Multi-Function Car	Kia Soul	408
Small APT Car	Fiat 500e	408
Mid-Size Car	Subaru WRX	451
Mid-Size Multi-Function Car	Subaru Outback	408
Mid-Size APT Car	Toyota Prius / Toyota Camry Hybrid	354 / 354
Full-Size Car	Dodge Charger	543
Near-Luxury Car	Mercedes CLA-Class	564
Near-Luxury APT Car	BMW i3	474
Luxury Car	Mercedes S-Class Sedan	563
Luxury Multi-Function Car	BMW 3-Series Gran Turismo	466
Specialty Coupe	MINI Cooper Hardtop	547
Premium Coupe	Chevrolet Corvette Coupe	598
Standard Convertible	Ford Mustang Convertible	564
Premium Convertible/Roadster	Chevrolet Corvette Convertible	617
Standard Pickup	Chevrolet Colorado	423
Full-Size Pickup	Nissan Titan	482
Heavy Duty Pickup	GMC Sierra 2500/3500	467
Entry SUV	Jeep Renegade	490
Entry CUV	Hyundai Tucson	451
Mid-Size SUV	Dodge Durango	465
Mid-Size CUV	Ford Flex	460
Full-Size Utility	GMC Yukon XL	483

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Near-Luxury Utility	Land Rover Range Rover Evoque 5-Door	516
Luxury SUV	Infiniti QX80	524
Luxury CUV	Porsche Macan	629
Minivan	Kia Sedona	391
Best Model	Porsche Macan	629
Best Full-Line Corporation	Volkswagen Group of America	422

Strategic Vision is a research-based consultancy with over thirty-five years of experience in understanding the consumers' and constituents' decision-making systems for a variety of Fortune 100 clients, including most automotive manufacturers. Its unique expertise is in identifying consumers' comprehensive, motivational hierarchies, including the product attributes, personal benefits, value/emotions and images that drive perceptions and behaviors, using ValueCentered® psychology. Strategic Vision also uses comprehensive algorithms and discriminating scales that measure customer love and go beyond typical outdated and ineffective satisfaction scales. ValueCentered® psychology and research methods were defined by Darrel Edwards, Ph.D. in 1968, and enhanced by co-founders J. Susan Johnson (1972) and Sharon Shedroff (1975). For further information, contact Alexander Edwards or Christopher Chaney at (858) 576-7141.