



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Customer Satisfaction with Rental Cars Stabilizes Following Two Years of Steady Declines

Enterprise Ranks Highest in Satisfying Rental Car Customers for a Sixth Consecutive Year

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 17 November 2009 — After two consecutive years of considerable declines, overall customer satisfaction with renting cars at airports has stabilized in 2009, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2009 U.S. Rental Car Satisfaction StudySM released today.

Now in its 14th year, the study measures overall [customer satisfaction with renting cars at airports](#) by examining six factors (listed in order of importance): costs and fees; pick-up process; rental car; return process; reservation process; and shuttle bus/van.

Overall satisfaction averages 733 on a 1,000-point scale in 2009, from 734 in 2008. In comparison, overall satisfaction declined by 16 points in 2007 and 17 points in 2008.

The stabilization of overall satisfaction is largely a result of the rental car industry effectively responding to economic pressures. In particular, many rental car companies have focused on containing operating costs by “right-sizing” their fleets to meet changing consumer demand and extending the service life of their vehicles, allowing them to delay orders for replacements. This has enabled many rental car companies to decrease their rental fees.

However, in a number of locations, reductions in rental fees have been offset by increased excise taxes imposed by local and state governments.

“The rental car industry has tried to dissuade attempts to increase taxation on rental car customers and has made efforts to increase consumer awareness and understanding of these fees and their origin, particularly since these fees may be confusing to customers when they receive their final bill,” said Paula Sonkin, vice president of the travel practice at J.D. Power and Associates. “Customers can avoid some of this confusion by educating themselves about the excise fees and taxes that are imposed upon rental car companies in the areas where they are traveling. It’s also particularly important for customers to understand that these fees and taxes apply to all of the rental car companies associated with a particular airport.”

Enterprise ranks highest in customer satisfaction among rental car companies for a sixth consecutive year and performs particularly well in all six factors. Enterprise is followed in the rankings by National and Hertz, respectively. In particular, National has improved considerably from 2008, by 15 index points and two rank positions in 2009. Hertz performs particularly well in shuttling customers to and from the airport.

“It is particularly notable that the three highest-ranked rental car companies in 2009 also have the fewest customer-reported problems,” said Sonkin.

The study finds that the incidence of even a single problem can have a notable negative effect on overall satisfaction. On average, satisfaction among customers who experience a problem is nearly 140 points lower than satisfaction among customers who don't have a problem during their rental car experience.

The study also finds that providing a highly satisfying rental car experience has a strong positive effect on customer loyalty levels. Among customers with satisfaction scores averaging 900 or higher, approximately two-thirds indicate that they "definitely will" recommend the rental car company to others and "definitely will" rent from the same company again. These rates are more than twice those of customers with satisfaction scores averaging between 750 and 899 and four times those of customers with satisfaction averaging between 600 and 749.

The 2009 Rental Car Satisfaction Study is based on more than 12,900 evaluations from business and leisure travelers who rented a vehicle at an airport location between September 2008 and October 2009. The study was fielded between October 2008 and October 2009.

For more information, read an [article](#) or view [rental car company ratings](#) at [JDPower.com](#)

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NOTE: One chart follows.

J.D. Power and Associates 2009 Rental Car Satisfaction StudySM

Overall Satisfaction Index

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Power Circle Ratings Legend

- Among the best
- Better than most
- About average
- The rest

NOTE: Ace Rent-A-Car, Advantage Rent-A-Car and Fox Rent A Car are included in the study but not ranked due to small sample size.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2009 Rental Car Satisfaction StudySM

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