



October 9, 2006

**BMW on top, Hyundai leads Toyota, GM poised for success:  
Strategic Vision announces 2006 Total Value winners**

San Diego –Hyundai leads over many brands, including Toyota. GM proves that Asian and European makers are not out of reach. BMW and MINI top all brands as Total Value leaders. These are a few of the results from Strategic Vision’s Total Value Index (TVI), which factors economic issues against the total new vehicle ownership experience. The San Diego-based research firm announced today the winners of its Total Value Awards, which reflect that true value is about much more than the cheapest deal. Reliability, a solid warranty, strong anticipated resale value, durability, and innovation are all part of the definition of “total value.”

Hyundai and Kia continue to produce nicely styled, high quality products, backed by solid warranties, and the results are four leaders in Total Value for 2006. The new Kia Optima and Hyundai Azera were Total Value leaders in their respective car segments, and the Kia Sedona tops the Honda Odyssey in the minivan category. The Hyundai Tucson was also at the top of Small Sport Utilities (tied with the Saturn Vue). The challenge for both Hyundai and Kia remains consideration on buyers shopping lists, and success rests on communicating foundational issues of expected reliability and durability along with clear cues of quality.

Toyota remains solid with several models performing relatively well in Total Value and three leaders in 2006 from its Scion and Lexus brands. The Scion brand continues strongly, with the xB proving that vehicles can continue to deliver value throughout their production cycle; Total Value is not exclusively the domain of new releases.

GM was the top domestic corporation, and presented four 2006 Total Value winners. The Chevrolet Corvette Coupe and Convertible, Saturn Vue, and Chevrolet Silverado 2500/3500 lead in Total Value in their respective segments. With the introduction of a five year 100,000-mile warranty, GM is poised for significant gain if the Total Value message is clearly recognized and communicated for individual models. "GM’s new warranty will bring new prospective buyers to the brand, who otherwise might have felt the quality, durability and value was missing," said Alexander Edwards, president of Strategic Vision automotive research group. "If GM can communicate the right quality cues and value in current and future vehicles, then they will be poised for success in the near future."

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TVI – add one

BMW and MINI lead all brands in Total Value for 2006. Perennial value leader MINI Cooper leads its segment for the fifth year running, and was the overall Total Value winner among all vehicles and segments. With the 3-Series and Cooper Convertible leading Total Value in their segments, BMW and MINI demonstrate that winning requires a formula for success. BMW and MINI buyers had the highest levels of believed resale value, validated by outside sources, and BMW's Ultimate Service program differentiates it from other luxury brands.

Honda is the top full-line corporation in Total Value, with one of the highest expected reliability scores among its owners and each Honda model excelling in that area. Honda Civic, Accord Coupe, and Pilot lead Total Value in their respective segments. The Honda Ridgeline leads in its segment, proving that delivering superior product experience, innovative features and standard equipment can overcome the hurdle of premium pricing to deliver total value.

Nissan had three Total Value leaders, including the Xterra and Armada. It also achieved a milestone with the Titan replacing the Ford F-150 as the Total Value winner in full-size pickups. Innovation and the level of standard equipment helped nudge Titan ahead in a tightly contested segment.

“The calculation of Total Value clearly incorporates explicit statements that owners make about value, but those statements do not alone provide sufficient differentiation to give us the diagnostic power we want or to be able to herald one brand or vehicle as the leader in a segment,” says Strategic Vision Founder and CEO Darrel Edwards, Ph.D. “By incorporating the importance of the variables that make up the experience and the economic factors which impact the perception of value, we find convergent, stable indices of True Value,”

“Total Value is absolutely critical now in the US market. It is even important for brands with strong reputations, but is critical for everyone else. Total Value is more than price paid or deal, and it is more than initial quality (TGW) divided by price - which some profess. Total Value encompasses the complete ownership experience with emotional components and priorities. Not all things are equal. Building Total Value is strongly related to brand reputation. It reinforces the notion of a ‘smart buy.’ In a mature market where consumers have a variety of excellent choices, yet concern for fuel economy and getting the most for their money, Total Value influences the purchase,” concluded Alexander Edwards, President of Strategic Vision, Automotive Group.

The Total Value Study surveyed over 64,000 new vehicle buyers who purchased their vehicles between October 2005 and March 2006, asking an extensive array of questions about their first 90 days of ownership.

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## Strategic Vision release – 3

TVI – add two

Strategic Vision is a research-based consultancy with thirty years of experience in understanding consumer and constituent decision-making systems for a variety of clients, including most automotive manufacturers, Coca-Cola, American Airlines, and Procter & Gamble. Its unique expertise is in identifying consumers' motivational hierarchies, including the values and emotions that drive perceptions and behaviors.

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The full list of 2006 Total Value Award winners:

Small Car	Honda Civic	801
Small Multi-Function	Scion xB	781
Medium Car	Kia Optima	799
Medium Multi-Function	Mazda6 Wagon	767
Larger Car	Hyundai Azera	808
Near-Luxury Car	BMW 3-Series	807
Luxury Car	Lexus LS 430, Acura RL, Audi A8	780 / 779 / 779 (tie)**
Luxury Multi-Function	Audi A4 / S4 Avant	787
Small Specialty (<\$25,000)	MINI Cooper*	794
Small Specialty (>\$25,000)	Chevrolet Corvette	798
Mid-Specialty Car	Honda Accord Coupe*	804
Convertible (<\$30,000)	MINI Cooper Convertible	813
Convertible (>\$30,000)	Chevrolet Corvette	789
Minivan	Kia Sedona	758
Small SUV	Saturn Vue / Hyundai Tucson	758 / 757
Medium SUV	Nissan Xterra	735
Medium Crossover	Honda Pilot	767
Large SUV	Nissan Armada	724
Near Luxury SUV	Lexus RX 330*	782
Luxury SUV	Mercedes GL-Class	772
Compact Pickup	Honda Ridgeline	739
Full-Size Pickup	Nissan Titan	707
Heavy Duty Pickup	Chevy Silverado 2500/3500	686

\*2005 Total Value Award™ winners / \*\*Differences of 1-2 points are not statistically significant