

January sees better auto sales

As the demand for cars shot up at Tet, several firms recorded a dramatic increase in sales volume, leading to strong growth for the auto market in January.

Despite economic woes and the fear that consumers might suspend their car purchase plans to wait for registration fee cuts, car consumption in the first month of the year was high compared to the same period last year. Auto dealers and manufacturers said the market always enjoyed tremendous growth during the holiday period but last month was still a surprise.

Toyota Vietnam was among those with strong sales growth. In January, the Japanese giants sold over 2,700 vehicles, up 1,180 units year-on-year.

Because of the significantly higher demand, Toyota Vietnam could not fully supply customers during the Lunar New Year.

For example, the luxury car line assembled in Vietnam Camry recorded a sales volume of more than 750 units last month. But many customers will have to wait until March to receive their cars.

Similarly, over 500 Altis cars, 500 Vios cars, 480 Fortuner cars and 370 Innova cars were sold in January. Those who want to buy these particular models now have to wait until later this month or next month.

U.S. carmaker Ford Vietnam also achieved spectacular sales growth with 690 units sold, a four-fold increase compared to the same period last year.

The success of Ford Vietnam is attributed to the launch of the mid-end sedan Ford Focus, attracting more than 100 orders. In addition, the company organized 'special sales day' with incentives for customers at all outlets across the country to celebrate the 150th birthday of Henry Ford, father of the automotive industry.

Honda Vietnam also recorded healthy sales last month with nearly 180 vehicles sold, a five-fold rise over the same period last year. Honda CR-V is still unavailable, so car buyers have to wait for the new version to be launched after Tet.

Mercedes-Benz, the only automaker from Germany with an assembly plant in Vietnam, said 133 vehicles were sold in January, almost double 2012's figure.

U.S. carmaker GM Vietnam sold nearly 610 cars last month, an increase of 100 units year-on-year. Local car manufacturer Truong Hai (Thaco) sold more than 1,830 vehicles, a strong growth of 1,000 units against January 2012.

Automakers attributed the enormous increase in sales to the buoyant demand during Tet. Some firms had cut down on production, and thus supply did not meet demand.

Besides, at the same time last year, many traders experienced a sales slump due to the hike in car registration fee and number plate fee.

A number of carmakers remarked the market was warming up, partly because the Government had decided not to charge personal vehicle restriction fee while lowering the registration fee for cars under ten seats to 10% at the first registration and to 2% at the second registration.

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