

Hybrid and EV manufacturers not courting Black consumers

By [Mintel Oxygen reports](#)

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CHICAGO, US: The hybrid and electric vehicle market is having a tough year in 2011 in the US. Sales for hybrid vehicles are down 2.7% through August 2011, despite the fact that US vehicle sales are up 10.5%.



However, while automotive companies would suggest that a sluggish economy and lack of supply are hurting hybrid vehicle sales, a recent report from Mintel suggests instead that there is a lack of desirable product for certain demographics.

"Most believe the profile of the hybrid vehicle owner is a person between the ages of 35-55, with a household income over US\$75 000, and a college education or higher. While this may be the current owner, the biggest potential in the market is with Black consumers," says George Augustaitis senior automotive analyst at Mintel.

Black consumers are significant purchasers of hybrids, EVs

Consumer research shows that nearly 12.5% of the Black demographic owns a hybrid or electric vehicle. Furthermore, 36% would be most interested in buying a hybrid or electric vehicle for their next purchase and 26% are unsure about their next purchase. Black respondents were also the most willing to spend an additional US\$3000-5000 to purchase a hybrid or electric vehicle, and 31% said they would spend an additional US\$1000-3000 on a hybrid or electric version of a vehicle. Black individuals were also the highest respondents who would feel proud to own a hybrid or electric vehicle.

"With the low ownership numbers of hybrid and electric vehicles among Black shoppers, the optimistic statements about pride of ownership and willingness to spend more suggest there is pent-up demand amongst Black consumers for hybrids and electric vehicles," adds George Augustaitis. "However, the sales and ownership numbers do not show the same story. This would suggest that there are no hybrid or electric vehicles on the market that are appealing to the Black population."

Mintel research also found that 26% of Black respondents are very concerned about carbon emissions and 30% agree that new electric engines in cars like the Chevy Volt and Nissan Leaf are amazing feats of engineering. Hybrid and electric automobile marketers would be wise to go after this under-targeted demographic.

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