

Chinese car brands close in on UK's established players, as search interest rises 297% in a year

IMAGIN.studio's latest report shows consumer interest in Chinese OEMs is growing almost ten times faster than the UK's most established manufacturers.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, July 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New data from IMAGIN.studio shows that Chinese car brands are rapidly closing the gap on the UK's best-known manufacturers in the minds of car buyers, with searches for seven leading Chinese OEMs rising by 297% between H1 2025 and H1 2026.



IMAGIN.studio Brand Search Comparison

The report tracked search activity for BYD, Jaecoo, Omoda, Xpeng, Chery, Geely and Zeekr, which collectively rose from 30.9 million searches in H1 2025 to 122.6 million in H1 2026. Over the same period, searches for seven of the country's most established manufacturers, including Skoda, Audi, BMW, Mercedes, Volkswagen, Volvo and Renault, increased by 31.9%, from 332 million to 438 million.

From newcomers to serious contenders

The data suggests Chinese OEMs are moving quickly from market curiosity to genuine contenders in UK car buyers' research journeys. Expanding dealer networks, more competitive pricing and a fast-growing range of models are translating directly into rising consumer attention, at a pace the market's household names simply aren't matching.

While established manufacturers continue to dominate in absolute terms, their more modest growth suggests that rising interest in this segment of the market is now being driven disproportionately by new entrants, rather than by demand expanding evenly across all brands.

Across all 14 brands, Chinese OEMs' share of search climbed from 8.5% to almost 22% in a year,

more than doubling their slice of consumer attention.

Closing the familiarity gap

As Chinese manufacturers expand their UK presence, retailers and OEMs face mounting pressure to help buyers understand brands, trims and specifications that remain unfamiliar to many UK drivers. For a market built on decades of familiarity with established names, helping consumers navigate new logos and technology is critical to converting curiosity into sales.

Commenting on the findings, Martijn Versteegen, CEO at IMAGIN.studio, said: "Chinese manufacturers have moved from a niche curiosity to a genuine force in the UK car market in the space of a year. Growth like this reflects real, growing confidence among buyers in brands that, until recently, very few people in the UK had even heard of.

"But this also raises the stakes for the industry. When someone is comparing a Geely or an Omoda against a Volkswagen or a BMW, they don't have decades of familiarity to lean on — every detail, every spec, every visual cue has to do more work to build trust. That's where dealers and OEMs need to focus next: making sure that as curiosity turns into consideration, buyers have everything they need, presented clearly, to make a confident decision."

Turning curiosity into conversion

With UK car buyers doing more of their research online than ever, the brands that present themselves most clearly are best placed to convert rising interest into showroom visits and sales.

IMAGIN.studio's data-driven, high-quality vehicle visualisation helps OEMs, dealers and marketplaces showcase new and unfamiliar models with the same clarity and consistency as the market's household names, helping turn growing curiosity about Chinese brands into informed, confident purchase decisions.

-Ends-

About IMAGIN.studio:

Autotech SaaS company IMAGIN.studio is the world's leading platform designed to elevate the automotive retail experience through its real-time vehicle visualization layer, providing services in 100+ countries. It generates consistent, high-quality visuals for every model, in every colour, in every angle — providing the crystal-clear imagery that builds consumer confidence and boosts conversions. The platform leverages sophisticated AI within a fully compliant framework, ensuring no copyright infringement. Unlike a static library, IMAGIN.studio creates each visual on the fly, ensuring imagery is always current and perfectly on-brand.

<https://www.imaginstudio.com/>

Pete Taylor
Influence emobility
[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/925483595>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.