



Feature 2

Passing on Honda's genes to the N

Supporting Japanese society with joy and richness

Benefits of the N:

The joy of mobility and a rich, sustainable society

Honda launched its first mass-produced mini passenger vehicle, the N360, in 1967 with the goal of introducing a car perfectly suited to the Japanese consumer as conceived by founder Soichiro Honda. The vehicle, which had been designed to offer strong appeal in the three key areas of interior comfort, power, and price, enjoyed explosive popularity in Japan during a time of high economic growth. In this way, Honda was able to bring the joy of car ownership to many customers.

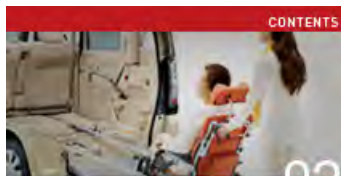
More than forty years later, Honda returned to its roots to design a mini passenger vehicle that would be ideal for the Japan of today, and the result was the N series, a line of three new mini passenger vehicles that have inherited the DNA of the N360. All have enjoyed strong support from customers, with the N Box series posting the highest sales figures of any new mini-vehicle during the first half of 2012. The N Box and N Box+ won a 2012 Good Design Award, and the N Box+ was chosen as the 2012-2013 Japan Automotive Hall of Fame Car of the Year.

Many years ago, the N360 brought a large amount of joy to Japan. Today, Honda is seeking to become a company that society wants to exist by delivering the value Japanese consumers demand in the form of the N series, a new line of vehicles that have inherited the N360's DNA.



01

The Honda Philosophy as expressed in the N series



02

Supporting customers who require nursing care



03

N-One: Unprecedented quality in a mini-vehicle





The Honda Philosophy as expressed in the N series



A newspaper ad from 1966, when the N360's pricing was announced, promoting the car's interior comfort, which was made possible by designing the cabin first

a car with a comfortable cabin space, different from other mini-vehicles that compelled customers to endure discomfort. By minimizing space required for mechanical components such as engine room, Honda engineers were able to maximize seating space for passengers. This approach was to become part of the M/M concept (man maximum, machine minimum) that forms the basis of Honda's approach to the manufacture of automobiles.

Concerning power, Soichiro said, "The many mini-vehicles that have been made to date are by no means well suited to Japan's roads. This is because they lack power, which is the primary determinant of consumers' emotional reaction to cars. A lack of power means these cars won't accelerate. They can't be driven quickly, and the resulting inability to pass could cause many traffic accidents" (Honda Company News, No. 41, as published in March 1959). Soichiro required the N360 to have a powerful engine. As a result, the vehicle delivered so much power that journalists participating in a test-drive event remarked with interest that it "accelerates as if it were a sports car."

When the N360 was priced at ¥313,000—tens of thousands of yen cheaper than competitors' offerings—some employees at the time questioned whether it needed to be sold so cheaply. But Soichiro wanted sold so cheaply. But Soichiro wanted to make the N360 "the highest-performance, most affordable compact car in the world" so that it would become the "second Cub," referring to Honda's popular motorbike (from a lecture given in November 1947). His dream was to fill the world with this vehicle into which he had poured himself, so drastic pricing was set.

The founder's passion for the N360, the ancestor of the N series

Honda's first mass-produced passenger vehicle, the N360, was launched in March 1967. The car embodied the passion for the ideal car of founder Soichiro Honda.

Soichiro placed particularly high importance on interior comfort, power, and price.

At the time, he said of interior comfort, "Cars can be made smaller, but not the people who use them. It would be difficult to make only cars small" (Honda Company News, No. 28, as published in February 1958). Honda started with the cabin when it designed the N360 with the goal of creating

Today, Honda Philosophy is founded on the Three Joys (the joy of buying, the joy of selling and the joy of creating). Soichiro placed particular weight on the joy of buying. The pursuit of interior comfort, power, and price as described above was undertaken in order to deliver this joy of buying. As a result, the N360 became the top-selling mini-vehicle just two months after its launch. Honda began exporting the car in volume in 1968, and cumulative production units of the N series had passed the 1 million mark by 1970. The vehicle, which redrew the map of the mini-vehicle industry, brought the joy of buying to a large number of customers, just as Soichiro Honda had intended.

The N series is back after more than forty years, having inherited the DNA of the N360. Through it, our founder's dream of bringing joy to customers lives on, uninterrupted.



The 13th Tokyo Motor Show (1966), where the N360 attracted attention

Bringing customers joy of car ownership again in the mini-vehicle category, where Honda's roots lie

Honda launched the N360 in 1967 during Japan's period of high economic growth in an effort to create the ultimate citizen's car. It is significant for Honda that the company's first mass-produced passenger vehicle was a mini-vehicle. As is apparent from the fact that Honda's history began with the production of auxiliary engines for bicycles, Honda's roots stretch back to basic, daily mobility. What we at Honda are trying to do today has not changed at all from the time of our company's founding: to manufacture products that meet customer needs.

Following the Lehman Shock, the trend in the automotive market quickly shifted to small, mini-vehicles. Although large vehicles make a larger contribution to the bottom line from a purely profit-oriented perspective, Honda's commitment to being a company that society wants to exist requires it to reliably deliver products that are good for customers. The N series was created through a sustained research effort that sought to get back to Honda's roots—meeting customers' needs. That overriding goal encompasses everything that employees involved with the N series think about on a daily basis.



Sho Minekawa
Chief Operating Officer,
Regional Sales
Operations (Japan)

The N series incorporates the message that we wish customers to experience again the joy of car ownership that characterized the era of the N360. But this wish goes further than mere nostalgia, and it goes further than low cost and good fuel economy. The N series expresses the joy of car ownership for a new era in a way that is uniquely Honda.

What does being a Honda-style mini-vehicle mean? It can only mean a completely new type of mini-vehicle that offers value not found in competing products. That's why we redesigned the N series' platform and engine to maximize the technology and brand strength of Honda. Thanks to technologies such as a center-tank layout and new engine, this new vehicle is extremely efficient. Functional beauty born of the pursuit of maximum efficiency: We believe that's what being uniquely Honda means for the N series.



Supporting customers who require nursing care

Taking a hard look at Japanese **consumers, communities, and lifestyles**

What sort of value do today's Japanese consumers demand in a mini-vehicle? Cars are used in various applications, including leisure activities, shopping, and raising children, but nursing care has also emerged as an important social issue.



Artist's conception of a wheelchair being loaded into an N Box+ wheelchair-accessible model (with G/L package)

Nursing care has ceased being exceptional and become a normal stage of life. If only consumers could continue to use their car when they begin to use a wheelchair, instead of being forced to purchase an expensive, specially designed vehicle. If only there were a reasonably priced vehicle that could serve those nursing care needs while also doing double duty for shopping and hobby-related activities. Honda's answer to the expectations of customers with these needs is the N Box+.

The N Box+ was developed based on wheelchair-accessible vehicle specifications so that nursing care could become a more familiar part of customers' lives. We used a vehicle body designed specifically to accommodate wheelchair-accessible vehicle specifications—one that is normally used for special models only—as the base for all series vehicles. In this way, the Multiuse Body was created based on Honda's uniquely unconventional approach.

Making **wheelchair-accessible cars** a more familiar part of customers' lives



N Box+ ramp and center-tank layout (artist's conception)

The most striking feature of the N Box+, which was developed based on an unconventional approach that draws on wheelchair-accessible vehicle specifications, is its sloped floor, a feature that to date has only been used in wheelchair-accessible vehicles. By sloping the low floor and combining with an aluminum slope, the vehicle delivers a new level of

convenience for not only nursing care, but also normal use and leisure activities.

This sloped floor was made possible by the N Box+'s center-tank layout, which moves the

fuel tank from underneath the rear seats and cargo area to a new position underneath the front seats. Engineers also drew on the design of the sloped floor used in wheelchair-accessible versions of the Zest and Freed. This approach allowed layout issues in the form of questions about where to position various components to be clarified quickly and resolved through an intensive focus on the design process.

Adopting this sloped floor in all series models eliminated the need to design a special body for wheelchair-accessible models, dramatically lowering costs. As a result, we are able to offer a wheelchair-accessible vehicle to customers who require it at a reasonable price.

Providing a spacious and comfortable interior for nursing care and leisure alike

Honda's M/M concept has been inherited as part of an uninterrupted legacy that began during the era of the N360. This basic concept of maximizing space for people and minimizing space for mechanical components underlies Honda's overall approach to automobile manufacturing, and it lives on in the N Box+.



Artist's conception of a passenger in a wheelchair in a wheelchair-accessible N Box+

Even when used as a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, the N Box+ features a high ceiling in the passenger space, while the rear seats can be stowed flat in the floor so that there is no feeling of crowding. A detachable handrail ensures occupants' time in the vehicle is a pleasant one.

Additionally, a bed large enough to accommodate a 190-centimeter person can be made by folding the rear seats down and reclining the front seat backs. We worked to achieve the optimum shape for the seats to support the body while driving and to provide a flat feel when used as a bed. The result is a contour that fits the shape of the back naturally and smoothly.

In this way, the N Box+ was born of an unconventional approach that led to a multiuse body instead of a special body engineered specifically for wheelchair-accessible models. The result not only makes nursing care a more familiar part of customers' lives, but also dramatically expands the potential ways in which the car can be used.

Honda's technical skill and dealer initiatives bring customer joy to fruition

At the Takino Branch of Honda Cars Nishiwaki, a dealer in the city of Kato in Hyogo Prefecture, President Hiroko Maruoka, who inherited the business from her father, strives to develop long-term relationships with customers by consistently exciting and inspiring them. We asked Ms. Kurosaki, a longstanding customer of the dealer, about her experience there.

Ms. Kurosaki, who has been a customer of the dealer for 30 years, purchased an N Box+ for her mother-in-law, who uses a wheelchair.



Ms. Kurosaki, who purchased an N Box+ at the Takino Branch of Honda Cars Nishiwaki

"My mother-in-law loves the car," she explains. "It's easy to get into and out of, and visibility from the back seat is good. We chose it because the fit and finish doesn't make you feel like you're driving a mini-vehicle." Honda's accumulated technical skill and the relationships dealers have built with customers complement one another. The slow, steady efforts of both parties have brought customer joy to fruition.



Unprecedented quality for a mini-vehicle: **N-One**

Carrying on the **N360's DNA** in true form

The N-One is the third model in the N series, after the N Box and N Box+. It takes its design motif from the N360 and carries on its DNA in true form.



N-One with the G/L package (FF)

With the debut of the inexpensive N360, many consumers experienced the joy of car ownership for the first time during Japan's high-growth years. Subsequently, Honda sought to identify what kinds of joy could be realized through car ownership in contemporary Japan. The result of this process was an effort to invest our expertise and technology into every aspect of the mini-vehicle—design, driving performance, safety, and ease of use—so that it would embody our approach to quality.

The N-One is the result of an effort to create a new, basic vehicle for the future in Japan as a car loved by the customers over the long term. This is a vehicle that gives shape to Honda's approach to quality.

Delivering unprecedented quality with Honda technology



N-One's "eye," a symbol of Honda's commitment to quality

Forms that inspire fondness over the long term comprise a universal style that complements every scene and lifestyle in Japan. We gave the N-One a trapezoidal form that reflects the care given to its air resistance and pursued stability by positioning the tires as far out into the corners of the body as possible.

friendly design, which evokes a person's eyes, are the headlights, round LED position lamps, and turn signals. The design crystallizes a variety of functions and ideas.

The headlights give character to the N-One's endearing front look. Behind the

The projector-type headlights illuminate more of the road surface with greater uniformity than standard lamps. Design features that limit leakage of the light upwards increase nighttime safety by limiting glare for oncoming drivers.



The headlight design crystallizes various functions and ideas (artist's conception).

Giving customers a level of safety that is unprecedented for a mini-vehicle



Emergency Stop Signal: The hazard lamps automatically start flashing quickly in the event of abrupt braking.

The N-One is the first mini-vehicle* to include an Emergency Stop Signal function as standard equipment, reflecting Honda's desire to reduce the number of rear-end accidents. When the system determines that the brakes have been applied abruptly while driving, it starts lighting brake lamps and blinks quickly hazard lamps automatically to alert the drivers of trailing vehicles.

The N-One also comes standard with a VSA (Vehicle Stability Assist) system that controls side slip and a Hill Start Assist function that temporarily prevents the vehicle from rolling backward for about 1 second when starting on an upward incline. Additionally, all models include airbags for front-end collisions, and some include side curtain airbags that include the rear seats or side airbags for the front seats to provide protection in the event of a side collision. Furthermore, the driver and passenger seats incorporate a cervical impact-absorbing structure that is designed to prevent whiplash in the event of a low-speed, rear-end collision.

*Mini-vehicle box-style wagon class (as of November 2012, according to research by Honda)