



Client Coupons- October, 2009





Tom Dwyer On The Road...

Thanks to the generous help of our clients and friends, we're very pleased and proud to find that Tom Dwyer Automotive Services is gaining a strong reputation in environmental and progressive circles. Thank you so much for your support! Because of your kind words, we've had the opportunity to speak to groups on sustainable business practices, environmental issues, and even political issues all around the Portland area. We thought we'd tell you about two of these venues, one that we just finished and one that we'll be doing next week.

On Thursday, we attended the Northwest Environmental Business Council's "Climate Change- Positioning Your Business" conference at the Doubletree Lloyd Center hotel. About 200 people attended, mostly from the Northwest but also from as far away as New Hampshire. The conference was designed to "help business decision makers and service professionals understand how to integrate greenhouse gas management issues into a strategic framework for planning and action – and how to stay ahead of the curve." Mostly the attendees were from large companies that were planning long-term strategies to deal with upcoming carbon output regulations. Although this could easily have been a bunch of corporate sleazes looking at how to avoid the laws, it was surprisingly reassuring-- everyone seemed to be genuinely interested and excited about what they could actually do to reduce their carbon footprint and overall environmental impact of their businesses.

On September 24, we found ourselves on a speaker's panel with Intel and Oregon Iron Works discussing how our environmental policies have affected our businesses and what opportunities they have opened up. We were glad to be able to point to concrete things like the support for our Carbon Neutral Program or the large number of new clients who come to us based on the stands we take in our KPOJ ads. We were able to talk about the fact that we were a Eco-certified shop, and what EnergyTrust was doing to help us go solar (more on that in next month's issue). Best of all, we were able to explain that we didn't do these things to "greenwash" a dirty business or to comply with some arcane regulation. We did it because these things made sense, because they were the right things to do, because we wanted to live in a world with clean air and water, and because we think these are the kind of things businesses will have to do to be successful in the future.

The next availability for "Tom Dwyer On The Road" came when Tom spoke at the Portland City Council meeting on September 30 on the topic of health care, and how health insurance affects our business. The City Council was considering a resolution that would urge our Oregon Representatives to support John Conyer's bill HR 676, a health care reform bill that would actually institute a Medicare-style, single-payer health care system. The supporters were a broad representation of doctors, labor organizations, business leaders, concerned individuals, and others that wanted to make their voices heard on this important issue. Tom pointed out the spectacular failures in our current system, decried the vampires of the health insurance industry, and pointed out why a single-payer system is the obvious choice to effectively deliver health care for businesses and individuals. In the end, the motion passed the council unanimously, and the City of Portland went on record supporting a health care plan that actually makes sense. Plus, we got a great plug from Commissioner Randy Leonard. See all the action at <http://www.portlandonline.com/index.cfm?c=49508&a=265131>. The fun starts at time index 36:30 with a strong statement by Randy Leonard, and you'll find Tom's testimony from time index 51:45 to 56:00. (The plug from Commissioner Leonard runs from 56:00 to 57:00, and is really worth hearing). If this is something you support, then CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE! Democracy doesn't work unless you do.



Popcorn Shorts

We all like the short popcorn stories. You know, little fun facts and tidbits that are quick and easy to read. As we shuffle things around in upcoming issues of "Your Car Matters", one of the features we'll be experimenting with is "Popcorn Shorts", a series of quick facts about some basic theme (or just randomly assembled, you never can tell). Our inaugural installment is collected by Tom himself, and is all about cars. Follow the links to get something a little more nutritious. Betcha can't eat just one!



The first American car produced in quantity cost \$650. The [Curved Dash Oldsmobile](#), which debuted in 1901. Oldsmobile manufactured 425 of them that year.



While there were organized racing events before the turn of the 20th century, the first race called the [Grand Prix](#) occurred in France in 1906.



The first production car in the United States? Many remember the Model T as the first car to be mass-produced. However, the [Duryea](#) was actually the first production auto, meaning more than one at a time were made. Thirteen practically identical cars rolled off the factory floor in 1896.



The [first traffic signal](#) was installed in Cleveland in 1914. The red and green signal lights were operated by a traffic officer sitting in a nearby booth.



Oil shortages prompted the enactment of a national speed limit in 1974. Cars had to crawl along freeways and interstates across the country at a maximum speed of 55 mph.



The first Japanese car to be produced in the United States was the Honda Accord, being manufactured in Ohio in 1982 rather than being shipped to the States from overseas.



Seat belts were added to cars as standard equipment on Jan. 1, 1958



Between 1972 and 1982, the average speed of cars on the freeways in a notoriously congested Los Angeles dropped from 60 mph to 17 mph.



Would you drive a "Masturbation"?

(by Ian Park, special to "Your Car Matters")

Did you know that the Toyota Matrix is almost exactly the same car as the Pontiac Vibe, or that some Chevrolet models are actually made by Daewoo? "Re-Badging", "Re-Branding", or "Badge Engineering" all describe the practice of one car company selling products from another company under its own name. Why would a company do this? What are the benefits? What's the upside or downside to you?

Re-badged vehicles can often offer a company a new brand identity or a supplement to a product line without having to invest in the cost of designing and producing a completely new car. This strengthened brand identity can help market other vehicles within the re-brander's existing product line. Re-badging also gives automakers the ability to up- or down-brand a vehicle's identity as if it were a trim package for sale to different markets. A prime example of this is Ford-Mercury-Lincoln, each of which carries a different brand identity, dealership network and prospective target market. Ford designed and built the Explorer for its own target market, and gave it a starting price of about \$18,000. Mercury re-badged the vehicle to create the Mountaineer, an uptown brother of the Explorer starting at about \$25,000. Lincoln took the Explorer and rebadged it as the Aviator, which was the most luxurious version of the three and began at almost \$40,000. Each company sold the same basic vehicle, but utilized small design changes and different marketing campaigns to sell it to their individual customer bases without creating 3 drastically different, expensive, and time consuming models.

Another reason for badge engineering has to do with borders, culture, and language. Frequently vehicle model names and even brands don't always sound as good outside their native tongue. When this happens (and it happens surprisingly often), it's much cheaper and easier to change the chrome logos than to design a new vehicle. The Buick Lacrosse, which sold well and without problems in the U.S., had to be renamed for the Canadian and more specifically the Quebec markets. Why? Because depending on the dialect, "Lacrosse" was a French slang term for either "masturbation" or "swindler". The Mitsubishi Pajero had the same issue. "Pajero" in many Spanish-speaking countries means "wanker", and so we know it today as the "Montero" in the U.S. or as the "Shogun" in the U.K.

Beyond the naming and marketing issues, there are strong bottom-line incentives to a company rebadge a vehicle. When GM looked to Toyota for smaller, more fuel-efficient cars, they could already see a successful track record of reliability, low cost of ownership, and an established parts supply network. When car manufacturers are looking to create a new production vehicle, costs can be in the hundreds of millions to build and tool new factories. So, GM saved money, time, and difficulty by simply plugging in the Toyota vehicles into its existing structure with minor changes. However, problems may appear if a company chooses to align itself with a company that doesn't have the same perceived (or actual) quality or reliability. If you are marketing your vehicle line as "reliable" and choose to bring something into the fold that isn't, customers may become confused or upset if the new addition doesn't live up to the hype.

For example, when GM tried to bring an entry-level car to their Cadillac lineup they chose the Chevrolet Cavalier as a platform, and thus was born the Cimarron. However, the Cimarron sold in 1988 for \$16,071, while the Chevy-branded original was selling at \$6,995. This was quite a price difference for what many critics harshly deemed little more than leather and nicer paint. There may have been many technical reasons for Cadillac to base a new vehicle around Chevy's "J" platform, but none of them seemed to make a \$10,000 difference to consumers. Total production in the 7-year run of the Cimarron was a mere 132,499 units. Similarly the Acura SLX, an incognito Isuzu Trooper that provided the Acura brand with a quick entry into an SUV market that was rapidly becoming crowded, suffered seriously from mechanical problems and numerous recalls and was harshly criticized by Consumer Reports for its rollover rating. All this hurt Acura, which had previously been seen as a reliable and safe "premium" brand not usually plagued by such problems, and which discontinued the SLX in 1999.

The reason for these re-badging failures is that both of these companies picked "cheapy" vehicles to plug into their product line. In retrospect, it seems like this would have been a no-brainer for two companies that spent billions of dollars and decades of time building their reputation on quality, but the short-term allure of new customers without the expensive investment in new product can be a powerful temptation. It didn't pay off in either case, where both companies had to spend millions to help erase the damage.

What does this whole shell game mean to you, the new-car buyer? It can either be good or bad, depending on how well you do your research before buying. One possible downside is that the customer may be unsure of what vehicle they are actually getting when they buy. Many consumers who buy based on national or domestic-production loyalties are probably surprised to find the "All-American" Pontiac Vibe was made by a Japanese company. On the other hand Toyota's solid reputation for reliability and value is reflected in the

cost of their products, so by buying a Vibe you may save a few bucks on what is essentially the same car. The best advice is to go forewarned and forearmed into any vehicle purchase. Comparison shop, use the web, talk to dealers, and especially talk to us. We can help guide you through the minefield of "brand-engineered" vehicles, and maybe save you some headaches as well. To get you started, here are some car makers that have worked together in the past...

Isuzu and Honda	Honda Passport, Isuzu Oasis, Isuzu Gemini, Honda Odyssey, Honda Civic
Ford and Nissan	Mercury Villager, Nissan Quest
Toyota and Chevy	Chevy/Geo Prism, Chevy Nova, Pontiac Vibe, Toyota Corolla, Toyota Matrix
Saab and Subaru	Saab 9-2/9-2x, Subaru Impreza, Subaru WRX
Mazda and Ford	Mazda B Series, Mazda Tribute, Ford Ranger, Ford Explorer
Mitsubishi and Dodge	Dodge Colt, Eagle Summit, Mitsubishi Mirage, Dodge D50 Pickup, 3000GT, Stealth
Chevy and Suzuki	Chevy Tracker, Suzuki Vitara
Chevy and Daewoo	Chevy Aveo, Suzuki Swift, Daewoo Lanos (same platform)
Volkswagen and Daimler	Volkswagen LT and Dodge Sprinter Freightliner Sprinter =Mercedes Panel Van



Drew's Chicken Cordon Bleu

4 chicken breast halves, skinned and boned

4 thin slices fully cooked smoked ham

4 thin slices Swiss or gruyere cheese

½ cup all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon coarsely ground pepper

1 cup dry bread crumbs

2 eggs

1 tablespoon water

½ cup vegetable oil

Lemon wedges

Parsley or watercress

Using a heavy cleaver or meat mallet, flatten each breast half to about 1/74 inch thick. Place 1 slice of ham and 1 slice of cheese on each breast half. Beginning at the narrow end, roll up and press meat firmly together.

In a pie plate, combine flour, salt and pepper. Spread bread crumbs in a second pie plate.

In a small shallow bowl, beat eggs with water. Roll a chicken piece in flour mixture, shake off excess. Dip piece in egg mixture; drain over bowl. Roll piece in bread crumbs. Press bread crumbs evenly onto chicken. Place coated pieces on a wire rack.

Repeat with remaining chicken breast halves. Let stand 20 to 30 minutes before frying.

In a deep, heavy skillet, heat oil to 375 degrees over medium heat. Fry chicken in hot oil, turning occasionally with tongs, 8 minutes or until golden; drain on paper towel. Garnish with lemon and parsley or watercress. Serve hot. Makes 4 servings.



News To Make You Furious

This month's NEWS TO MAKE YOU FURIOUS comes from the healthcare debate, where reasoned and rational people calmly debate the merits of various well-considered and comprehensive plans, weighing the rights of people to live healthy lives against...well, whatever weighs against that. Here's a few mouth-dropping stories about real people and their interactions with the Insurance Board Death Panels. Unfortunately, if you're interested, it's easy to find more.

This American Life- Always good on any subject, they really get going on this one. Listen to "Fine Print"

http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio_Episode.aspx?sched=1308

Yes!- Personal stories from patients, doctors, and activists

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/health-care-for-all/1508>

WFAA- Dallas TV Station with story of a 27-year-old whose plug was pulled

http://www.wfaa.com/sharedcontent/dws/wfaa/latestnews/stories/wfaa051214_lj_african.bb0e76d.html

The Agonist- More stories in nice little boxes

http://agonist.org/ian_welsh/20070905/stories_from_the_health_insurance_front

Firedoglake- Fun with medical bills

<http://firedoglake.com/2007/09/04/more-fun-with-medical-bills/>

Commonwealth Fund Top 10 Health Policy Stories

<http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Content/From-the-President/2007/Top-10-Health-Policy-Stories-of-2007.aspx>

Committee on Energy and Commerce- Actual testimony before our Congressional overlords

http://energycommerce.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1671:energy-and-commerce-subcommittee-hearing-on-terminations-of-individual-health-policies-by-insurance-companies-&catid=133:subcommittee-on-oversight-and-investigations&Itemid=73

Los Angeles Times- Heartwarming article on Blue Cross employees getting good performance reviews.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2009/jun/17/business/fi-rescind17>

Baseline Scenario- Fun facts about rescission. How could this possibly be legal?

<http://baselinescenario.com/2009/07/27/health-insurance-innovation/>



Postcard Contest Winners

With everyone home from vacation, the Tom Dwyer Summer Postcard Contest is now officially over. Our winner, chosen at random, was coincidentally the one from the farthest away. The \$100 grand prize goes to Steve B. and Deborah W., who wrote the following to us from the Moon...

"Dear Tom...We really enjoyed our return to the Moon, but we had to mail this back on Earth-- the Post Office has discontinued Lunar service. We hear that Saturday delivery is next."

Congrats, Steve and Deborah, and thanks for going that extra mile to make sure we got your card!