



Weekly Car Dealers Newsletter

March 8, 2010

This information that follows is taken from sources including *The Carconnection*, *Autoweek*, and other industry sources.

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2010 AUTOMOTIVE SEMINAR EXCEL TIPS

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MAHINDRA TO SET DATE FOR U.S. LAUNCH****

2010 AUTOMOTIVE SEMINAR

The Edmonton 2010 Automotive Seminar will be held May 26th in the MacKay LLP office. This year's meeting will include detailed presentation on HST and the changes to GST involving Financial Services as well as industry updates and other interesting sessions. Our meeting mailers will be sent out in early March.

Book the date now!

EXCEL TIPS

If you have someone entering data into an Excel spreadsheet, using the tab to move from field to field is very easy. The key to making the tab work is to unlock the input cells, and then protect the worksheet. First, select all of the input cells on your worksheet. (To select non-adjacent cells, hold down *Ctrl* while you select the cells.) Select *Format Cells* to display the Format Cells dialog box., Click the *Protection* tab and remove the check mark from the Locked check box. Click *OK*. Locking or unlocking cells has no effect unless the worksheet is protected. To protect the worksheet, select *Tools, Protection, Protect Sheet (or Home, Cells, Format for 2007.)* If you're using Excel 2002 or 2007, you'll be able to specify some additional options. Specifically, you can remove the check mark from the Select locked cells option. When the sheet is protected, you'll find pressing *Tab* moves the heavy-bordered active cell indicator to the next unlocked cell. Easy! *Source: Sandie Jerome*

GENERAL MOTORS PUSH TO RELEASE VOLT EARLY HITS SNAG

General Motors Chairman and CEO Ed Whitacre's push to put the Chevrolet Volt extended-range electric car in customer hands prior to the November launch is running into hurdles, the Free Press has learned. After adding CEO to his title in December, Whitacre quickly talked about the possibility of bringing the car out earlier than expected in a limited number. Not wanting to chance it, some executives are now leaning against putting the Volt into the hands of consumers prior to the official launch. "There's a lot of hard work that needs to be done between now and November, but the team remains on target to deliver," said Rob Peterson, a GM spokesman. *Source: [Detroit Free Press](#)*

GM'S WHITACRE NOT FINISHED CLEANING HOUSE

Three months into the era of Big Ed Whitacre and this much is clear about his General Motors Co. Change isn't coming fast enough for the retired telecom exec-turned-auto CEO or for GM's active board of directors, and one of the chief reasons appears to be that there are still too many old GM hands near the top of the building. So the house cleaning of the executive ranks continues, however much the corporate spin tries to suggest otherwise.

The latest departure is the inimitable Bob Lutz, the septuagenarian whose style, influence and knack for effective infighting unleashed GM's technical know-how and helped make (some of) the General's metal cool again. At 78, he can retire on his own terms knowing his tenure made GM's cars and trucks better than they otherwise would have been.

Not sure whether Whitacre will be able to say the same thing. For his management-by-musical-chairs will either find the right combination of people and assignments to make GM solidly profitable, or it will project panic, sow confusion and reap the kinds of internal resentment that delivers less performance, not more. Three months after Whitacre ousted Fritz Henderson, the ex-CEO comes back as a highly paid consultant. Less than three months after Whitacre made Susan Docherty the U.S. sales and marketing wunderkind, she gets stripped of half the job because, as one executive explained to me, she was "getting swamped" by its scope. Weeks after Whitacre relied on John F. Smith to smooth relations with European politicians and employees over GM's about-face on its plans for its Adam Opel GmbH unit in Germany, Smith gets pushed into an early retirement and the responsibility for managing strategic relationships falls to GM's jack-of-all-directors, Stephen Girsky.

GM is officially in the drama business -- which couldn't make it look more different than that other Motown turnaround project in which an outsider CEO focuses Ford Motor Co.'s long-timer Blue Oval talent on a cohesive, clearly defined plan and sticks with it. Whitacre? Not so much, judging by the management churn that has "short-term tactics" written all over it. Where Ford's Alan Mulally and his four-point plan is by now the stuff of dull repetition, and where the results speak for themselves, there's uncertainty about whether Whitacre has a plan and, if so, what it

actually may be. "There's a hundred ways to run a company," a GM executive who recently left the company told me, "and he picked one -- just go sell more cars."

If only it were that simple. If only GM didn't have data, as it was explained to me, suggesting Cadillac doesn't resonate as much as hoped with folks looking for a car that says they've "made it." Or that the bailout of GM and the United Auto Workers gives customers a reason to steer clear of GM showrooms.

If only a flip-side of the global recall scandal rocking rival Toyota Motor Corp. didn't include the cash-rich Japanese automaker using sales incentives and cut-rate financing to woo wary customers -- a race GM may want to avoid but probably cannot as it strives to rebuild its sagging market share.

If only Ford's ability to execute an impressive turnaround didn't stand as an obvious example that Detroit automakers possess the talent to compete anywhere in the world, so long as they're led with clarity, purpose and a commitment to produce world-class vehicles.

"The thing that encourages me is that the official credo of governing now is, " Lutz told Automotive News 'design, build and sell the best cars and trucks,' in an interview Wednesday after the Geneva Motor Show. "The company is on the right track."

Hard to tell at times like these. Lutz, a consultant to Whitacre until May 1, insists he was not asked to leave. He probably wasn't, chiefly because Whitacre is smart enough to know he can learn from Lutz -- and said as much in his obligatory remarks confirming Maximum Bob's looming exit.

This much is clear: The early days of Big Ed's era are all about distancing the new GM from the past and the people who defined much of the old GM -- Henderson at the top, Smith in planning, LaNeve in marketing, Cole in Washington, Young in finance, to name a few -- because the past also was marked by epic failure.

Fair enough. Also clear is that Whitacre is keen to retain the automotive cred that makes the preponderance of GM's cars and trucks contenders in key markets around the world. He should, because that's the whole ballgame.

Sacrificing the continuity of global product development, embodied in Vice Chairman Tom Stephens, for one, risks derailing the momentum that helped the automaker survive bankruptcy -- and regaining that mojo takes a whole 'nother kind of speed GM cannot afford to lose.

Source: Detroit News

MAHINDRA TO SET DATE FOR U.S. LAUNCH

MUMBAI (Reuters) - Mahindra & Mahindra, India's largest utility vehicle and tractor maker, hopes to announce in 2-3 weeks a timeframe for the launch of its pick-up trucks in the United States, a top official said on Thursday. The U.S. market is crucial for Mahindra to achieve its objective of becoming a global player but the launch, originally expected late last year or early

2010, has been delayed due to safety and emission certification. "The process is taking a bit longer than what we anticipated," Pawan Goenka, president and member of the management board, said in an interview. He said an application would be made to the U.S. Environment Protection Agency as soon as the vehicle completed the tests required, which should be known in about two to three weeks. Goenka said the agency usually takes a month to process applications. "Since our long-term aspiration is to be known as the premier SUV and pick-up manufacturer in the world, it is but natural that we must sell and be successful in the U.S.," he said. "Without that we cannot call ourselves a premier player in that segment." The pick-up will be competing with Ford Motor's 2010 Ford Ranger and Toyota's Tacoma models in the United States, the world's largest market for SUVs and pick-ups.

Mahindra hopes to quadruple exports in 2010/11 from an expected 10,000 units in the current fiscal year that ends on March 31, Goenka said. "Once the U.S. sales also start we will be able to achieve that ultimate objective of having 20 percent of our volumes coming from exports," he said. Its exports had slumped 36 percent in 2008/09 to 8,000 units following the global downturn.

Mahindra has a 65 percent share of India's utility vehicles market with models such as Scorpio, Bolero and the Xylo and competes with Tata Motors, Toyota and General Motors. *Source: Reuters*
