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Safety Quote to Edmunds – 10March2009

First and foremost, safety is *not* an engineering issue per se. It is a management issue. The engineering and technical staffs can provide system designs for almost any safety concept or issue imaginable. But if management fails to prioritize the safety issue in general, and specifically in terms of product program financials, all of the safety engineering talent in the world will be irrelevant.

Typically we found that a very happy Ford or Chrysler customer would inform 5 to 8 others of their satisfaction with our product, the so-called good-news statistic. If our customer was dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, upwards of 20 to 24 people would be informed of the bad news. However the downside is even more slippery. If our product fails to protect anyone connected to the use of our vehicle as a result of a **safety** issue, not just a passenger or owner, then literally millions will hear about it; they will hear about it not just from their friends but from the courts and then from the mass media. These days, as a result of the internet, the bad news message on a vehicle safety problem instantaneously reaches a global audience. If management has not prioritized safety, engineering expertise can do nothing to avert or mitigate this bad news outcome. In my hard-won experience this scenario results from management decisions about the product priorities.

Does 'safety sell' in the automotive product world? Yes, but it also protects the long term viability of a car company by maintaining the good news. On the flip side, a person that experiences the competent deployment of an automotive safety device or system which protects them from severe injury or death will not only survive as a repeat buyer, but will live to do sales and marketing for us! Safety definitely sells, and historically car company management has encouraged use of customer safety experience in very effective advertising. Safety sells from one end to the other.