

# Local car salesmen rebuff image problems

By C.J. RISAK

There are people in the world every one trusts. Their mother. The pope. A close friend.

And there are an equal number of people on this earth that no one seems to trust. Politicians. Lawyers. Oil company executives.

And car salesmen.

Many people don't have any faith in the promises and assurances given by a car salesperson. The feeling that a salesman will tell the customer just about anything to make a sale is predominant among consumers.

Why? Where does this lack of trust stem from? Why do people feel they

are being taken by a car salesman, but not by sales people in other professions?

"I don't think we have an image problem," Bob Dusseau Sr., of Bob Dusseau Lincoln Mercury, said. "I certainly don't have that problem here."

"I think the press builds this up too much. Do people read the press when

they want to buy a suit, or jewelry?"

While the public, for whatever reasons, may not profess the utmost faith in what car salesmen tell them, owners of the car dealerships in Farmington don't think they have much of an image problem.

"It's as if I said all journalists were jerks," Dave Trower, a spokesman for

Holzer Ford, said. "If they wrote one bad article about me, I might feel that way about all of them."

"It's the same thing with car salesmen, one bad one gives us all a bad name."

"I think it dates back to the old Livernois days, about 10 or 15 years ago. There were some pretty shady deals, a lot of shysters. But, by and large, with all the controls and laws that regulate us today, plus the various consumer groups and newspapers, it makes it pretty hard for a shady operator to stay in business."

STILL, CAR SALESMAN today do face an image problem from a cynical public. Advertising campaigns the various car manufacturers wage point this up: they are trying to sell trust in their product.

Commercial sales such as Chevrolet's, "Hot dogs, apple pie and Chevrolet," really don't sell anything about the car, other than you can trust the car company because it's part of America.

Still, car dealership representatives insist that they never will take advantage of a customer just to make a sale, claiming that the public wouldn't allow it, and that in fact it would be bad for business.

"Most car customers are better informed now than at any time in history," Trower said. "People are not dumb. If you think, as a salesman, you are going to pull the wool over the customers' eyes 90 percent of the time, you won't be around very long."

It is true that the public is better informed nowadays about what a car can do and what it is like than ever before. Several car magazines carry information on autos ranging from performance tests to how much it costs and how much each option available on it costs.

Bob Sellers, owner of Bob Sellers Pontiac, finds the informed consumer much easier to deal with.

"If they (the car buyer) come in well-prepared, then we can get a more accurate idea of what is wanted," Sellers explained.

## Loans available for ice storm victims

Federal loans are now available for homeowners and small business owners who experienced property damage in last April's ice and wind storm.

The Small Business Administration has activated a disaster program which offers loans of up to \$50,000 for small business owners and \$500,000 for small businesses at an interest rate of 7% percent. Payment terms are negotiable.

According to loan officer Bob Collins, legislation has recently hit the U.S. Congress toward lowering that interest rate to 3 percent.

The counties eligible for this assistance include Oakland, Wayne, Macomb, Lapeer, Livingston and Genesee.

Personal property owners affected by the April 8 storm are eligible for Economic Injury Loans, which must be filed with the SBA by July 16. Businesses are eligible for funds through Economic Injury Loans, which must be filed by Feb. 18, 1980.

The disaster branch of the SBA is located at the McNamara Federal Building, 477 Michigan Ave., Detroit 48226. The phone number is 226-4030.

Collins says the loans are intended to help people restore their property to its pre-disaster condition.

Involving personal property damage, the most common forms of damage included collapsed roofs, shingle and gutter damage, and porches demolished by fallen trees.

Collins says his office has received as many as 300 calls inquiring into this assistance in the past week. Among those communities hardest hit by the storm were Oakland County and northern Wayne County.

Last April, Michigan was denied a

request made to President Carter which would declare the state a disaster area, making it eligible for further financial relief.

Collins suggests that once an application is received, the property owner should get a repair estimate and submit it along with the application to the administration. From there, a loan officer will be sent to survey the damage.

In some cases, he says, immediate repair is needed. He advises property owners to save all repair receipts as well as photos of the damage.

## Botsford bid studied

Botsford Hospital's request to rent space at Edgewood Elementary School in Farmington Hills would be an inconvenience to operations at the school. But the possibility of renting space at Clarenceville Junior High will be studied.

This is the information the board of education received in a letter from Edgewood principal David M. Kamish.

He told Supt. David McDowell that there is only one classroom not being used for classes. But it is being used "as a very necessary storeroom."

Kamish said there were two rooms that possibly could be rented, but that it "is very advantageous to keep the large rooms with the folding door for school use."

He told McDowell the room gave them some flexibility which they continue to need.

"The annual Edgewood fun fair uses these two rooms for a restaurant. I

don't know where we would put the restaurant, without the opportunity of these two large rooms."

He said the teachers were also "very reluctant about giving up these two large rooms."

Kamish said he believed there were at least six or eight rooms free for use at the junior high school.

"I feel quite certain that Botsford Hospital would be interested in renting space in our junior high school," he added.

McDowell said he had tried to contact an administrator at Botsford regarding the suggestion but that the person was out of town. He said he would contact the hospital later.

Edgewood is at 21225 St. Francis, Farmington Hills, while the hospital is on Grand River, north of Eight Mile Road. The junior high is in Middlebelt, north of Seven Mile, in Livonia.



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