

At least auto show's concept cars are interesting

This year's auto show kicked off coincidentally with the deadline for the ultimatum issued in the Middle East, a fact that was grimly acknowledged by every executive making his or her new-year predictions.

That, unfortunately, gives the festivities something of the atmosphere of the ballroom on the Titanic, as the glitz and glitter becomes a kind of bravado at best, at worst a symbol of conspicuous consumption in the face of pending sacrifice.

But even without the sobering sense of brinkmanship brought on by the Midwest crisis, this would have been one of these years ripe with a sense of premonition. For one thing, it's the start of a new decade. For

another, the softening economy and onslaught of worldwide competition gives this year the feel of change in the air.

There isn't a lot of new hardware this year in any case, particularly coming from the Big Three. The significant new cars on the show floor are somewhat subdued — led by the new Chrysler minivan, which is changed only slightly, and Ford's new full-size sedan, which are modernized and repowered but not startling.

To achieve a sense of newness, GM introduces several 1992 models early, notably a new Cadillac that takes Cadillac, finally, out of the doldrums of styling.



auto talk
Dan McCosh

But mainly, there is a promise of the future in a handful of extremely well-worked out "concept cars" that this time are much more than silly reaches of styling excess.

Chrysler outrages and amazes with a nostalgic version of a 10-cylinder touring coupe. It shares the

stage with one of the most significant small car designs seen in decades — a sloped, four-door economy car powered with a tiny two-stroke engine.

The latter marks one of the few significant changes in engine engineering in decades, a promise of fu-

ture efficiency, power and economy wrapped in an appealing, stylish and presumably low-cost envelope.

In fact, Chrysler would have stolen the show were it not for a singular new Pontiac concept car that manages to combine convoluted sculpture, high technology and outrageous excess with a subtle harmony.

Curiously, both cars are credited to extremely young designers now working in Detroit. Two, it turns out, come from the Cleveland Art Institute — an institution apparently recovering its former glory.

Then Ford steps in with yet another swoopy glass bubble that pushes its now-famous aero theme to the

outer reaches. And it is powered by a straight eight-cylinder engine, of all things.

Berlione and Pininfarina, two houses of design rarely seen in Detroit, unveil exotic sports cars — in themselves statements of power and speed, but somehow lacking in the imagination of the kid's stuff.

Is all this hope for the future of an industry that has been relocating itself, in the process becoming so self-invested it began to lose a good deal of the charisma it used to overflow with?

Probably, at least if things return to normal. In the background, it seems as if the drum roll has started.

Owner needs lots of good advice when selling his business

Sooner or later, every small business changes hands. And for business owners who have been through the process, negotiating a mutually satisfying sales agreement is a key aspect of any successful transaction.

Both sellers and buyers can jeopardize the negotiations of a sale when neither party is aware of the different methods of selling a business and the resulting financial returns and tax consequences, said Dan Nemes, partner of the Birmingham CPA firm of Nemes, Allen & Co.

"The tendency is to zero in on price as the most important element of the deal," Nemes said. "But it's

the nature of the sales agreement that makes or breaks it."

He added that no business owner should attempt negotiating a business sale without involving the help of a qualified attorney and CPA.

"Trying to do so is like skiing down the highest mountain blindfolded since your chances of success are slim to none."

Offering a business along with real estate may best be handled as two separate transactions.

"The price of the two combined can be overwhelming to buyers, and for many sellers, maintaining ownership of real estate is wise from an investment or tax point of view,"



focus: small business
Mary DiPaolo

Nemes said. Tax also allows negotiations and tax alternatives to be clearer and more straightforward when real estate is not included in the sale of the business.

Sellers who are asked to enter into special arrangements such as cov-

nants not to compete, employment contracts or consulting agreements should also be aware of the resulting tax consequences. From the seller's perspective, money received as part of such agreements is recognized as ordinary income and may be taxed

at the maximum rate of 31 percent.

This is less desirable than income received in the form of capital gains that is taxed at a maximum rate of 28 percent.

The buyer always has the incentive to pay that portion that would be ordinary income to the seller versus capital gain proceeds since he cannot deduct the amount picked up in capital gain by the seller until he sells the business," Nemes said. "And if he's paying you ordinary income as part of some arrangement, the seller will potentially pay that 31 percent penalty for the buyer's benefit further ahead."

Nemes believes there are many

methods of selling a business but boils down to being familiar with your options as part of the sales negotiation process. Beyond that, Nemes stresses the best sales agreements are those that reflect both parties' willingness to be fair, honest and respectful of each other's specific needs and circumstances.

For more information, contact Nemes at 540-6500.

Mary DiPaolo is the author of *Market Trends*, a Northville business consulting firm. She is also producer and host of the radio television series *Entrepreneur's Perspective*.

datebook

● PURCHASING MANAGEMENT

Thursday, Jan. 17 - National Association of Purchasing Management meets at the Mazda plant in Flatrock. Information: 1-773-3737.

● MULTIMEDIA USERS

Thursday, Jan. 17 - North American Multimedia Users' Group workshop 7:30 p.m. in Birmingham. Fee: \$119. Information: Mark Welser, 642-1436.

● ACCOUNTANTS

Thursday, Jan. 17 - National Association of Accountants meets in Bloomfield Hills. Information: Joe Boy, 838-9329.

● INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Thursday, Jan. 17 - Michigan Society of Instructional Technology meets at 6 p.m. in Farmington Hills. Information: Carol Vost, 474-8855.

● MANUFACTURING EXCELLENCE

Friday, Jan. 18 - "Manufacturing Excellence: Plan, Execute, Measure" 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. near Rochester. Non-member fee: \$205. Information: 370-3120. Sponsors: Oakland University, American Production and Inventory Control Society.

● DOCUMENTATION

Friday-Saturday, Jan. 18-19 - Technical documentation seminar in Detroit. Fee: \$495. Information: 1-996-2696. Sponsor: Communique Inc.

● PARA-ACCOUNTANT PROGRAM

Information: 1-996-2696.

Monday, Jan. 21 - Winter term for paraprofessional accountant program begins in Rochester Hills and Royal Oak. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

● LEGAL SECRETARIES

Monday, Jan. 21 - Legal Secretaries Association meets at 5:30 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. Information: Michelle Desotte, 649-3333.

● PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

Monday, Jan. 21 - Production and manufacturing management certificate program begins 6:30-9:30 p.m. on campus of Oakland University near Rochester. Information: 370-3120.

● FINANCIAL PLANNING

Monday, Jan. 21 - Personal financial planning program begins near Rochester. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

● INTRODUCTORY LOTUS 1-2-3

Monday, Jan. 21 through Feb. 11 - "Introductory Lotus 1-2-3: Spreadsheets for Use in Home or Business" offered 7-9 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. Fee: \$85. Information: 645-3635. Sponsor: Cranbrook Schools.

● ASSERTIVENESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Tuesday, Jan. 22 - "Assertiveness in the Workplace" offered 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the American Society of Employers in Southfield. Non-member fee: \$225. Information: Denise Moody, 453-4506.

● WOMEN'S ECONOMIC CLUB

Tuesday, Jan. 22 - Women's Economic Club luncheon in Detroit. Information: 364-5088.

● INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

Tuesday, Jan. 22 - "Invest strategies for Under-21s" 7:30-9:30 p.m. in Birmingham. Fee: \$12. Information: 644-3632. Sponsor: The Community House.

● TRADE SHOWS

Tuesday, Jan. 22 - "Free presentation: Secrets of Trade Show Selling" 7:30-9:30 p.m. in Southfield. Information: 334-6400. Sponsor: Associated Exhibitors Inc.

● APPRAISERS

Tuesday, Jan. 22 - American Society of Appraisers meets in Southfield. Information: Bruce Stewart, 673-2583.

● FINANCIAL PLANNING

Tuesday, Jan. 22 through March 26 - "Do-It-Yourself financial planning course" 6:30-9:30 p.m. near Rochester. Fee: \$245. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

● WORDPERFECT GRAPHICS

Tuesday, Jan. 22 through Feb. 26 - WordPerfect Graphics course 6:30-9:30 p.m. near Rochester. Fee: \$150. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

● BEGINNING COMPUTER

Tuesday, Jan. 22 through Feb. 12 - Beginning Computer Hands-On Service Class in Surviving the Computer Age offered 5-9 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. Fee: \$75. Information: 453-4506.

tion 645-3635. Sponsor: Cranbrook Schools.

● CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wednesday, Jan. 23 - "Customer Service Satisfaction in the 1990s" offered 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the American Society of Employers in Southfield. Non-member fee: \$225. Information: Denise Moody, 453-4506.

● PROFESSIONAL SECRETARIES

Wednesday, Jan. 23 - Professional Secretaries International meets at 5:30 p.m. in Southfield. Information: Ann Dickinson, 549-8558.

● STARTING A BUSINESS

Wednesday, Jan. 23 and 30 - "What You Need to Know to Start a Business" 7:30-9:30 p.m. in Birmingham. Fee: \$245. Information: 644-3632. Sponsor: The Community House.

● TIME MANAGEMENT

Thursday, Jan. 24 - "Time Management Our Non-Renewable Resource" offered 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the American Society of Employers in Southfield. Non-member fee: \$225. Information: Denise Moody, 453-4506.

● EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Thursday, Jan. 24 - "Developing and Implementing Employee Involvement Programs" offered 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the American Society of Employers in Southfield. Non-member fee: \$225. Information: Denise Moody, 453-4506.

● LANDLORD PROTECTION

Thursday, Jan. 24 - "Protecting the Landlord When a Tenant Files Bankruptcy" 4:30-6 p.m. in Birmingham. Fee: \$25. Information: 643-6432. Sponsor: Maroko Landau and Pomer.

● HEALTHY EMPLOYEES

Thursday, Jan. 24 - "Health Enhancement Programs at Your Workplace" 7:30-11:40 a.m. near Rochester. Fee: \$75. Information: Beth Vocea, 370-3158. Sponsor: Oakland University.

● WORDPERFECT 5.0

Thursday, Jan. 24 through Feb. 11 - "WordPerfect 5.0 Word Processing on the IBM Personal Computer" offered 7-9 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. Fee: \$85. Information: 645-3635. Sponsor: Cranbrook Schools.

● JAPANESE FOR BUSINESS

Tuesday, Jan. 29 through March 19 - "Introduction to Japanese for Business and Social Use" begins at 6:30 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. Fee: \$75. Information: 645-3635. Sponsor: Cranbrook Schools.

A year after the JOA went into effect, what's the Detroit newspaper situation in 1991?

After a year of the JOA (Journal of the Automobile Industry) going into effect, what's the Detroit newspaper situation in 1991?

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