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Marchionne Speaks on Leadership

ANN ARBOR – As the 2012 campaign chair for the United Way for Southeastern Michigan, Chrysler Chairman and CEO Sergio Marchionne, recognizes the need to transform the region through several means, including education, a United Way key focus area. In keeping with that theme, Marchionne addressed nearly 500 business students last week at the University of

Michigan's Ross School of Business, discussing the characteristics of a leader, what can be accomplished as people remove barriers and the moral responsibility that touches those who aspire to be leaders.

"Closing our eyes, or thinking that finding a solution is someone else's role, makes us part of the problem," Marchionne said.

Chrysler Seeking to Stoke Fiat Sales in N. America

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
and TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writers

DETROIT (AP) – Fiat hopes to start fresh in North America after a disappointing first year in the market.

The Italian brand sold fewer than 25,000 Fiat 500 subcompacts in the U.S. and Canada in 2011, only halfway to its goal of 50,000. Its network of new dealers was slow to get up and running. Awareness of the brand was low. Fiat was returning to the U.S. for the first time since 1983, when it pulled out of the market because of quality problems.

Sergio Marchionne, the chief executive of Fiat SpA and its partner, Chrysler Group, said

the company shouldn't have set such a high target. He said Fiat based its numbers on sales of its closest competitor, Mini, which sold more than 62,000 vehicles in the U.S. and Canada last year.

"We set ourselves up for the fall. We really did," Marchionne said during an interview at the Detroit auto show.

"And then people are saying, 'What's the future of Fiat?' Well, the future of Fiat was exactly the same future that we had in mind when we launched the 500."

Marchionne said the brand now expects to sell between 25,000 and 35,000 vehicles in the U.S. next year and 5,000 in Canada.

Olivier Francois, the mar-

keting chief for Fiat and Chrysler, said Fiat should have a much better year in North America. The company now has 137 dealers, compared with 70 six months ago. It's also rolling out two Fiat 500 variants: the upscale Gucci addition and the sporty Abarth.

"We needed better depth than just one car," Francois said. Marchionne confirmed that Fiat is also planning to launch a small minivan to the U.S. in 2013.

Francois said awareness of Fiat is growing since the company launched ads with singer Jennifer Lopez in September.

Francois said the ads are helping position Fiat as an ur-

ban car with a lot of attitude. Later, the brand will focus more on its Italian heritage, he said.

After the disappointing first year, the head of U.S. Fiat, Laura Soave, was replaced in November by longtime Chrysler marketing executive Timothy Kuniskis.

Kuniskis said his top priority is increasing awareness of the Fiat brand. But in the meantime, he's happy with the customers Fiat is drawing, who come from many different ages and income levels.

"We're getting people from every demographic who just want something different," he said.

"These are customers that Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge have never seen before."

Model Ts, a Plug-in and 1896 Duryea Among New Exhibit at Henry Ford

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"Driving America" is more than an exhibition with cars on display," said Patricia Mooradian, president of The Henry Ford.

"It is really an interactive, state-of-the-art story of us – us as drivers, consumers and enthusiasts. It examines the car as an innovation and explores how it has changed almost every aspect of our lives and heavily influenced the decisions we make.

"It is an exhibition that resonates with us all and it will challenge us to think differently about what we drive."

One of the largest automotive-centric exhibitions of its kind, "Driving America" is a sweeping 80,000 square feet and includes 130 vehicles and more than 60 cases of artifacts.

Sprinkled throughout the experience are 18 interactive 42-inch touchscreens offering thousands of additional details, images, videos and oral histories, all of which give the visitor greater access, beyond the museum floor, to the collections of The Henry Ford. Guests can create their own custom collection that can be accessed through their mobile device or home computer for viewing later.

"We wanted to develop content around what the visitor was seeing," said Mooradian. "All of the interactives are designed to be learning experiences and activities that utilize artifacts from the extensive Henry Ford collection."

The breadth and depth of the Museum's overall car collection, including new ones on display, is downright breathtaking, even for a metro Detroit auto facility.

"We truly believe in intergenerational learning," said Christian Overland, executive vice president, The Henry Ford.



Touch-screen interaction for visitors is a major part of the experience at the new state-of-the-art "Driving America" exhibit.

"So, we still have the story of Henry Ford as an innovator – we actually tell that story better than we ever have. We actually take people (from) his 1896 invention of the Quadricycle going through all of the failures in his motor companies until 1903, then all the way to the Model T, and how he designed and achieved all that, going through that process.

"There's Model Ts, there's World War II vehicles, we still have the Jeep, we still have the Mustangs, we still have people's favorites.

"But we've added things that may not be the usual suspects." We've added a 1971 Chrysler New Yorker, we've added a 1990 Explorer, we've added a Plymouth Horizon. We added a Dodge Ram... we added a Toyota Prius, too. Those are cars that started changing the world and defining the 21st century. "We've been looking at the tool kit for yesterday and tomorrow, too.

"So we have Gottlieb Daimler's original calipers used to build the original car. His daughter gave Henry Ford his original tool chest, we have one of the tools on display.

"Now, we also have a Nissan

Leaf electric plug-in coupler."

"Driving America" offers up a stellar and unprecedented collection of some of the most important and significant vehicles of the modern era, including an 1896 Duryea, the last remaining example of America's first production car; the 1865 Roper, the oldest surviving American car, and the 1931 Bugatti Royale, the third of only six ever built in the world.

Century-old electric cars, current hybrids, muscle cars, racers and modern-day SUVs fill the exhibition's 20 focal areas that cover everything from hot rods and road trips to road food and racing.

"What makes this exhibition different from most is that it looks at cars through the eyes of the people who use them, or in some cases, don't use them," said Bob Casey, senior curator of transportation for The Henry Ford.

"Visitors will be asked to think about what attracted them to automobiles in the first place."

Note that the McDonald's sign at the exhibit is a 1960-era artifact that the Museum gathered from the Madison Heights burger shop.

Ford Eyes Future of Lincoln Brand

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – Ford Motor Co. marketing chief Jim Farley has a busy year ahead, with the launch of major products such as the Ford Escape and the revamp of the luxury Lincoln brand.

And as the new Ford Fusion was debuting at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, the new Ford EcoSport, a compact SUV for developing markets, was unveiled in New Delhi. Both will go on sale later this year.

The company is accelerating its plan to make global products instead of producing different cars for each market, Farley said last week at the Detroit auto show.

Farley says 85 percent of Ford's products will be built on just nine basic platforms by 2013. That's a year earlier than its original plan. It's also a major change from five years ago, when just 29 percent of Ford's volume was built on shared platforms.

In North America, Farley is also tasked with reinventing the Lincoln brand, which was the top luxury brand in the U.S. 15 years ago but has fall-

en to last place after years of neglect.

Ford debuted the new Lincoln MKZ midsize sedan at the auto show, and will try to create a new image for Lincoln with advertising and spruced-up dealerships. It's a challenge Farley relishes.

"It will take all of our energy to get Lincoln back," he said.

Farley talked about new products, gas prices and even Ford's crosstown rival, General Motors Co., at the conference. Here are two questions and his answers:

Q: Countries like India, Brazil and China are seeing big growth in auto sales. Will the U.S. become a has-been?

A: "No. The United States has never been more vibrant. Detroit is back. Walking around the auto show, I haven't felt this vibrancy in our industry in a long time. What's really exciting is that there's now equal footing among all the brands, and the customer is going to have a lot of great choice. The fundamental difference about the U.S. is that it's a healthy industry. The capacity and the demand are aligned. The customers are expecting more around fuel economy, they're

open to new technologies, and because of all that, and the pricing environment, and the fact that we have a healthy industry without too much overcapacity, I think we're entering a golden time for us. The industries like Brazil and India are excited because of their growth, but everyone's adding capacity, too, so the question is, are they adding too much capacity?

Q: At what point do gas prices affect what people buy?

A: "What we've learned over the last two years in the U.S. is that it's not the price, it is the rate of change in the price. If the slope of the curve changes dramatically, segments and choices change dramatically. If the slope is gradual, say 10 cents a quarter, customers adjust. But when it changes dramatically like it did in the summer of 2008, that's when people change. The one thing that has really changed is that every American now knows that it just takes one day – one natural disaster – and tomorrow could be very different from today in terms of the gas price.

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