

Chevrolet Will Offer Siri Connectivity in Sonic, Spark

by Irena Granaas

Call them young urbanites, the digitally enabled generation, or simply Millennials – there's a new auto customer segment that auto manufacturers are quickly recognizing as the wave of the future.

At the recent Los Angeles Auto Show, Chevrolet demonstrated its understanding of these tech-savvy customers, announcing that, starting next year, its least-expensive mini-cars, the Spark and the Sonic, will integrate Siri, the Apple-developed intelligent assistant that helps car occupants get things done using voice requests.

Working through the cars' standard Chevrolet MyLink infotainment system, Siri allows drivers with a compatible iPhone running iOS 6 to perform various tasks in an eyes-free, hands-free mode.

Scott Fosgard, GM communications manager for Environment, Technology and Product Development, explained this all came about when Apple announced last summer it would be working with 12 automotive companies, including GM, to develop technology to allow its customers to access the voice recognition capability offered in two of its popular iPhone line: the iPhone 4S and the new iPhone 5, while driving their vehicles.

"They referenced this technology as Siri," he said. . . . We then became the first car company to demonstrate that in the Chevy Sonic in L.A. at the L.A. Auto Show . . . What I find very ironic is that we're showing that in the smallest, most affordable econo-

my car we make," he said. "If you've been following the automobile industry, you know that goes against tradition.

"Usually, new technology starts in the premium brands and rolls down to the affordable brands over time . . . So, why is that important to a customer?"

"Well, I think with all infotainment technology, the entire industry is trying to get to where we give people that connectivity that they want – they have it at home, they have it at work, and the last frontier for them is the automobile."

With government safety experts taking a hard look at driver distraction as a major factor in highway crashes, Chevrolet says it's finding ways to cater to this customer base while reducing distractions.

For example, along with Siri, the MyLink system permits these

customers to re-text messages safely.

Spark and Sonic RS owners can use Siri in Eyes-Free mode to:

- Make voice-activated calls to their personal contacts on their iPhone
- Access favorite songs in their iTunes library and switch from iPod mode to AM/FM/ XM radio modes
- Access their digital calendar and add appointments.

Driving is still job number one, and Siri further limits distractions, say GM officials. While in Eyes-Free mode, it will not provide answers to questions which require bringing up a Web page or any other graphic display.

Yet, from a safety standpoint, the goal is to let them keep that connectivity but in such a way as they never have to touch the phone, Fosgard added, so they're

not tempted to text someone while they're driving or look up a phone number, and, by so doing, take their eyes off the road.

He said, "If you're experienced with some of the infotainment systems that the industry offers, what's done with Chevy MyLink in two vehicles, the Spark and the Sonic, is that those cars are the most affordable we sell – at a price point of \$12,700, say, for the Spark, bring in the processor speed of voice recognition that we might offer in the Cadillac XTS . . .

"We basically take what you love on that phone and project it onto that center stack . . . and the same thing with Apple. We are accessing the voice recognition that you pay for in the phone coding, but you do it without ever touching the phone.

"There's a little button on the steering wheel (that) allows you



Siri, the Apple-developed intelligent assistant that helps car occupants get things done using voice requests.

to do things like update your calendar. You can have text that you can dictate," Fosgard said.

"You can get sports scores and stock prices, and you can get simple directions, things that don't require Siri to search the Internet and come up with a graphic answer."

Newly Retired GM Employees Encouraged to Keep in Touch

by Jennifer Knightstep

Most of us look forward to the time when we can retire from our careers and spend our time playing golf, traveling, and spending time with family. But it's important, says Joe Wrobel, IT manager at General Motors, to stay connected with employers even after retirement.

"Over the years, many GMers have developed close friendships with co-workers, and joining a local retiree club is an excellent way to keep in touch with those friends, and to stay up-to-date on happenings at GM that might affect them."

Aside from the official GM retirees website, which offers updates retirees will find relevant, there are several local retiree groups scattered across the United States and in Michigan.

There's a group for Design Center retirees, a group for Milford Proving Ground retirees, and even a group called Over the Hill Car People for GM retirees nationwide.

Many groups meet monthly, and feature guest speakers who cover a range of helpful topics.

For more information about joining one of the dozens of GM retiree groups, visit www.gmretiree.com.

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