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Retro or Heritage, It is All the Same to You! by Hiteshbhoi

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Words matter, they really do. In some cases the wrong words or phrases can summon up a whole host of thoughts or feelings, negative or positive. Marketing professionals spend millions of dollars per year testing products with consumers to see just how well they are received. The automotive industry is no exception with vehicles living or dying based on name only. Beyond specific model names, there are other â€œkillerâ€• terms that must be avoided at all costs. Letâ€™s take a look at curren accepted automotive vernacular and those terms or words that are resoundingly rejected.

Crossover â€“ A rather vague term, a crossover vehicle defies easy description. One of the earlier crossover models was Chryslerâ€™s Pacifica â€“ a tall wagon, while the all new Dodge Caliper also is given that designation. Sometimes the designation hides what a vehicle really is: a hatchback. Ask anyone who drove one of these cars during the 1970s and 1980s and you will quickly learn why it is one term avoided by automakers at all costs!

Retro â€“ Suggesting something old made new, this term has been attributed to a particular breed of vehicle that borrows styling cues from an earlier model. Current examples include the Ford Thunderbird and Ford Mustang. While retro is positively received by some, automakers are now using a different term â€“ heritage â€“ to describe this category of vehicles. Chevrolet, for one, has named its new compact vehicle the HHR [heritage high roof] specifically to invoke the heritage name.

Ragtop â€“ Oh, this old term for a convertible has certainly died a nasty death. Rags are nothing more then spent clothe at least in the eyes of most motorists. Substitute the term â€œcabrioletâ€• and you have the preferred name for a vehicle whose roof retracts.

Wagon â€“ Drop the word â€œstationâ€• from station wagon and you have a word that describes the Dodg Magnum. Unlike previous generation vehicles that were used to drop Dad off at the railroad station to catch a ride to work, the Magnum puts the sport into what many have long considered to be the bane of suburbia: family wagons.

SUV â€“ Owners of Fordâ€™s Explorer, the Jeep Cherokee, and the Chevy Blazer have long been accustomed to calling their rides sport utility vehicles. Some manufacturers, including BMW, have adjusted the term SUV to SAV â€“ sport activity vehicle -- suggesting that their vehicles have a more refined use than their more prosaic competitors.

Green â€“ No longer just a color, the term â€œgreenâ€• is used to describe eco-friendly vehicles such as g electric hybrids. These vehicles still pollute, but their share of fuel consumption is much lower as are its overall negative impact on the environment. No word yet just how all of the dead batteries will be recycled when the time comes.

So, no matter how you slice it a favored term with one generation may be avoided at all costs for another one. Usually, you are still talking about the same thing, but by using terms that evoke a positive response you are much more likely to look at that product favorably. Clearly, this â€œwordsmithingâ€• is something automotive marketers are keen to emphasize with consumers.

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Hiteshbhoi - About Author:
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