



Technology...Artificial Intelligence at its “Best”

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A number of years ago, one of our Kimal Associates, Cody, was having severe problems with his Chevrolet Impala. He took it to a local dealer for their very sophisticated computer diagnosis of its "issues." (I was told this brand specific software cost over fifty thousand dollars to the dealer.) Cody showed me the printout of several pages he was given, a diagnosis telling what was wrong, and a lengthy list of "fixes." These included re-bore, and re-ringing the engine with new pistons and rings to cure the oil burning; a complete valve/head job to correct the "missing"...all new seals and gaskets; etc., etc. The punch line at the bottom was a thirty-eight hundred dollar fix...And naturally the car was just out of warranty! Cody lamented that he loved the car, but hated to spend so much money "fixing it." I suggested that he get a second opinion on the computer's diagnosis and take it to a local garage owned by an "old school" mechanic that I know. I said, "Just have Tim do his own kind of diagnostic on it and see what he comes up with."

About a month later, Cody announced that he sure was glad that he took my advice and let Tim look at his Impala. The ultimate fix, according to Tim, would have his car back to "running like a top" and didn't even hit a thousand dollars! You see, Tim started it up and "listened" to it run...Then put on his stethoscope and soon found some vacuum leaks, leaking head gaskets, a plugged PCV valve, shorting plug wires, and more--all fairly minor things. By the time he corrected all these minor things, he had it running great. Did this mean the local dealer was trying to rip him off? I don't think so. The college-trained technician (whom I'm sure was very computer savvy) did what he was trained to do. I'm sure that if he'd been asked to just start it up and "listen" to it to determine what might have been going on, he wouldn't have had a clue!! (They don't teach "old school" at Mechanics school!)

No, I'm not telling you to go find an "old school" mechanic the next time your ride is acting up. In fact, sadly, there aren't many mechanics like Tim left. What I'm clearly saying is, we have a wealth of new smart technology hitting not just the auto industries, but even our industry, almost daily. We can do analytics, spreadsheets and projections on almost anything...create formulas that plot spaghetti graphs as far into the future as the eye can see...but we shouldn't treat any of it as gospel. Right? So my message at the end of this story is simple. It might be time we look at this technology...I'll call it any kind of Artificial Intelligence, and don't rely on it as the ultimate decision-maker. I'd say it's smarter to somewhat "park it" while you dialog with *real* people, customers, builders, employees, and even outsiders, on what they see as *real* issues or problems.

Sometimes the common sense and wisdom coming out between those two ears and your pie hole far overrides what the AI (Artificial Intelligence) might have told you. Learn to effectively combine them both and you may just have a killer combo!

Good selling, and especially: Good thinking.