

Service Managers Evaluate Fuel Additives

SAN FRANCISCO — When the going gets rough, automobile owners who experience stalling, hesitation or other possible fuel-related engine problems often consult automobile dealership service managers.

Service managers' sophistication concerning the role of gasoline deposit control additives in solving these problems was borne out in a nationwide survey of 200 new car dealership service managers conducted by the research firm of Millward Brown, Inc. for Chevron U.S.A.

The survey evaluated service managers' attitudes toward gasolines containing deposit-control additives and bottled additives, and how they shared information with their customers.

Service managers are doctors of sorts, faced with an increasing array of complicated problems to find and repair, while suggesting maintenance tips to car owners. Fuel-delivery systems in new car engines are a good example of where these problems can occur.

Industry figures show virtually all cars built in the 1990s are expected to include fuel injectors. These systems are responsible for helping to increase fuel economy and reduce exhaust emissions. However, they also can be extremely sensitive to accumulation of deposits that can clog injectors, resulting in a series of driveability problems such as stumbling, hesitation and stalling.

Results from the Chevron New Car Service Managers Survey include:

✓ **Service, service, service.** The median number of cars serviced in an average week by dealerships surveyed was 150. Eighty-two percent specialized in domestic makes, while one-third specialized in foreign cars. Twelve percent handled both.

✓ **We know additives.** Almost all (98 percent) service managers said they were aware of gasolines which contained cleansing additives or bottled additive products design to prevent the formation of deposits in engines.

✓ **Engine problems focus attention on additives.** Two in three service managers (65 percent) say they provide information on gasoline with cleansing additives or bottled additives to customers whose cars are having engine maintenance done.

✓ **Until problems arise new car buyers do not receive additive information.** Two-thirds (68 percent) of respondents to the Chevron survey say their dealerships do not provide literature on gasolines containing additives or bottled additives to new car purchasers as part of the new car document package.

✓ **Dealer's choice.** Despite high awareness of additives, only about half (46 percent) of new car dealer service managers surveyed say they would recommend specific brands of gasolines or bottled additives.

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