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I recently read an article entitled, “10 Business Ideas that Immediately Crashed and Burned.” I know what you are thinking...Why is an educator reading about business strategy? Having grown up with a small business family where I worked in the family business, I continue to be enamored with business principles and how they could be applied to education. So this brings us to the article I read and one particular section on the Edsel. My father was a car collector, which can explain some of my interest in the article. Over the years, he had many automobiles ranging from the occasional Porsche to a 1948 Dodge, to yes an Edsel. His Edsel was completely original and sported a two tone color of pink and grey. My most agonizing moment in life was the day he picked me up from Junior High School in that glorious roadster. I sunk below the bench seat so none of my classmates could see my departure from school on the most perilous of days for a teenager. I doubt there are many people that can top that embarrassing tale on the road from unassuming and innocent child to an image conscious teenager hoping someday soon to have a car he can call his own. Thankfully, my first car wasn't the Edsel.

Below is an excerpt from the article about the Edsel:

“By all accounts, the Edsel should have succeeded wildly. It was slickly marketed, price-competitive with competitors, and generally well-built with plenty of top-of-the-line features. But as they rolled them out, Ford started hearing disconcerting stories about consumers taking one look, then walking out of the dealership.

So what was the problem? Well there are many differing opinions on the subject, ranging from the price, marketing, appearance and reliability. All of which sound like an exercise of “It should have worked, buuuut”

Price: It should have worked because the Edsel was only slightly more expensive than the basic Ford models. Buuuut, no one quite knew what the Edsel was supposed to be (a luxury car? a budget alternative?) — so the price still seemed too high.

Marketing: The slick marketing campaign built a lot of anticipation around the Edsel's release by only showing the car through unfocused lenses and thin, gauzy sheets. Buuuut, again, like above, no one knew what the Edsel was supposed to be. Also the name is ugly as sin.

Appearance: Even by today's standards, the Edsel is not a bad looking car. It's a bold design to be sure, but it's still slick and classy. Buuuut, at the time it looked like “an Oldsmobile sucking on a lemon”

Reliability: On paper, the Edsel was a sturdy car built with good parts and meant to last. Buuuut, the assembly of the Edsel often took place in different plants, making

quality control nearly impossible. Some cars were shipped to dealers only partially assembled, with instructions in the trunk.

On paper, the Edsel must have looked like a slam dunk to Ford executives, but it's amazing that with all the numerous tiny problems, no one pointed a single one out."

Source: <http://www.businesspundit.com/10-business-ideas-that-immediately-crashed-and-burned/>

As I read this article, I kept going back to the state report card on schools and the comparisons we offer in Guthrie. They appear to be somewhat striking. The authors of the legislation continue to show loyalty to their work while our community educates themselves about how irrelevant the results are for the schools with an "F". It would appear that our report card was shipped to Guthrie only partially assembled with the State Superintendent's letter serving as the "instructions in the trunk."

At Ford Motor Company, maker of the Edsel, this story ended by discontinuing production of the vehicle. Losses were so large that prudent business decisions prevailed. One glaring difference rests in the report cards' funding source...your tax dollars as opposed to the marketing budget of Ford Motor Company.

I wonder where my father's pink Edsel is today...I might consider buying it for nostalgia.