

Bad Product Design

Deadly Consequences

If you watch *America's Test Kitchen*, then you'll know that the critique of products is a regular feature on the PBS Program. Sometimes, host Christopher Kimball admits to being shocked by the total incompetence of some of the product designs that have been tested on their show. And his reactions are humorous.

However, a tragic recent national news story illustrates that product design is serious business.

The back of a limousine caught fire on a bridge in San Mateo, California, and only five of the nine women and the male driver were able to get out of the burning vehicle.

Now legislators rush to pass new safety legislation for fire extinguishers while others speculate about the cause of the fire and level blame, but one fact that is glaringly apparent, is the design of the stretch limo that caught fire is poorly designed.

According to an ABC news report, which displayed the interior design of a similar limousine, it would've been difficult for passengers to exit quickly, especially when sudden panic and confusion are added to the equation.

Watching the report, it was very apparent that little thought had been given to common sense safety measures for passengers needing to exit the vehicle quickly for any reason.

And incredibly, if one expert is to be believed, some limo models apparently were built with a waste receptacle positioned near the area over the gas tank... a waste receptacle in which someone could conceivably toss a cigarette. Door locks were difficult for passengers to open. In the case of

the limo that caught fire, there was only one door.

Lesson: A tragic story with many, many lessons. From a business standpoint, there was a violation of law or regulation and therefore liability, but one can't help but wonder had the limo been designed intuitively, could the women have merely quickly piled out of the side of the vehicle?

The story not only underscores the importance of safety issues and product design but points out what can happen when someone enters the wrong profession with a lack of requisite reasoning skills, expertise, and proficient skill set.

Americas Test Kitchen

<http://www.amazon.com/Americas-Test-Kitchen/e/B004LSANTK>

Americas Test Kitchen

<http://www.americastestkitchen.com/tour/>

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