

cc: Fiore Volkswagen
Attn. Customer Service
525 Quaker Lane
West Warwick, RI 02893

cc: Speedcraft
Attn. Customer Service
104 Old Tower Hill Road
Wakefield, RI 02879

cc: Posted on the Internet

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Dear Volkswagen of America:

I feel that the time has come to relate to you the tale of my experience in purchasing my new VW, given that it is finally over and I can look at it through the lens of hindsight. Please note that this is not a criticism of your fine automobiles; I am completely satisfied with my vehicle, a 2005 Golf GLS TDI. However, this is mix of criticism and praise for your dealerships here in Rhode Island.

Our story begins somewhere around July of 2004. I decided to sell my Chrysler Concorde for something a bit smaller and more nimble, yet with a more versatile hatchback form factor. After considerable research, I pared the list down to the following:

- VW Golf
- Scion xA
- Honda Civic
- Subaru Impreza

In the end, I settled on the Golf because it was available with a Diesel engine. (As a side note, hybrid vehicles were eliminated fairly early on as a result of a discussion with my girlfriend's father who happens to be a volunteer fireman. Despite completion of a safety course addressing how to properly cut open hybrid vehicles in the event of an accident, there is still a great deal of uncertainty surrounding their safety in the rescue community. Diesel,

however, is quite safe.).

In August of 2004, I visited Speedcraft Volkswagen in Wakefield, Rhode Island. My visit there was discouraging, to say the least. I spoke to a salesman there (I do not recall his name) and asked if there was a TDI on the lot; there was not. I asked if it was possible to still get a 2004 model; I was told there was not. I asked about the possibility of getting a 2005 model; I was told that “we can’t get diesels”. This struck me as odd, and I left somewhat disheartened. Recent conversations with folks at Speedcraft have led me to believe that the salesman must have misunderstood something - everyone I spoken to says that they have to order TDIs, but they can be gotten.

Anyway, some weeks later, I took a ride up to Fiore VW in Warwick, where I spoke to a salesman named Ed Roy. There was a Jetta TDI on the lot, and we took a test drive. I was quite impressed, and after a few days of contemplation, I returned and placed an order for a 2005 Golf GL TDI, with Tiptronic transmission and ESP package. Mr. Roy said that he would call me when it arrived.

Days passed, then weeks. I called Mr. Roy and he said that it had not yet been built. I waited even longer.

November rolled around and I was tired of waiting. I called Mr. Roy and told him so, and asked what he had on the lot. He made me quite happy when he stated that three Golf TDIs had just been delivered. The caveat was that they were all GLS models. This was fine, actually, as I had been considering upgrading to a GLS anyway.

One should note that I feel that Mr. Roy should have called me when those vehicles arrived. However, one could also take the stand that him doing so could have been interpreted as a shady and underhanded tactic to sell me a more expensive vehicle, so I can understand his actions in this matter.

I drove up to Fiore and took the Golf GLS for a test drive. I loved it, and Mr. Roy and I sat down to haggle. We agreed on a price that I felt comfortable with, and he had to take it to the VW sales manager for approval. Here is where it begins to go downhill. For the next 15 minutes or so, I was treated to the experience of hearing Mr. Roy get screamed at by his manager. It should be noted that I heard this **across** the showroom floor. Mr. Roy returned, and the deal was done. Now, it should be noted that there are two ways of interpreting this argument:

1. It was legitimate, and the manager was legitimately angry.
2. It was completely for show, to make me think that I was getting a good deal.

If the first case is true, then this was completely unprofessional and the manager should be dismissed on those grounds.

If the second case is true, then this is even worse. Please recognize the following:

- I am not an idiot.
- There is this wonderful research tool called the Internet. From the Internet, I know:
 - The MSRP.
 - The dealer invoice cost.
 - The dealer hold back amount.
- I am also aware of the fact that I have a very small amount of “wiggle room” on TDI models because they can be easily moved. Consequently I would not get as deep a discount as I would on a gasoline engined version.
- Through numerical analysis of the previous figure agreed upon when placing the order for the GL model, I knew the percentage of MSRP that I could be expected to pay. I also knew both the raw and percentage values above invoice that I could be expected to pay. Consequently, I came up with a hard number which is what I could expect to pay.

So, we haggled and Mr. Roy got yelled at. All over a **one hundred dollar** difference between my hard number and the dealership’s hard number. This is **one half of one percent** of the cost of the vehicle.

Now, all that would be fine and dandy and I would just chalk the above up to a lack of judgment, except that it doesn’t end here.

Less than a week later, I took delivery of the vehicle. Unfortunately, the user’s manual was incomplete. Normally, this would not be an issue, except that I was missing the sections of the manual which cover:

- Maintenance Schedule
- Radio Operation (Including how to enter the unlocking code)

These are fairly important sections. Mr. Roy informed me that they would order me the sections of the manual and mail them to me when they arrived.

Weeks pass. I call Mr. Roy in December and leave a voice mail message asking what is going on. My phone call is never returned.

I stop in on a Saturday in January, and talk to a gentleman at the information desk. I am told the parts department handles those issues and that they are closed, and I should call or come back during the week.

Since this is starting to get ridiculous, I email Volkswagen of America. My email is followed up the next day with a phone call. I explain my issue, and the representative tells me that she will call Fiore. The following day, the representative calls me back and tells me that the parts manager will give this his personal attention and that they will send me the sections of the manual as soon as they become available. I have no complaints about this. Indeed,

all my dealings with VWofA have been completely satisfactory.

Following this conversation, I never hear from the parts manager, or anyone else from Fiore.

March rolls around, and I'm coming up on my initial 5,000 mile oil change, so I call Speedcraft to arrange an appointment. Their service team is very highly regarded in Southern Rhode Island, and several fellow VW owners won't take their vehicles anywhere else. They are busy, so the appointment for my oil change will be in a week. No problem there. After I make my appointment, I speak with the parts department and explain the situation about the manual. They say that they will order one for me, although they will have to charge me for it since I didn't buy the vehicle from them. I understand this and agree.

The manual arrives before my appointment. It's just that fast. I wonder what's going on with Fiore? The manuals are obviously in stock, but it's been four months since I took delivery of the vehicle and I still haven't heard from them. Actually, one could make the argument that the owner's manual is part of the vehicle, and therefore delivery of the vehicle has not been completed, but I find this argument somewhat silly and therefore will not make it.

As I write this, it is now May, and so it's been six months, and I still haven't heard from Fiore.

Consequently, I am forced to take away the following conclusions:

- Fiore Volkswagen does not take care of their customers once the sale is made, and consequently I will never do business with them again, and will advise friends not to do business with them either.
- Apart from the initial conversation with the mistaken salesman, the level of attention I have received from Speedcraft has been nothing short of superb. I only wish I had bought the vehicle from them in the first place.

Attached is the receipt for the manual which I ordered through Speedcraft, as evidence of my story. If Volkswagen of America feels moved to refund the total contained therein, I

would not complain, though this is not expected, since it is Fiore's fault, not VWofA's.

Thank you for your time and eagerly
awaiting a production version of the
Concept-R,

Matthew Caron

encl: Owner's Manual Receipt