

Ford Appoints Goldsberry to Global Position

By Jacqueline Mitchell



Customers across the globe want good service. McDonald's knows that. No matter where you go in the world, a McDonald's meal is the same.

Ford Motor Co. wants the same thing in its customer service division -- consistent performance by its dealers in customer handling, technical training, vehicle repair and service, whatever the geographic location.

Mindful of what he calls the "McDonald's experience" Ron Goldsberry, one of two African-American

vice presidents at Ford, has been charged with the global responsibility of bringing Ford's customer service division up to speed.

For Goldsberry, the promotion broadens his range of responsibility. He has worn former hats as vice president and general manager of Ford's customer service division for its North American operations. And before his recent appointment, he was vice president of the Ford Customer

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Service Division, the service arm of Ford's automotive operations. In the newly created position, Goldsberry is responsible for worldwide customer service activities, merchandising, parts sales and marketing, and a network of 12,000 employees scattered worldwide.

"The ownership experience is important and what auto companies do with that experience is important."

Goldsberry says. One of his goals is "to increase the retention of our service customers," he said, adding that roughly 40 percent will come back for routine maintenance. "We want to at least double that."

Goldsberry says he is looking at a number of ways to improve the retention rate of Ford customers. Cost of service is a major issue confronting all manufacturers. It is still less expensive to have a vehicle serviced by an independent mechanic than by a dealer. "We are working with suppliers to drive down our cost so that we can be more competitive," he says.

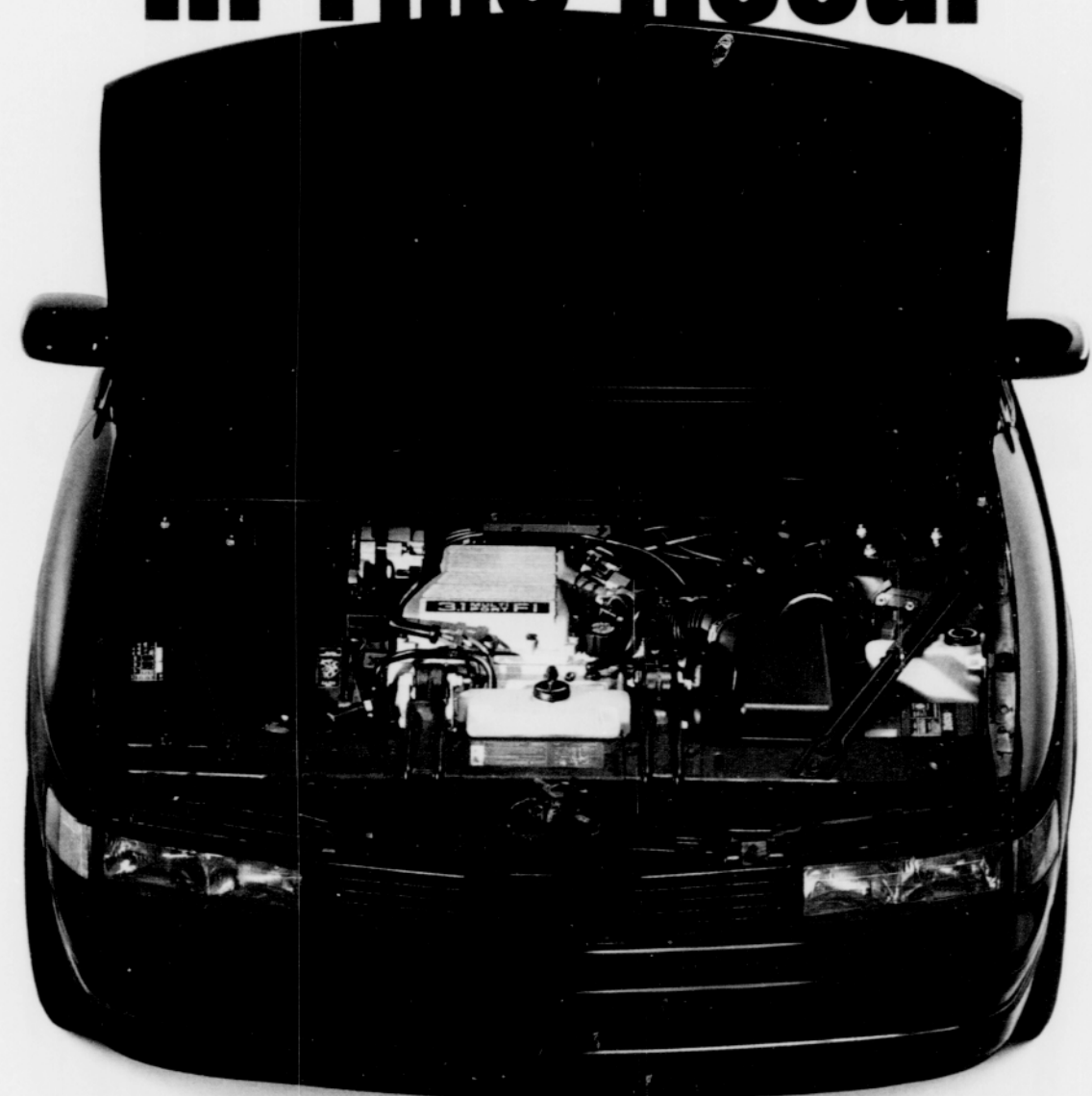
Goldsberry's association with Ford began in 1983 when Ford purchased Parker Chemical Co., where he was vice president and general manager. He moved to the customer service division in 1991 as general sales and marketing manager.

Goldsberry, 55, brings a wealth of experience to the position, and reflects what it takes to be a global executive. He encourages aspiring executives to learn other languages and to become familiar with other cultures. "I speak French, German and some Japanese," Goldsberry explains. He has lived in Europe and spent considerable time in Japan and Brazil, and has a lot of experience in dealing with different nationalities and cultures.

Even though African Americans are moving into the executive offices, Goldsberry believes more needs to be done. "The rate of progression is not where we would like it to be, but it is increasing over time."

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