

Robert LeBlanc speaking at GM's "Volt Unplugged" event at IBM

Video Transcript

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kb2ZdMTBv8&feature=player_embedded

Robert LeBlanc, IBM: Thank you. Good morning to everybody. First of all, I want to thank you for arranging this fabulous weather. What a perfect day to, ah, test drive the new Volt. First of all, let me thank Micky and the General Motors team for taking their time out to share with us their exciting new product, and for allowing us to be a key supplier for General Motors. You know when we went and embarked down the whole Smarter Planet kind of strategy, this is what we envisioned. We envisioned working very, very closely with clients and enabling them to build better products and services, or to build smarter products—and that partnership enables us to learn a lot. Not only do we think we can bring value to you, Micky, at General Motors, I can tell you, you bring a lot of value to us, ‘cause I know you and your teams challenge us. And because of that, we do a better job at what we’re all about, and that really is, you know, enabling smarter, ah, products. We’re very, very happy to be part of this and and we’re really excited that you’re able to share this with us.

The other thing that’s absolutely amazing is you turn around and you look at that car: more lines of code than an F-35 fighter. It actually has more lines of code, I heard, than a Boeing Dreamliner, the brand-new 787 Boeing. It’s got more code in it than the space shuttle that went up, the very first space shuttle that went up. That tells you how advanced these products have really, really become—and how important it is that you have a set of tools and a platform that allows the level of collaboration ‘cause when you think the products and services that are built, you know, 10-20 years ago there were a lot of discrete pieces. You had discrete manufacturing, electronics was totally separate. Now they’re just one big interacting set of, ah, subsystems, and in fact, that right there, has more power than the average data center that we enabled with our clients, you know, in the 1960s and the 1970s. In fact, I like to call it a rolling data center. And one thing people don’t know, actually each Volt has its own IP address—so much like your laptops that have an IP address that allows you to do things like download software, the Volt has an IP address. So now all your Smartphones, your iPhones, your Blackberries can all connect and communicate, ah, with the Volt. Not only that, imagine the time you could save on having to take your car to the dealership. ‘Cause now you can download software no matter where you car is. And in fact, someone gave me a stat—I don’t know if it’s true, Micky—70% of the time that your car spends at a dealership is actually for software download. So imagine if you could just be parking here during the day and your car is, ah, uploading.

The other thing that’s really important is, it really epitomizes the notion of systems. This is something that we’ve been talking about in IBM and General Motors is really living that world. Because you have to have all the systems interacting together—and you have to have the safety systems and the braking system and your engine and battery systems all interacting together in a seamless fashion, ‘cause if any of those are the weak link, that becomes the weak link for the total product and or services. So, we’ve been very focused in on that and in fact people still view us as the “IT company”. In fact we view ourselves

as much more than just the IT and the data center, we really view ourselves as providing the tools and the expertise for clients to build the next generation of products. The other thing is, this is not just about the software that's embedded in these kinds of vehicles, but also the interaction with all of the external systems. Think about connections to traffic systems, to weather systems. You know, we talk in IBM about doing, ah, smarter cities, we talk about road control; all of those systems have to interact. Imagine a world where the car could decide what is the best route to take, umm, in any particular day, or any particular time. All of this interaction is all part of the vision that we share here with, ah, General Motors, and it's really exciting to be part of all of that.

Not only that, you think of all the telematics. You look at all of the telematics and OnStar which Micky is also responsible for and how it has changed the way your car interacts, and the way you interact with your car. You know, think of the navigation systems. Gone are the days of pulling out the maps and arguing which route to take. Now you just put it in your, your navigation system and I'll tell you, Micky, I was a hardcore car guy, I said I would never have a navigation system—and the very first navigation system that I had was actually on a General Motors car. I had bought a new Corvette, and the car came with the navigation system, and I talked the dealer down for the price of the navigation, 'cause I said I would never use it. Now, I can tell you, I will never buy another car without it, and I think my wife really appreciates that, 'cause we know how the men never like to ask for directions.

Now the thing that's really important here is the managing of the complexity. You can imagine the complexity in building a vehicle like this. The interaction of people, the interaction of information, and the interaction of processes all having to come together at a point in time, continuously through, you know, the product design. Then you do that, and you do it on an accelerated time. And so, you know what, it feels good from an IBM perspective that we can help General Motors really get to where they're going and really help, you know, clients, you know, build smarter products. Because, at the end of the day, if we do that, you know what, we'll have done something really, really great from an IBM perspective. So all you IBMers out there, you know, that work on products and services, I hope that you feel as good as I do—there's no better place to watch what you do than have it show up in the products and services that our clients do, and it's really, really exciting to be part of this, ah, event here. Mickey, I want to thank you and the General Motors team for allowing us to participate in this really, really, ah, exciting time in General Motor's history and we're glad to be part of it, we're glad to be a supplier and as you said, you want feedback on your product, we'd love feedback on our products as well—'cause we think we can do an even better job, make a better job. And by the lineups for the cars, I think that you got yourself and absolute winner, and I look forward to, ah, my test drive here, ah, later this morning.

So with that, make sure you enjoy the car, ask lots of questions: it really is, truly, an engineering marvel and when you really peel the onion it's not just another car it really is something that's, ah, really kind of a futuristic view of where, ah, the automotive industry is going. With that, enjoy the car, enjoy the day, and thanks for coming out.

Applause.