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Backtracking, G.M. Says Please, Call It a Chevy

By RICHARD S. CHANG

Responding to negative reactions to an internal memorandum discouraging use of the word Chevy, General Motors moved on Thursday to explain its strategy and to reassure consumers that it still valued the popular nickname for Chevrolet.

The memorandum asked employees to "communicate our brand as Chevrolet." For decades, Chevrolet and Chevy have appeared interchangeably in advertisements, and the Chevrolet Web site uses both terms.

But after a strong public reaction to a report in The New York Times on the note, G.M. issued a statement on Thursday that said the memorandum had been "poorly worded." The statement said that the memorandum reflected Chevrolet's strategy as it expanded internationally, but that the company was not "discouraging customers or fans from using" Chevy.

"In global markets," the statement said, "we are establishing a significant presence for Chevrolet and need to move toward a consistent brand name for advertising and marketing purposes. The memo in question was one step in that process."

G.M. also posted on Chevrolet's YouTube channel a video interview with Alan S. Batey, vice president for Chevrolet sales and service and one of two who signed the memorandum. In the video, Mr. Batey uses Chevy no fewer than six times in less than two minutes.

"Chevy," he began. "What is Chevy? Chevy is our nickname. It comes from selling vehicles here in the U.S. for 100 years. We love it when people call us Chevy."

In an interview by phone, Mr. Batey called the memo "a rough draft" and "a bit of fun." He also explained that there would be no "massive change of direction."