

AUTOMOTIVE

Luxury brands are not immune to recall repercussions

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Aston Martin's DB11 Volante will see recalls. Image credit: Aston Martin

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

German automotive corporation Daimler's sweeping recall now extends to the Aston Martin brand, but getting ahead of necessary repairs and going above and beyond for drivers may save the British automaker's luxury image.

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While faulty products and recalls are unfortunately a part of the automotive business, it is how these brands handle these instances that can make or break them. Aston Martin's high-end status will not protect it from the repercussions, so its customer service needs to be heightened in times like these.

"All brands can find themselves in a recall situation," said Lauren Fix, automotive expert, the [Car Coach](#), Lancaster, NY. "This could mean anything from the luxury end to performance; such vehicles like Ferrari and Aston Martin are not excluded."

Ms. Fix is not affiliated with Daimler or Aston Martin, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Daimler](#) and [Aston Martin](#) were reached for comment.

Recall reaction

In October 2017, news broke that Daimler needed to recall more than 1 million vehicles, mostly Mercedes-Benz, due to faulty wiring in the steering column that could unexpectedly set off airbags.

The recall has now extended to Daimler's Aston Martin, which follows another recall from the brand related to problems with powertrains and battery cables.



Aston Martin's DB11 recalls luckily has not seen any injuries. Image credit: Aston Martin

Aston Martin has made a strong case for itself by getting ahead of the issue with the Daimler recall. By going ahead with a recall before any injuries or incidents have occurred, luxury auto brands can save themselves significant backlash.

However, Mercedes-Benz did have a few instances where drivers were said to have minor abrasions due to unintentional airbag deployments, Reuters reported.

Unfortunately Japanese auto parts manufacturer Takata had similar issues with early airbag release, but did not discover this issue in time, which caused more than 20 deaths. This exhibits the importance of timing when discovering mechanical issues and following through with recalls.

Aston Martin is recalling 3,873 of its DB11 coupes built after 2015 to immediately correct and repair the wiring issue. The automaker is promising to fix the issues in customers' existing vehicles within a two-hour time span, free of charge.



Aston Martin's DB11. Image credit: Aston Martin

Customer service is key in these instances, since luxury brands are already held to a higher standard. They need to make sure they are providing the best service for customers who have essentially been wronged, whether it was an innocent mistake or not.

"In December, Bugatti raised the bar for navigating a recall with their Flying Doctor' service," said Julie Blackley, communications manager at [iSeeCars](#). "This level of customer service helped overshadow negative perceptions brought about by the recall and helped enhance Bugatti's brand."

"Aston Martin could follow their lead and provide customers with a service experience that is reflective of the automaker's high standards," she said. "Luckily for Aston Martin, they announced the recall before there were any reported injuries."

"Though it's unrelated to the Takata recall, it raises more questions about the reliability of the already troubled airbag industry."

Aston Martin's recall comes at an important time for the brand, as the automaker inches closer to a potential initial

public offering with a valuation of as much as \$6.8 billion.

In December 2017, Reuters reported that Aston Martin hired investment bank Lazard to look into creating a preliminary plan to either set up an IPO or a trade sale. Aston Martin's move comes after seeing positive growth following years of stagnation ([see more](#)).

Auto recalls

Amongst Aston Martin's recall, Italian automaker Maserati is also recalling its 2018 Ghibli and Quattroporte models in North America after discovering a potential fire hazard in the cars.

The vehicles impacted have a potential defect in the fuel delivery pipe, which could lead to a leak and fire in the engine compartment or under the car. According to a report from Bloomberg, the sedans that are affected have not yet been delivered to customers in the United States or Canada ([see more](#)).

"The key to success for any luxury brand is to communicate with your customers during a recall," Car Coach's Ms. Fix said. "Offering personal communication to reach out to buyers, this will ease the concerns from their buyers."

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