

# **Toyota Debunking Kane/Gilbert Message Study**



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March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

## Key Findings

- ❖ **Despite very low levels of awareness of Sean Kane and David Gilbert, all 3 audiences view the individuals as credible, with more than 8 in 10 saying they would be credible figures to discuss Toyota safety.**
- ❖ **This indicates that in addition to refuting claims that electronic throttle control issues are a cause of sudden acceleration, it will also be vital for Toyota to discredit Kane & Gilbert's research and testimony.**
- ❖ **Notably, the statements tested do work to significantly damage Kane & Gilbert's credibility.**
- ❖ **However, while the statements are effective at increasing the proportion of audiences that say "ETC is not a cause of sudden acceleration", the majority of respondents still believe ETC is at least somewhat to blame for Toyota's issues.**
- ❖ **The strongest statement types are similar across all 3 audiences, though communicating strongly with Elites, who are more tuned in to the news, will be most critical.**



# Recommendations

- ❖ **To have the most impact, particularly among Elites, Toyota needs to:**
  - **Call out Kane/Gilbert's monetary or self interested motives to undermine credibility, indicate other third-parties have questioned their credibility**
  - **Referencing other studies that reproduced same results on other vehicles to diminish the belief that ETC causes sudden acceleration in Toyota vehicles**
  - **Portray transparency, open and honest**

## **Discredit Kane and Gilbert by calling out their personal motivations**

*Professor Gilbert was paid nearly \$2,000 by Sean Kane, a consultant hired by the trial lawyers suing Toyota. Gilbert received nearly \$4,000 worth of equipment for his experiments. Going forward, Kane, a consultant for lawyers who are suing Toyota, has promised to pay Gilbert \$150 an hour for any of his services*

*While Sean Kane claims to be an independent safety expert, he is the owner of a for-profit company that serves as a paid consultant for the plaintiff lawyers that are currently suing Toyota. Despite what he says, he is not working for the best interest and safety of the American people.*

*Sean Kane, the owner of Safety Research & Strategies Inc. who testified during the Congressional hearings, is a paid consultant for trial lawyers who are suing Toyota, not a "safety expert" advocating for consumers.*

*Kane's theories have been debunked time and time again by government investigators and serious scientific studies*

## **Demonstrating other manufacturers have same issue work to diminish belief ETC is cause of Toyota's issues**

*Even though David Gilbert claimed that his findings were unique to Toyota, he never tested any other vehicles from any other manufacturers. Exponent, an independent engineering and scientific consulting firm that NASA employs, then investigated Gilberts' methodology and were able to replicate the same mechanical events in vehicles from Honda, Chrysler, Subaru, Mercedes, and BMW, effectively refuting Gilbert's claims.*

*The independent engineering firm, Exponent, was able to reproduce Gilbert's phony "unintended" acceleration on a BMW, Chrysler, Subaru, Mercedes, and Honda – and Toyota engineers also reproduced it on Ford and GM cars -- even after Gilbert asserted that only Toyota vehicles were affected.*

## **Toyota is being transparent; What we have done/doing**

*The American people deserve the truth about the safety of their cars, not biased studies by trial lawyer consultants who stand to make millions suing Toyota. The facts are: Toyota and its dealers are working around the clock to make things right for its customers. More than one million cars have already been repaired. And, a world-class engineering firm has conducted a comprehensive review of Toyota's electronics. Their interim report confirms that our fail-safe systems work.*