

Did We Really Kill The Electric Car?

Anna Wells, Editor, IMPO



It was recently announced that Tesla Motors, the car company founded by billionaire Elon Musk and several Silicon Valley brains, would discontinue production on its pioneer model, the Tesla Roadster.

The Tesla Roadster was designed as a way to get electric vehicle technology into the hands of early adopters, without subjecting them to the cart-type designs available up to that point. The Tesla Roadster was sleek, could go zero to 60 in four seconds, and had the price tag (\$109,000) to prove it. It was also the first production EV to offer a range of more than 200 miles per charge.

It seems Tesla is shifting its strategy to focus more on its upcoming Model S, a 4-door EV sedan, most likely to compete with the more moderately-priced EV sedans being touted by the likes of Chevrolet and Nissan. Perhaps there is just not a big enough market of early adopters for high end EVs. Brad Pitt and George Clooney bought Tesla Roadsters; so did the Governor. I don't think they are in the same price bracket as I am when it comes to car shopping, unfortunately.

Regardless of your personal feelings about electric vehicle technology, its convoluted history, and its viability—and despite the Roadster's indefinite production hiatus—Tesla Motors still serves as a success story in my book for the following reasons:

Perception: The Roadster proved that EV technology doesn't have to look and drive like a golf cart with doors.

Collaboration: Tesla has worked with multiple U.S. automakers, including GM and Toyota. Former GM CEO Bob Lutz credited the Tesla Roadster with helping to spur GM's development of the Chevy Volt.

Technology Improvements: The Roadster's ability to address style and range issues has helped create a great baseline for development, essentially showing that automakers can build the kind of EV that consumers really want.

Did We Really Kill The Electric Car?

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

In a time when it seems funding for innovation is under attack, it's important to continue to recognize the laudable efforts of OEMs and manufacturers when they are able to really drive product development and manufacturing to the brink of what we thought possible. The more visibility these inventions receive, the more pressure there is on the market to adapt. Our 3-month series, the Energy Intelligence Report (which kicks off on page 32 of the July issue), intends to highlight the options for plants wishing to improve energy efficiency of equipment and components, optimize their utility programs, or integrate more green consumables into their maintenance programs. This "green" category is one that's improved immensely from an industrial product standpoint, and it's important that we stay tuned in to what's available.

The fact that most other companies don't, like Tesla Motors, have billionaires funding innovation out-of-pocket makes it even more critical that we "vote" on technologies with our pocket books. Most of the more interesting developments don't come with a \$100,000+ price tag, either.

And if you want to vote for free: Stay tuned this summer for our third annual *IMPO*vation award nominees and voting. We rely on our readers to select the most unique and beneficial products each year, in an effort to show our support for an industry that continues to innovate. The *IMPO*vation award winners are like the Teslas of our industrial world—those who see an opportunity and kick its tires until something truly unique and influential develops. Let's continue to show that their efforts are noted and appreciated.

Source URL (retrieved on 10/02/2014 - 1:51pm):

<http://www.impomag.com/blogs/2011/07/did-we-really-kill-electric-car>