

A word to corporate leaders: The Donald isn't your bestie

Chris Cooke - November 2025

Antonio Filosa isn't exactly a household name.

But the chief executive officer of the multinational automotive manufacturer Stellantis probably should be.

Last month he and his board of directors made the untimely and most unfortunate decision to throw themselves on the altar of an incoherent and unpredictable bully named Donald Trump.

If nothing else Mr. Filosa and his corporate entourage apparently had a bout of amnesia when they made the decision to scrap the manufacture of Jeep automobiles in Canada and in particular the Toronto suburb of Brampton.

You are probably wondering what that has to do with us living out here in the hinterland.

Directly, nothing.

But indirectly, if you pay taxes as most of us do, you may remember that Stellantis grabbed up Chrysler Corporation four years ago.

That acquisition laid bare a litany of bailouts and financial incentives that kept the sputtering auto maker alive during its 2009 bankruptcy and since producing cars and mini vans in Brampton and Windsor.

That was until now.

Since rolling Chrysler as a tuck in under the corporate Stellantis banner Mr. Filosa and his board haven't been shy about bellying up to the public trough offering commitments for cash from Ottawa and Queen's Park.

A battery plant in Windsor, upgrades to its mini-van plant and a billion-dollar retooling to build Jeeps in Brampton.

Apparently, it is easy for Mr. Filosa to forget the insolvency of Chrysler and the obligations to build vehicles in both Brampton and Windsor.

And since the Chrysler acquisition he seems somewhat emboldened by his ability to make commitments without consequences.

Mr. Filosa can be forgiven if it never occurred to him that a bully would come along wanting to onshore his manufacturing business at the expense of Canadians.

But the partially retooled Jeep plant in Brampton remains mostly unfinished and is unlikely to reopen anytime soon while Filosa and his board are spending \$13 billion in Belvidere, Illinois to build Jeeps and create 3,300 American tariff-free jobs

I'm willing to wager that it never occurred to Filosa and for that matter his board that the Canadian government would sue for unfulfilled commitments.

It appears from this vantage point that he and his board made a short-sighted business decision with long lasting repercussions.

Mr. Trump wants to onshore and Mr. Filosa willingly bowed at the altar of the bully.

But the Stellantis boss is about to discover there is a price to pay for quick reactionary decisions. Canadians have a short fuse, engrained memories and in these days an elbows-up personality.

And Jeeps just got harder to sell.

So did Crown Royal whiskey from Amherstburg.

The decision to onshore bottling operations south of the border at the expense of 160 jobs in the small town south of Windsor has a bitter taste.

When Doug Ford pours a bottle of the expensive liquor on the ground in front of questioning reporters you know it isn't a good look.

Let me suggest this.

The interim CEO of Diageo needs a good publicist along with a lesson in diplomacy.

To suggest, as he did that the Amherstburg plant was "nice to have" but not a "must have" you know he suffers from short-sightedness.

The same short-sightedness that led the company to buy property south of the NOVA Chemical plant in St. Clair for a \$250 million bottling plant that never materialized.

In light of the Amherstburg decision it is probably fair to assume that it never will.

Over three and a half decades in business I like to believe I've become a good judge of human nature.

So let me suggest here sales of Jeeps and booze in Canada are about to fall off a financial cliff.

The Donald may be thrilled but I'm betting shareholders of the two companies will be looking for

replacements in the “C” suite by this time next year.

The smart money says you don't annoy Canadians because in the end the Donald isn't your bestie.

I could be wrong about this but I'm usually not.