As Its Sales Continue to Drag, German Automaker Assigns A Team to Study U.S. Drivers

VW’s American Road Trip

By GREG CRAN

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One surprise: tailgating. The Germans didn’t know Americans use their cars as portable buffet tables.

Volkswagen’s American Road Trip

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Moorehead team member Mr. Berger said he helped realize real that in the U.S. marketplace there is a need for a wide variety of vehicles, from small cars to pickup trucks and SUVs. “You could clearly see the different segments for mobility,” he said.

Although Volkswagen has been receptive to Moorehead’s suggestions, the team still finds itself hard at times to get its message across to Germany. “It’s a little simple, it’s been difficult to convey the importance of customer feedback; it sounds trivial to headquarters staff,” another colleague in Wolfsburg explains. “What is important to American needs is why the team has been meeting two to three times a month to include interviews with consumers and clips of the Moorehead team at various events.

It seems to have paid off. By the time Volkswagen wraps up this summer, the hope is the group will have provided the basis for as many as three new vehicles within the next decade and helped ex-

Volkswagen thinks Moorehead is successful enough that it is expanding its activities beyond the project and a similar cultural immersion program may be used in the future. The team’s research is expected to be used in India in 2020.