



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

NHTSA Consumer Research Working Group

WebEx

March 30, 2010

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Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

North America Sales

- \$30 Billion Annually
- 190 Million Passenger Tires Replaced in 2009
- Readily Available, Reliable, Objective Consumer Information?





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Establish Program Goals

- Empower the Marketplace
- Stimulate Competition: Manufacturers and Retailers
- Encourage and Reward Technological Advancement



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Evaluate NHTSA's Existing Consumer Information Program for Tires

“Uniform Tire Quality Grading System”
(UTQG)

- Universally Panned as Unreliable
- Rarely Used by Professionals or Informed Consumers
- What Went Wrong and Why?
- Don't Repeat Past Mistakes!!



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

UTQG Shortcomings

- Grades Not Easily Understood:
 - Indexes (A, B, C, etc.) Require Detailed Knowledge
- Grades Not Reliable:
 - No Actual Tire Tests Required
 - Manufacturer Reports Only “Grade” No Actual Values
 - Grade is Manufacturer’s “Self Certification” Claim
 - Manufacturer May Claim a Lower Grade



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Analyze Successful Consumer Information Programs

- Appliances: “Energy Guides”
- Food: “Nutrition Facts”
- Vehicles: “Fuel Economy Estimates”
- Energy Star



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Identify the Elements of Success

- **Intuitive**
- **Relevant**
- **Objective**
- **Reliable**
- **Consistent**
- **Up-to-Date**
- **Readily Available**
- **Empowering**



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Develop Practical Understanding of the Tire Sales/Purchase & Marketing Process

Conduct Direct Observations & Interviews

- Consumer Perspective
- Retailer/Sales Rep Perspective
- Manufacturer Perspective



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires





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Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires





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Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Typical Sales/Purchase Process

Sales Rep:

- What is the year, make & model of your vehicle?
- I have three different tires in stock that will fit your vehicle:
 - Low Price
 - Mid Price – On Special Sale Today
 - High Price



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Tire Store Observations & Interviews

- Consumers:
 - “Need Tires Now”
 - Few “Planned” Purchases
- Dealer Perspective of Consumers:
 - 90% Know Nothing About Tires
 - 10% Do Research



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Tire Dealer & Consumer Roundtable

- Tire Dealers:
 - Keep it Simple
- Consumer Representatives:
 - Presentation to Consumer has to be Intuitive
- CEC Conclusions:
 - Consumers are at the Mercy of the Sales Rep
 - Tire Marketplace is a “Crap Shoot”



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Transform the Tire Marketplace

Empower Consumers

- Tires are expensive, I want tires that will last
- I want my vehicle to stop quickly
- Fuel efficiency is important to me
- I want a tire that doesn't require frequent inflation

Empower Sales Rep

- This is a long-life tire
- This is a quick stopping tire
- This is a fuel efficient tire
- This is a low maintenance tire



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

The “Core Term” Approach

Core Terms - Nutrition

- “Low Calorie”
 - Max 4 calories per gram
- “Low Fat”
 - < 3 gram per serving
- “Sodium Free”
 - < 5 mg per serving

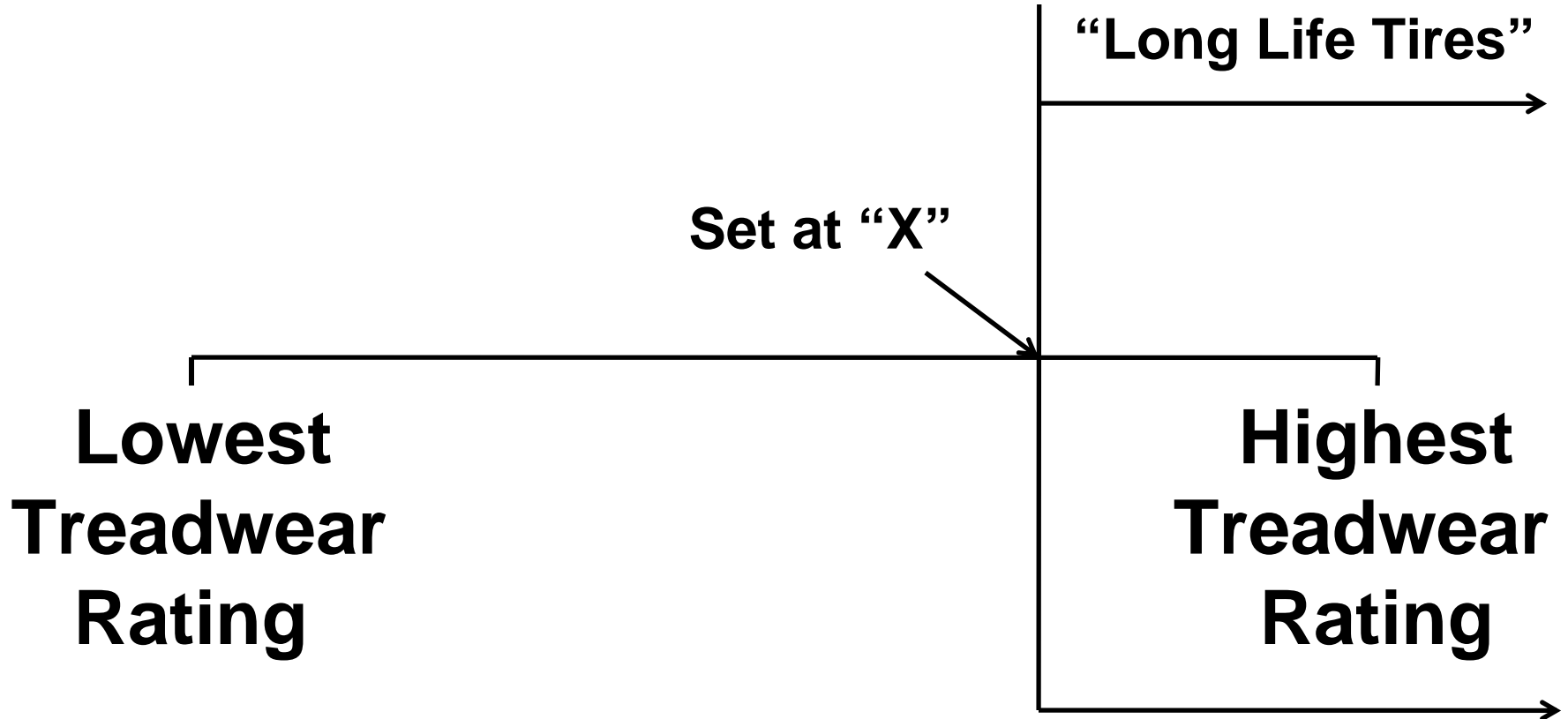
Core Terms - Tires

- Long Life (Durability)
- Quick Stopping (Safety)
- Fuel Efficient
- Low Maintenance



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

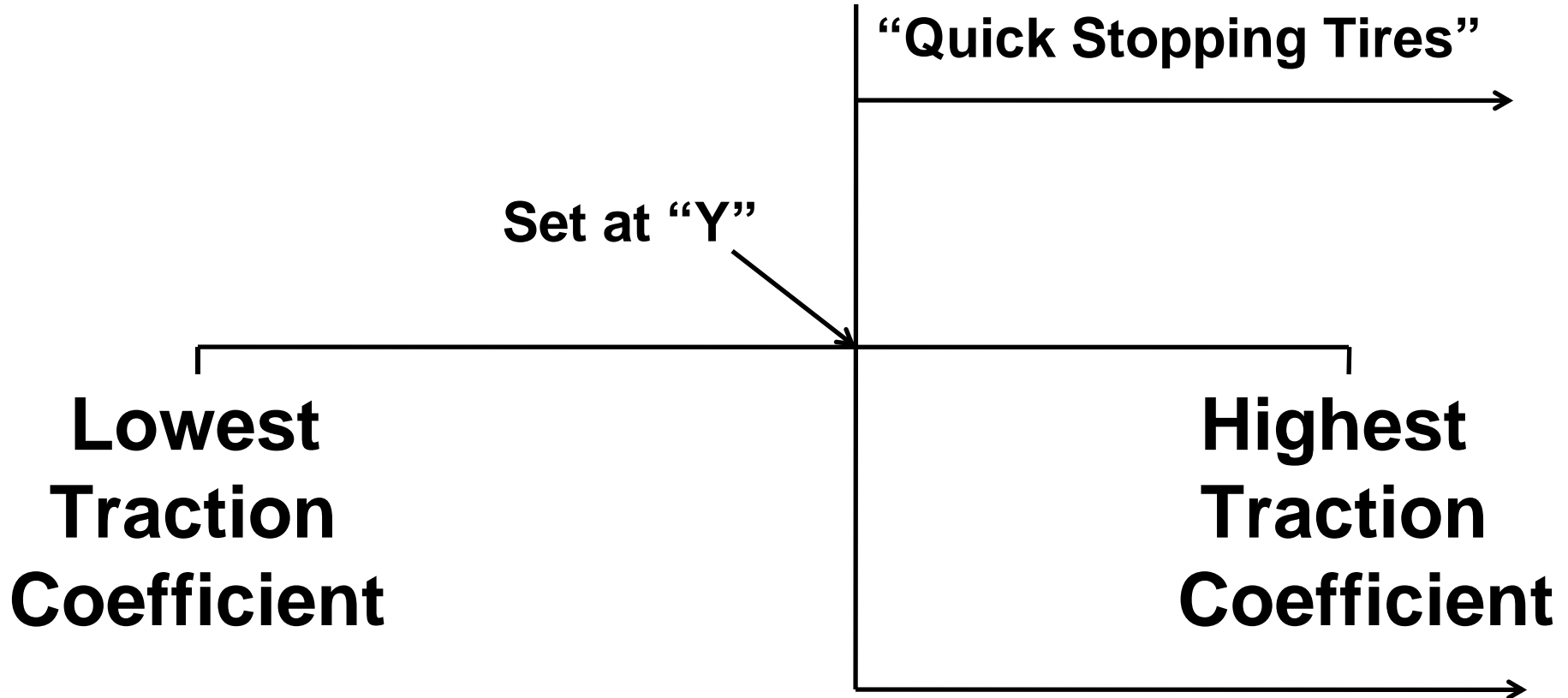
Core Terms for Tires – Long Life





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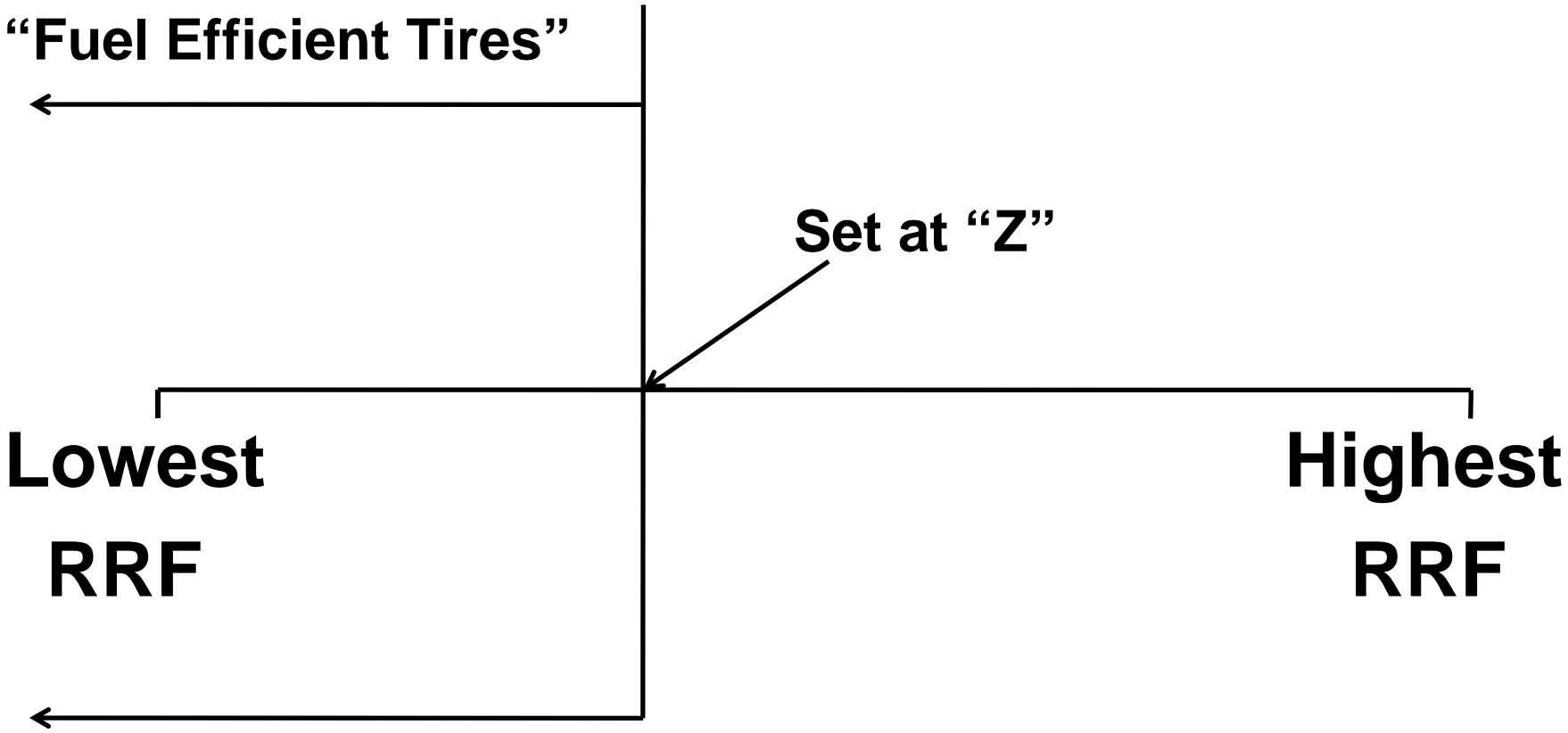
Core Terms for Tires – Quick Stopping





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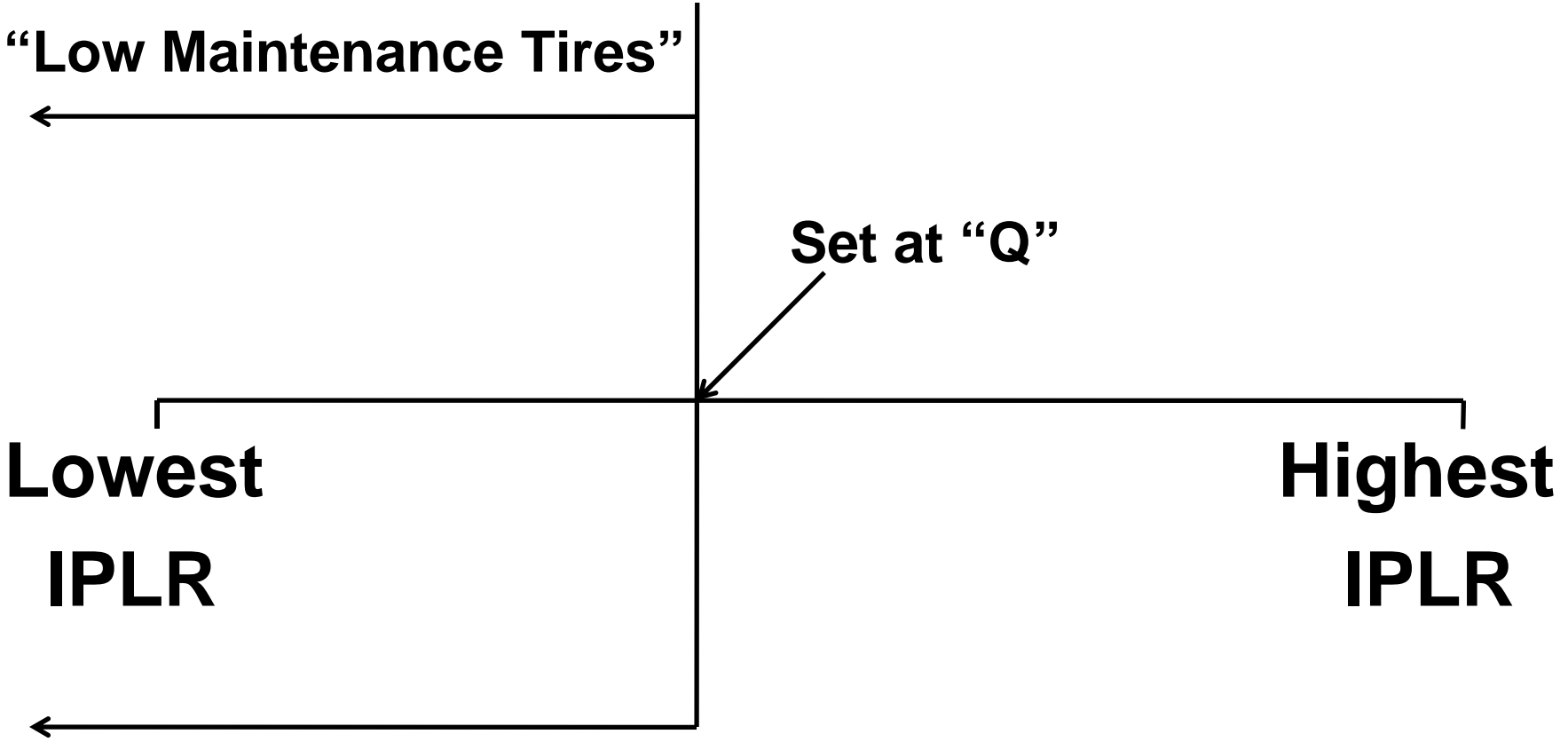
Core Terms for Tires – Fuel Efficient





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Core Terms for Tires – Low Maintenance





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Tires With All Four:

- Long Life
- Quick Stopping
- Fuel Efficient
- Low Maintenance



Ask for Energy Star Tires



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Multifaceted Consumer Information Program

- Comprehensive Database
- Rating/Ranking System
- Core Terms
- Tools:
 - Searchable, Interactive Websites
 - Calculators – Life-Cycle Costs, Fuel Savings
 - Internet Learning Center with FAQs



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Labels on Tires??





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Labels on Tires??

- Of Value to Consumers?
 - Will Consumers Actually See/Look at Labels on Tires?
- Of Value to Wholesalers or Retailers?
- What's on the Label?
- Mandatory?
- Optional?



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires



2% Improvement in
National Fuel Efficiency =

- 3 Billion Gallons/Year Fuel Savings
- \$9 Billion/Year Fuel Savings
- 33 MMT/Year CO₂ Reduction



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

What Can California Do To Help?

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