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BY **JOHN VOELCKER** | 1,202 views | Feb 28, 2012

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Bright_Idea_2

The two executives take the blame for not pursuing funding from China, saying that Bright "made it clear we were an American company."

According to the Bright insider, "we had a term sheet with a Chinese investor."

And, he said ruefully, "had we known in 2010 what we know now, we'd be a Chinese company today"--and still in business.

Plug-in delivery van

Bright was founded in January 2008 to develop and build a plug-in [hybrid](#) light commercial delivery van, a vehicle type that covers more miles than passenger cars and whose owners are willing to spend more up front for the promise of savings over the lifetime of the vehicle.

Its design, the Bright Idea van, offered a payload of up to 2,000 pounds and gas mileage in mixed use of up to 100 miles per gallon.

It was to run [up to 40 miles on electricity](#) from its 13 kilowatt-hour lithium-ion battery pack that powered by a rear-wheel drive electric motor.

Then, its [four-cylinder GM engine](#) and transmission would take over, assisted by a smaller electric motor, to power the front wheels.

In essence, the Bright Idea was to be the world's first plug-in through-the-road hybrid delivery truck.

We drove the Idea prototype back in October 2009, when its extended-range engine was a 2.0-liter gasoline engine from a [Dodge Caliber](#).

We [found it performed -- and behaved -- much like a conventional hybrid](#), with the same lag on acceleration and disconnect between engine speed and road speed you'd find on any conventional hybrid car.

The [collective employment history](#) of Bright's founding engineering team included engineers from teams working on the GM EV1, [Ford Fusion](#), BMW, Mercedes-Benz, and even Segway.

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