

STRAUSS AUTO CLOSES ALL STORES

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Strauss Auto *can be described** as , "In 1995 we began the process of changing our name to Strauss Discount Auto. Strauss Discount Auto stores can be found throughout New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia and Bethlehem Pennsylvania. This new identity celebrates the company's over 80 year history of success in the retail industry of the NY/Metro area..." Apparently that success has not been as good as the company has hoped and it has not kept their workers in their jobs. The company has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, the fourth time in a long row of these types of filings, but this time the company seems to have shut down all of its stores at the same time, leaving all of their retail workers in search of a new job, without any fair warning. As part of the filing the company has decided to send notices of termination to 580 workers as well. For the time being the company seems to be avoiding all requests for contact of any form. This reporter tried several different ways to contact the company. When you visit the company's web site all that the site says is "Our Customer Service Number Is 800-787-4554. When this reporter attempted to call the number of the line that was listed on the website. After several rings a human being was eventually reached. I got as far as asking if this was the customer service line for Strauss Auto, and I was hung up on. Attempts to the call the nearest local store, in Toms River, NJ according to Google yielded endless ringing, with no option to leave a message. When this reporter contacted the corporate offices she was given a lengthy run around by the only people in this company who still seem to be working, and eventually was told she could leave a message for the customer service supervisor. Thus far the best comments on the situation come from reporting done by a reporter for [Jersey 101.5](#) a radio station close to the store, which spoke to a service manager at a local store. In that piece Eric Walz, the service manager of the now closed Strauss Auto store in Middletown, New Jersey said the following about the closure, " 'We had a normal business day Monday,' says Eric Walz service manager of the Strauss Auto in Middletown. Walz says he received a call around 6 a.m. Tuesday from a district manager telling him that there were developments overnight and that the entire chain was shut down effective immediately and that his employment was terminated. He says some of his fellow employees, 'found out when they saw the sign on the door.' " In the filing made with the state of New Jersey the company's current president, Joseph Catalano, said, "Increased power, gas and fuel costs have caused consumers to delay vehicle service and replacement expenditures," Catalano said in a filing. "Mild winter weather also resulted in a disappointing 2011-2012 winter selling season and a subsequent decline in spring business due to a lack of winter driving conditions." He did not explain how the company could do this to their workers with so little warning. *As the company has taken the majority of its site down the description of company had to come from a third-party site.

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