

Ford to Boost Vehicle Output As Sales Rise

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models.

Ford has phased out its Mercury brand, leaving some dealers with only Lincoln. Lincoln sales rose 3.6 percent last year but lagged the overall U.S. auto market, which was up 11 percent, according to Autodata Corp. In January, Lincoln sales fell 21 percent compared with the same month of 2010.

The Ford executives said they are offering sales bonuses to Lincoln dealers who meet company requirements on perks for customers, such as car washes and loaner cars, staff training, sign changes and having 30 percent of their used car sales certified.

That means the cars pass dealer inspections and meet Ford standards for their mechanical and physical conditions.

The dealers have until Sept. 1 to meet the new standards and start getting the bonuses. Ford wouldn't give specifics on how much the bonuses would be.

Ford is trying to reduce the number of U.S. Lincoln dealers to make the remainder more profitable. It has about 1,100 across the country.

Glenn Mears, a Lincoln-Nissan dealer from Dover, Ohio, south of Cleveland, said there was little animosity at the meeting from dealers who lost their Mercury businesses.

He said already he's coming close to making up the lost Mercury sales with the Lincoln brand.

Ford recently also hired a new design director to manage the growth of the Lincoln car brand and image, so minus Mercury, its overall attention can now be focused entirely on the Ford and Lincoln brands as far as the domestic marketplace goes. That was played out at the recent Detroit auto show, where, of course, there was no sign of the now-defunct Mercury brand.



Ford CEO Alan Mulally, seen here at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, will also be giving a keynote speech at a major technology event on March 1 in Hanover, Germany, where he will discuss news about Sync and MyFord Touch.

Mulally to Talk Ford Technology on World Stage

COLOGNE, Germany – Ford President and CEO Alan Mulally will deliver the keynote address at the 2011 CeBIT show on March 1 in Hannover, Germany, promising exciting news about the company's groundbreaking SYNC with MyFord Touch driver connect technology.

CeBIT is the world's largest computer expo.

Ford's increasing role as a developer and manufacturer of industry-leading in-car communications technology and interactive solutions has placed it at the forefront of this rapidly developing segment of the automotive world, and has been reflected in the company's growing presence at technology events worldwide.

"I am honored that I will be sharing our Ford story at CeBIT," Mulally said. "We committed to our customers that we will deliver best-in-class quality, fuel economy, safety, value and really smart tech-

nologies such as SYNC with MyFord Touch in every vehicle from Ford, including the all-new Ford Focus."

SYNC with MyFord Touch is a voice-activated in-car connectivity platform that allows the driver to control the vehicle's major functions through spoken commands.

Also boasting the ability to synchronize with media and telecommunications devices – offering hands-free voice control of external business and personal communication or entertainment tools – SYNC with MyFord Touch is set to revolutionize the way that car drivers communicate both with the car and with the outside world while in the car.

Ford SYNC was developed with the help of Microsoft to offer drivers the ultimate solution to the challenge of staying connected, safely, while on the move.

Originally available to Ford customers in North America,

the system has been significantly developed by Ford's specialist engineers to make it compatible with European markets.

In North America, where more than 3 million vehicles have now been equipped with the advanced voice control and connectivity system, SYNC has been proven to offer users considerable benefits in terms of simplicity and convenience, particularly when combined with Ford's integrated touchscreen interface, MyFord Touch.

Visitors to the CeBIT technology show will have the opportunity to try out the advanced new Ford technologies for themselves at Ford's show stand.

CeBIT has become a focal point for the latest technological advances across a huge range of industries and applications since coming to the fore in its present form in 1986.

The annual event is now the

world's largest digital, IT and telecommunications fair and plays host to more than 6,000 exhibitors.

Mulally's keynote speech at the 2011 CeBIT technology show will be a further example of Ford's groundbreaking approach of talking directly to technology consumers and media that began with a similar appearance at the 2009 International CES in Las Vegas.

Ford has returned to the CES event in both 2010 and 2011, with Mulally delivering keynote addresses each year. Mulally now has the most CES appearances of any such car exec.

In doing so, Ford has recognized the importance and value of bringing its increasingly sophisticated in-car connectivity and communication technology directly to a technology-focused audience alongside the traditional automotive audience.

Ford Focus Global Drive Stars Racer Tanner Foust

DEARBORN – Ford confirmed last week that bloggers and consumers attending the Ford Focus Global Test Drive next month in Madrid will be greeted, hosted and coached by the versatile professional racing driver Tanner Foust, who stars on the American edition of "Top Gear," a motoring TV series on The History Channel.

Foust brings a wealth of experience to the Global Test Drive program, with stunt driving, rally competition, three X Games gold medals and a pair of Formula D drift championships to his credit.

Teaming with 24 Hours of Le Mans, Trans-Am and American Le Mans Series (ALMS) veteran Justin Bell, Foust will host, coach and assist bloggers and consumer participants in the first-ever Focus Global Test Drive program.

Foust and Bell will help host Focus Global Test Drive participants at the National Institute for Aerospace Technology (INTA), near Madrid. An aeronautical research facility, INTA and its varied surfaces make an ideal location for dynamic driving events.

"Focus Global Test Drive will be a unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience for the participants," said Foust. "I'm looking forward to helping these drivers put the next-generation Focus to the test, and to benefit the drivers' charities of choice."

At the three-day event, Feb. 18-20, 2011, consumers and bloggers will be able to experience the Ford Focus in a unique new manner. Each challenge and course will highlight the driving dynamics and technologies in the vehicle. And throughout the event, charities will benefit.

To participate in Focus Global Test Drive, friends and fans from around the world were invited to submit simple video applications explaining why they should be included in this unique behind-the-scenes event.

The application process invites prospective test drivers to "start more than a car" by generating the market equivalent of \$10,000 for a specific charity of their choice from the categories of hunger, education and environment/sus-

Kresge to Aid Launch of New 'Art X Detroit'

DETROIT – The Kresge Foundation announced it will sponsor Art X Detroit, a free-five-day series of exhibitions, presentations, readings, discussions, concerts and dance performances for the larger Detroit community.

Art X will showcase newly commissioned works by the Kresge Artist Fellowship awardees and the two Kresge Eminent Artists, renowned visual artist Charles McGee and iconic jazz musician Marcus Belgrave.

In 2008, the Foundation established a new program that has provided more than \$1 million to metro Detroit-based individual artists working in the visual, literary and performing arts through its Eminent Artist and Kresge Artist Fellowships.

This first-ever public celebration of the 2008-2010 Kresge Artists will take place from April 6-10, 2011, in many cultural organizations located in midtown Detroit, the city of Detroit's cultural center.

"Arts and culture animate the Detroit community, opening our eyes to new and different ways of viewing ourselves and our place in the future," said Rip Rapson, president of the Kresge Foundation.

"The festival promises to feature the kind of reflection and creativity that nurture individual development, draw communities into closer relationships, and strengthen the fabric of daily life," he added.

Art X begins on April 6 with the unveiling of a new major public art installation by Charles McGee, to be followed by an evening reception at MOCAD.

Organizers are hopeful that the public turnout will be strong, even though the first week in April can often be cold and blustery in downtown Detroit environs.

Roush Moves Into Home EV Car Charging Business

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major move for Roush – a global powerhouse in cutting-edge product development, composition, creation and testing – into the electric vehicle industry.

This is an important evolutionary step for Fours, officials said, and for the auto industry, as an existing Roush automotive facility in Livonia has now been modified to support the EV industry.

With the official opening of the facility, located in an industrial park near I-96 and Levan Road, Roush has actually been able to re-hire employees who were previously laid off.

"Roush is an excellent example of a Michigan company that has reinvented itself and is successfully applying the power of Michigan to the next emerging industry," said Mich. Gov. Rick Snyder, who

also attended the grand opening last week.

"Partnerships like this help us to ensure Michigan stays on the leading edge of technology and enhances our economic development efforts."

Meanwhile, the Blink brand charging stations now form the centerpiece of the rich charging infrastructure network that ECotality is deploying as part of a larger, Dept. of Energy (DOE)-backed project.

Recently, the Blink chargers received Underwriters Laboratories (UL) listing and production immediately started.

ECotality has conducted 1,200 residential assessments to date, and also has conducted site assessments for deployment of over 1,500 commercial charging stations – key steps leading to the actual installation of the Roush-built charging station.

Added Roush's Lyall, "More importantly for Roush, this re-

ally represents a significant milestone in our efforts to re-purpose what has been a traditional automotive facility.

"The facility that you're in today, two years ago was 100 percent automotive parts delivered into assembly plants – mostly plastic and injection-blow-molded pieces.

"It was a very nice business and something we were very proud to do, but of course with the turmoil in the industry and the things that have gone on, we had to make some hard choices like everybody else.

"You can lay down and die or you can reinvent yourself. . . . we have reinvented ourselves here today, we are now a facility that's involved in consumer products, industrial products, life sciences – even the entertainment industry.

"And to be able to take what was automotive and

turn it into that. . . we've really become a flexible manufacturing and complex assembly facility – that's something we're very proud of. It's going to drive jobs for Michigan and it's going to drive jobs for Roush."

Indeed, Blink Home Charging Stations are now available to EV drivers and are free of charge to EV Project participants. The units can be installed indoors or outside at commercial locations, and both hardware and plug-in charging stations are available. Visit blinknetwork.com for more details about the retail end of the EV charging station project.

The front end is being handled by Roush Manufacturing, thank you, in a delightful chapter about how the Motor City auto industry continues to both take advantage of and sometimes create entirely new business opportunities.

Ford Encourages Customers to 'Create Adventures'

CHICAGO – If you had a Ford Explorer for a week, what would you do and where would you go? This question lays the groundwork for the new "Go. Do. Adventures" program that invites consumers to suggest how they would use an Explorer to create their own unique adventure.

"We want people to get out there and experience their environment with friends and family in a fresh new way, and the new Explorer is the best vehicle to do it in," said Jim Farley, Ford group vice president, Global Marketing, Sales and Service.

"Ford has reinvented the Explorer, and with this new campaign we're inviting consumers to be just as inventive by coming up with their ultimate adventure."

Consumers can submit stories in the form of essays, photos and videos through several websites, such as www.ford.com/explorer and Facebook. The responses will showcase both key product features and unique American locations and attractions. Those people whose ideas are selected will then be able to live out their dream adventure, courtesy of the all-new

Explorer. All of the action will be captured and documented through the Explorer Facebook page.

"This provides a platform for a larger audience to experience Explorer. We started the conversation by revealing Explorer on Facebook and are continuing to advance that dialogue online," said Eric Peterson, Explorer communications manager. "We have actively answered our fans' questions, but now we have an opportunity to create advocates and show how Explorer can enable you to do the things you always dreamed of."

Additionally, through collaboration with Outside Media and its network of unique assets and experts, Ford will select the most compelling stories to film, and produce short films to be distributed online and through traditional media. Ultimately, the content will be developed into a one-hour TV special.

The current marketing campaign for the reinvented 2011 Explorer, Go. Do., is an example of how a consumer-oriented approach can influence advertising creative and generate online discussion. It began with the Ford Explorer Face-

book engagement that showed the all-new SUV's live Facebook reveal on July 26.

The Go. Do. campaign continued evolving through Facebook as Ford engaged fans and prospective Explorer customers in one-on-one conversations using texts, videos and images.

This led to significant Facebook growth – more than 138,000 fans and growing – and increased anticipation for the new Explorer. Explorer

fans also can get real-time answers from Ford experts as well as view video responses from engineers and celebrities such as Bret Michaels and Snoop Dogg.

The unfiltered feedback influenced more traditional aspects of the campaign, including TV and print advertising. The result is an unscripted, organic look at American families and the American road trip, with a mini-documentary feel to TV spots.

Ford Runs Grammy Ads

Ford's hot-selling Ford Explorer made some waves during the 53rd annual Grammy Awards on Sunday night, in a 60-second television spot that featured hip-hop recording artist Nelly and the Explorer's new audio system from Sony.

"The Grammy's provide an opportunity to reach a broad audience with our message, and we want to make sure everyone knows about the new, totally reinvented Explorer," said Matt Van Dyke, Ford's director of U.S. Marketing.

Since the launch of the reinvented 2011 Ford Explorer last year, Ford has been inter-

acting with customers on Facebook – more than 138,000 fans to date – posting videos featuring Ford engineers and a variety of celebrities answering questions people have about the popular SUV.

The unique ad featuring Nelly is one of three commercials that ran during the Grammy TV broadcast Sunday night. Explorer was also seen in three other ads that lean heavily on music to tell the Explorer's story.

Nelly is one of a number of celebrities who have appeared in videos on Explorer's Facebook page. Others include Bret Michaels.



Tanner Foust

tainability.

The Focus Global Test Drive offers something for everyone. Ford engineers will get rapid feedback from interested customers and prospects; drivers get a first look at the new car before it goes on sale; friends get to come along for the ride of a lifetime; and deserving charities will benefit in a big way.

The all-new Ford Focus is the result of a global product development program bringing together Ford's best engineers and technologies from around the world.

A global Ford nameplate, Focus will be nearly identical in all 122 world markets in which it will eventually be sold, with 80 percent parts commonality.

Focus goes on sale in markets around the world early this year.

Euro EV Firm Opens in Ohio

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) – A European electric car company is setting up a North American base in Ohio.

Ohio State University says Monoco's Venturi Automobiles chose to locate in Columbus to be close to the university's Center for Automotive Research.

A news release says the new Venturi North America operation will design, engineer and produce electric vehicles for specialty markets.

The university says Venturi now employs 70 people in engineering and manufacturing in Monaco and France.