



Case Study:

Ford Motor: 2020 Ford Escape

Year: 2021



This case study was prepared for the client Ford Motor for the product Ford Escape 2020 to portray that today's Latinas are finding themselves and realizing their dreams in unprecedented fashion ways that were not done before. It was developed and designed by Zubi. In the Impact on Innovation category, it won bronze.

Executive Summary:

For 2020, Ford was launching a new version of its Escape small SUV. Sales and share had been declining in previous years despite the fact that Hispanics were migrating from cars to SUVs and the small SUV segment was becoming the largest in the Hispanic industry. The new Escape provided us an opportunity to re-think everything from targeting to content approach. With increasing Latina educational attainment levels, new business start-ups and other improving socioeconomic indicators, it became evident that Latinas are the engine powering the Hispanic market's ongoing success story and they would also be the key to a successful launch.

With the insight that today's Latinas are finding themselves and realizing their dreams in unprecedented fashion, our proposition was, "Ford is proudly building the future with Latinas who are making a difference." Our campaign showcased Escape's contemporary design and features, drawing a parallel between the vehicle and modern Latinas. The bilingual multimedia campaign featured spokeswoman Joanna Hausmann in short and long-format videos with Latina leaders, radio, social media and out of home executions. Though interrupted by COVID, one year later we are beginning to see the fruits of our campaign as Ford brand metrics and Escape sales are rising.

Definition of your challenge:

For several years the ground had been moving under the automotive industry, as consumers moved from cars to SUVs and trucks. In order to address this trend, Ford chose to eliminate almost all cars from its vehicle line-up, but because Hispanics were lagging in the trend away from cars, Ford's sales among Hispanics suffered mightily. Then the Hispanic shift to SUVs and trucks began to really accelerate in earnest in 2019. Suddenly, the small SUV segment became the most important in the Hispanic industry. This should have been welcome news for Ford but unfortunately, Escape, Ford's lone entry into the small SUV segment at the time, had been suffering share and volume losses for several years. On the bright side, an all-new and innovative Escape model was due to launch in early 2020.

Our deep dive into industry data showed that Hispanic industry and Hispanic small SUV growth was being driven by Latina buyers, but Ford suffers from trust issues with Hispanics in general and especially Latinas. We knew we needed to win the consideration and trust of this important target, which consists of a broad cross-section of Latinas who are at the heart of the Hispanic success story, having achieved substantial socioeconomic gains in recent years. So, our objectives were to launch the all-new Escape to Hispanics, especially modern Latinas, with a bilingual campaign that would be well received, increasing the brand's favorable opinion among them and motivating them to buy the new Escape at levels at which they had not bought the previous model.

The Key Insight & Strategy:

Latinas have turned their Hispanic identity, which was once an obstacle to achieving their dreams, into their superpower.

Based on a comprehensive analysis of socioeconomic data, we ascertained that virtually every single gain being made by Hispanics in the U.S. was being propelled by Latinas. Such gains included declining teen pregnancy rates, unprecedented increases in educational attainment levels and a record number of small business start-ups. It turns out that while the culture at large was wrestling with women's issues, Latinas have been moving forward, doing, not talking. We learned from primary qualitative research that they are unapologetic and aren't backing down, but their heritage and culture remain at the center of who they are. Armed with a sense of purpose and determination, they are taking the reins of their own futures and making influential strides along the way. Their optimism and sense of accomplishment were fertile ground for this initiative as their power and influence has been manifesting itself in everything – in their education, in their careers, and in their families' lives.

We then identified the values the new Ford Escape and our target audience could share:

- Authentic and down to earth
- Unapologetically proud of who they are
- Proud builders of things/lives
- Clever and savvy
- Always looking forward
- Good citizens of the world, always giving back

Armed with a powerful insight and the values we wanted to communicate, our single-minded proposition was developed, “Ford is proudly building the future with Latinas who are making a difference.”

Execution:

The Built to be extraordinary campaign was a bilingual, 3601 multimedia effort that included Spanish TV, Spanish Radio, English cinema as well as online video, digital banners, social media posts and out of home posters in both languages. The campaign tapped the Venezuelan American internet personality Joanna Hausmann as the designated spokeswoman for the 2020 Escape launch. Known for her funny online “rants”, Hausmann epitomizes the modern Latina who is successful on her own terms. Her role was to lead the charge in connecting with other extraordinary Latinas, spotlighting the amazing things they were doing across a range of causes including environmental fashion, green urban spaces, sports, and positive gender and ethnic representation in popular culture, all while showing how the Escape could be the perfect support to making some of those endeavors possible. In our 30s TV spot, Let’s make a difference, Hausmann and a select group of influential Latinas take the new Escape to the beach for a real clean-up effort organized by the environmental advocacy non- profit, Heal the Bay.

Shorter 15s digital videos narrated by Hausmann explain how hashtags alone don’t change things, action does. The videos each showcase a feature of the new Escape and an example of how it can help Latinas make a difference. A series of longer, 2-minute videos of Joanna interviewing Latinas such as Gabby Rivera, writer, and storyteller whose work often addresses issues of identity and representation for people of color and the queer community within American popular culture and Marlen Esparza, a professional boxer who challenged for the WBA female flyweight title in 2019 were created. These in- vehicle interviews highlighted the journeys of these trailblazers while Hausmann drove and subtly demonstrated Escape’s innovative features. For radio, we recorded one of Hausmann’s trademarked “rants” in which she jokingly mocks the conventions of normal vehicle radio spots while talking up all of the features of the new Escape and for additional reach and impact, we created a series of posters that were displayed in shopping malls in the key small SUV markets of Los Angeles, New York and Miami.





Results:

Although our campaign was cut short just six weeks in, because of the pandemic, we were able to relaunch it, albeit at lower media levels than originally intended. Still, we are pleased with the results we were able to document:

1. In brand tracking, Ford's favorable opinion among Latinas increased by 27% from Q4 of 2019 through Q4 of 2020, the pertinent period in which the "Built to be Extraordinary" campaign was contained.
2. In-market testing showed that the TV spot, Making a Difference, drove strong Lift to Brand Impression, and an increase in Purchase Consideration among both Latinas and Hispanic men, an unexpected but welcome surprise.
3. On average, the online videos achieved a video completion rate that was 8.55% above the benchmarked goal, with all of the creative executions performing above benchmark.
4. Social sentiment on Ford Latino social and Influencer platforms was 98% positive.
5. In testing, the Radio spot was rated the highest among competitive radio ads in ability to attract attention, distinctiveness, and humor. It was also the most liked ad among Latina respondents, and had the highest net number of likes of specific ad elements among all respondents. The ad produced a lift in both brand and nameplate opinion and consideration over an unexposed control.
6. Though 2020 was a rough year in the automotive industry because of the pandemic, the work we did for Escape is paying off so far in 2021. Escape's Hispanic sales are up 33% through March, compared to the prior year and, with the help of the addition of Bronco Sport, Ford now has increased its share of the small SUV segment by 55%.

Industry Impact:

For us, the lesson of this campaign is the value of the Latina consumer to brands who are desperately trying to achieve incremental growth. If the tale of Hispanics in America is a success story, and we believe that it is, then the authors of it have most frequently and recently been Latinas. We took dead facts about sales, vehicle model gender mix rates, and socioeconomics and inspired a campaign that in turn was inspirational and motivating to the target audience and a net positive for the client.