



The most alluring PR-ROI option is quantifying PR's influence on sales. To illustrate, we examine how **Ford Motor Company's** launch of the Ford Mustang Mach-E generated media coverage, awareness and sales.



The Ford Mustang Mach-E was unveiled in November 2019. It is Ford's first vehicle designed from the ground up as an electric vehicle and marked the first time in 55 years that Ford expanded its Mustang family beyond sports coupes. It also represented another milestone: customers could reserve their Mach-E on Ford.com. The business put a premium on driving customers to Ford's website and converting visits into reservations for car orders.

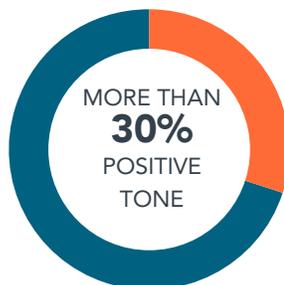
In addition to conversion, it was crucial to protect the Mustang brand with its fans. It was vital for the car's performance figures, green credentials and innovative technology to appear across targeted earned and social media. Ford's Insights team—global manager Michael Young and analyst Ben Kocsis—collaborated with the communication team to craft a number of measurable objectives.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

Business outcomes included driving demand (online reservations) and attaining an earned media conversion rate of 0.7 percent or higher, via attribution analysis.

Outtakes included delivering high message retention and company recall, particularly among opinion elites and younger audiences as quantified via surveys. In addition, the team wanted to elevate Ford's reputation as an environmentally responsible company, achieve a top-10 search ranking on **Google Trends** and reach record levels of site traffic for a new vehicle's landing page.

Outputs included generating 1 billion in media reach with more than 30 percent in positive tone; raising industry-average readership among females to 37 percent and delivering strong message penetration in target media.



STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The data and insights team provided research-backed recommendations to hit these targets. The insights team focused on two primary areas.

The first, an optimized and targeted media list, included demographic analysis identifying optimal media with the highest penetration among target audiences, media segmentation informing multiple event strategies and social media/ influencer identification, ensuring the media conversation spilled into organic social media.

Organic SEO was utilized to direct consumers to Ford.com, 'steal' search share from electric vehicle titans and apply SEO data to select earned media partners with the highest credibility around the electric vehicle conversation.

Ford's Data and Insights team utilized analytic tools and research to support communication strategy. Tactics included organic SEO, an optimized media target list and engagement across social media.



The team leveraged SEO to discover the most frequently searched keywords connected to electric vehicles, analyzed opportunities for organic keywords, implemented keywords to increase search visibility, identified earned media outlets with the highest authority in organic search around electric vehicles and analyzed keywords competitors 'owned' to assess risk/reward of coopting them.

To best optimize the media target list, the team searched for outlets with highest reach/frequency devoted to electric

vehicle topics; analyzed reach potential, particularly factoring differences between reach of homepage vs. automotive/technology focused subpage; and applied reader demographics with existing audience/customer profiles to ensure that intended Mach-E messages resonated with target audience.

Finally, the team engaged with social media by identifying outlets and headline keywords that drove the highest engagement across social platforms around electric vehicles and added data-informed insights and guidance into recommendations.



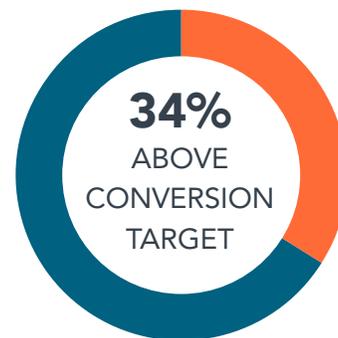
PR DRIVES RESULTS

By leveraging data-driven analysis and guidance, the communication team accomplished a number of its results against its objectives. Business outcomes included filling First Edition Mach-E reservations, which is as good as it gets. Additionally, the team saw a conversion rate of .99 percent, besting its target of .7 percent.

The team also saw successful outtakes. For those aware of the Mach-E launch, nearly 70 percent of respondents associated the vehicle with Ford. About 60 percent of respondents reacted positively to the Mach-E launch, chiefly among Gen Z and so-called Opinion Elites. It ranked among top 10 topics in Google Search during launch, and generated 2.5M site visits in first two months.

In terms of outputs, the campaign generated 2 billion in potential media reach after the first week. The intended message penetration reached 72 percent (goal: 70 percent).

Beyond the launch, Ford's data and insights team continues to inform communication strategy for Mach-E.



Not every PR campaign results in sold-out inventory and not every organization has Ford's resources. But even if some of us never experience the opportunity to calculate PR's power to drive sales, it's important for PR practitioners to know that what we believe in our hearts to be true is, in fact, true: PR drives business results. And yes, we can prove it.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Weiner is the Chief Insights Officer for Cision. He is a member of the Arthur Page Society and a Board Director for the Institute for Public Relations from whom he was awarded the Jack Felton Medal for Lifetime Achievement.