

Ford's Focus on Young Buyers Pays Off

Focus ST is showing signs of success in bringing younger, more affluent customers into Ford showrooms as the car and the Ford ST performance brand mark one year in the market.

Through October, U.S. sales of the Focus ST since launch are fewer than 12,000 units, with demand strongest in Detroit, Los Angeles, Houston and Orlando.

Among those buyers, nearly two-thirds, or 65 percent, traded in a non-Ford vehicle to buy their car – the highest percentage of conquest sales for a non-hybrid vehicle among all Ford cars and trucks. The most traded-in brands: Honda, Chevrolet, Mazda and Toyota.

And those sales numbers are important, said Ford spokesman Chris Terry.

“We want the Focus to be successful beyond the usual Ford fanboys who are based in the Midwest,” Terry said. “So when we see the sales figures coming from places like Houston or Los Angeles or Orlando, that’s very good news for Ford.”

In addition, many Focus ST buyers are young, with 32 percent under 35, compared with 22 percent of non-ST Focus owners. And they have higher incomes, with an average household annual salary of \$127,000, compared with \$67,000 for non-ST Focus customers.

The Focus ST is helping to boost sales of other Ford models,

drawing to showrooms customers who then buy a different Ford model, most often a Fusion sedan or Escape utility, said John Felice, vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service, citing anecdotal evidence from dealers.

“It’s having the kind of halo effect for other vehicles we’d hoped for when we invested in the ST brand,” said Felice. “We continue to build through word-of-mouth and terrific reviews. As an affordable high-performance vehicle that can serve double duty as a daily driver, it has no equal.”

Ford recently launched the Fiesta ST, the second vehicle in its ST lineup. With a 197-horsepower, 1.6-liter EcoBoost engine and EPA-estimated highway mileage rating of 35 mpg, Fiesta ST essentially has no direct competition in its price range.

Focus ST, Ford’s first global performance car, integrates advanced and sport-oriented technologies previously unavailable to North American customers.

The combination of these technologies into a refined yet high-performance sport compact elevates the category and further cements Focus as the most complete compact car range sold in North America, said Terry.

What that means, he said, is that buyers are going for the more expensive trim packages.

Part of the buying experience for both Focus ST and Fiesta ST



2014 Focus ST

owners is complementary precision driving instruction at Miller Motorsports Park in Toole, Utah. The exclusive experience includes classroom instruction as well as karting and autocross driving lessons from Miller’s professional instructors.

The sales figures are also good for Ford because the Focus falls in what Ford people call a “super-segment” niche. That’s the compact-subcompact-mid-size sedan and small utility segments.

About 10 years ago, that ‘super-segment’ accounted for about a third of the vehicles sold in the country. Now, that number is closer to 50 percent, and may go as high as 60 percent.

“Look at it this way. If you divide the motor vehicle market up into three segments – truck, SUV and car, Ford already has the top selling truck and top-selling SUVs. The only way to grow the company is in the car segment.”

Being able to compete in this supersegment with a car aimed at younger buyers is a real victory for Ford, Terry said.

2013 Grand Prix Generates \$17M in New Spending

The 2013 Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix generated \$46.3 million in total spending for the Metropolitan Detroit region, according to information released Nov. 18.

The total number represents an increase of \$1 million in spending from the 2012 Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix, according to a report conducted by sports consulting firm Sport-simpacts.

The consulting firm also provided an analysis report of the 2012 Grand Prix, said Grand Prix spokesperson Merrill Cain.

The report stated that of the 2013 total spending number affecting Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties, \$17 million represents new spending to the region as a result of non-local sources that will be retained long term as new income for Detroit-area households, businesses and government.

This information represents a total economic impact increase

of \$1.3 million over the 2012 Grand Prix, according to Sport-simpacts, which has conducted more than 75 studies since 2000, including numerous sporting events in Metro Detroit such as Super Bowl XL, the Ryder Cup and the Major League Baseball All-Star Game.

“The Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix continues to be a very positive force for Detroit and Southeast Michigan,” said Bud Denker, chairman of the Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix.

“We know that the event shines the light on Detroit and Belle Isle on an international level with race broadcasts seen around the world and it’s also great to see how much of an impact the Grand Prix has on the local economy.

“We’re very excited to report economic growth from the 2012 event and to generate \$46.3 million in spending for the region this year.”

Women's Group Grants Scholarships

More than 70 area senior high school girls who have gone through the Women of Tomorrow program were invited to join their mentors, school coordinators, scholarship partners and the Women of Tomorrow Detroit Scholarship Committee to learn about the scholarship opportunities available to them through the Women of Tomorrow organization.

The Nov. 21 event was held at Comerica Park and was underwritten by the Detroit Tigers, who have an ongoing commitment to partner with and support Women of Tomorrow.

In attendance were the Women of Tomorrow Scholarship Partners – Central Michigan University, Northwood University and Rochester College – who have all committed a competitive scholarship opportunity for a Women of Tomorrow graduate.

Representatives from the three scholarship partners, as well as University of Michigan and Michigan State University, were on hand to help students navigate the various steps involved in the scholarship process, including how to fill out college admissions and financial aid applications and other scholarship opportunities that may be available to them.

“I believe education is the key to change,” said advisory board member and president of Ward Williston Oil Laurie Cunningham.

“Thanks to the generosity of organizations like Northwood University, Central Michigan and Rochester College, many of these young women will get the support they need to fulfill their goals and dreams of success.”

President and chairwoman of Weight Watchers Group Florine Mark is also an advisory board member. She said she believes wholeheartedly in supporting tomorrow’s leaders.

Mark secured the first scholarship partnership with Central Michigan University.

When asked why it was so important to support Women of Tomorrow’s mission, she said, “These young women have the intelligence, talent and passion needed to achieve great things; and we are so grateful that some of Michigan’s finest educational institutions have not only recognized their potential, but they have stepped forward to help the girls on their paths to success.”

The Women of Tomorrow Detroit Scholarship Committee members are Cunningham, Lori Blaker, president and CEO, TTI Global; Joanne Faycurry, partner, Schiff Hardin; Ellen Hill Zeringue, vice president of Marketing, Detroit Tigers; and Jacquise Purifoy, attorney, Law Office of Jacquise A. Purifoy PLLC.

“We are extremely grateful to all our educational partners for their commitment to the Women

of Tomorrow Mentor & Scholarship Program,” said Blaker, head of the Scholarship committee.

“Their assistance and resources will provide the support that our young women need to thrive in the college environment.”



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