

Ford Shows Off Electric Mustang With Instagram Augmented Reality Series

Ford is giving a tour of its Mustang Mach-E electric vehicles from the comfort of viewers' homes using augmented reality.

The automaker launched a series of 10 short Instagram videos this week featuring Ford engineers explaining various aspects of the cars while a 3D visual representation was superimposed in front of the viewer using the app's AR feature. The campaign, called "Expert in 0-60," was produced by BBDO.

The shorts allow Instagram users to explore the interior and exterior of the vehicles from various vantage points as the expert narrators guide viewers around the virtual car.

"This isn't just a brochure or looking at a couple of pictures on the net—you are actually genuinely getting to hear from the engineer that helped shape the car," said BBDO executive creative director Philip Sicklinger. "We're sort of approaching AR in a new kind of format, trying to basically launch a car that doesn't quite exist in a sort of visceral way that you can touch and feel it yet sense."

The creatives were able to create the digital models of the cars by stripping down high-res imagery of the vehicles and painstakingly augmenting and reframing them with animation to make them work for the AR format. The team used the game development platform Unreal Engine for the process.

"There was this really fine balance between creating something that was a light enough experience that you could open up on

your phone without Wi-Fi, and it just lands straight in your camera versus making sure we've got that kind of high fidelity. There's that interactivity," said BBDO associate creative director Ricky Bowry.

Ford is hoping the virtual format will prime consumers for what to expect when the physical car first goes on sale later this year.

"Our consumers have just been craving more information since the reveal, and the reality is we won't have vehicles rolling out for consumers to test drive and to experience on dealership lots until nearing the end of this year," said Ford integrated marketing communications manager Thea Toney. "So we really wanted to make sure that we could provide that type of an immersive experience where they could get one-to-one with the vehicle."

Brands have been increasingly turning to mixed-reality tech like AR during the pandemic to better engage people remotely and sometimes work around production constraints. Earlier this week, Barefoot wine teamed with the Black Eyed Peas to create a music-centric AR app.

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