

Firstly, congratulations on a phenomenal Mustang sales performance in August 2015 – almost 10,000 cars in a single month – what an achievement. I originally wrote this letter at the beginning of September and I see that now, 6 weeks on, sales figures have continued to be incredible. Mr Callum, must be immensely proud and, as a UK resident myself, it's good to know that a bit of Scotland has played its part in this fantastic story.

I do hope that this correspondence finds its way to each of you although I suspect it may not. To try to improve my chances, I enclose something a little different in a bid to vie for a few minutes of your time in a no doubt hectic schedule. It's an A3 poster containing excerpts from comments on forums largely populated by some of the most diehard proponents of the icon that is the Ford Mustang. These people are not the bulk of your market. These people are outliers. These people are the people that epitomise the Mustang "spirit". These people are about passion for an idea; a concept. They are the early adopters; the enthusiasts; the "fanbois". They are the ambassadors you do not know about.

I am one of those people.

News of the arrival of an official Mustang in the UK, Australia and Europe spawned a flurry of internet forums which simply exploded with a fervour of excitement. Posts full of details of what configuration has been ordered, what modifications will be made, where the parts will come from, where will the Mustang be driven – every conceivable detail was going up by the hour. The loyalty, commitment and sheer industry of this community is nothing short of remarkable. Customers placed deposits in early 2014 almost a year before the prices were released. Customers ordered – and even made their own - parts before they had delivery dates. The creativity shown in working out how to track which vessel cars were on as they left Baltimore for Europe particularly stuck in my mind. There are some truly obsessive individuals amongst us – an obsession which comes out of the same feeling that Mr Farley described in one of the four promotional videos for Europe : *"A few of us were talking to Bill Ford about it and he said 'Jim, through my whole life of being connected with Ford, my father, my grandfather, me, I have always dreamed of visualising, driving a Mustang in Europe as the ultimate expression of what makes our company different'"*. Mr Ford, we absolutely know where you are coming from.

So casting your eye over the extracts I have enclosed might be a surprise.

You see, I think these ambassadors are being let down. What should have been a magical experience is turning out to be the complete opposite and, as some of the extracts reveal, is turning even these ambassadors away. Widespread stories of putting down deposits with Ford UK dealers and then hearing absolutely nothing for months – possibly at all - are commonplace and the feeling I have - that the dealer just took my money and forgot about me - seems to be one that is shared. Treatment of customers doesn't appear to be particularly equal either. Some got what is now called the "on the list" email while others didn't. Information about the few people that do have build dates for their cars has highlighted that cars are not being built strictly in order. So, for example, there are customers who ordered in February with build dates whereas I ordered in January and I have nothing from my dealer. I know of others who ordered earlier and are in a similar position to me. I don't think any of us particularly mind waiting for the car that has been 50 years in the coming, but I don't see it as unreasonable to expect either that they are built in order or at least some communication to customers that you are not going to do that and perhaps why. Perhaps cars are being done in colour runs – a perfectly understandable reason – but there is just nothing

whatsoever coming out of the Ford UK machine. Even the so called “Champions League” winners don’t seem to have actually won anything other than a free book you can buy on Amazon for £32.00. It certainly doesn’t look like they will be the first people to drive the right hand drive Mustang in the UK.

I used social media to try to get some acknowledgement that I existed so far as Ford was concerned but that failed and I had no response. I even emailed customer service and got nothing more than the auto-reply saying I’d get a reply within 3 working days. That was on 14th August 2015 and with over eight weeks elapsed since then, I don’t hold out any hope of any substantive reply. The customer service we in the UK have had from Ford and the network of so-called specialist dealers is abysmal.

There is then the speculation about what we will actually be getting. In episode 2 of your promotional video, Raj Nair stirred the excitement pot and hit the nail on the head when talking about the European Mustang fans : *“What they wanted was pretty consistent. They wanted the next generation Mustang and everything Mustang stands for as the American icon it’s been for 50 years. It was more about doing the best Mustang we’ve ever done. It’s not about developing vehicles differently for Europe because we want those dynamics in the global vehicle.”* In short, they want the same car that you sold almost 10,000 of in August – just in a right hand drive configuration in some countries.

So you can anticipate the disappointment as the rumour mill grinds and people start to suggest that the rear lights will be white and not red. That the hood grills will not be there. That the “gill” daytime running lights won’t work. That the tower strut brace won’t be included – the list goes on. Particularly concerning for some like me is the suggestion recently that there is no interior difference between cars ordered with a custom pack and those without which would mean that the custom pack is more expensive than would be the case had the options been ordered as separate items at the time of purchase.

Understandably, some of these things you just cannot deliver because of local restrictions. For example Australia’s so called “anti-hooning” laws mean that for that market, the line lock feature is not possible. But some of the rumours are difficult to understand – particularly when one looks at other vehicles commonly sold on Europe. For example, the Jaguar F type R AWD has hood vents. I can’t see anything that makes a tower strut brace illegal in the UK. We just don’t know what we are getting and it will be helpful to know exactly what we are going to lose and why. Your Global Product Communications Manager, Craig von Essen, came out and told the world that Australia won’t be getting line lock and why. We in the UK on the other hand, were recently written to by Ford UK to be told that because of the right hand drive configuration, we’d be losing five whole horsepower points. Hardly a deal breaker. The letter is not interesting in so far as what it said but more in what it did not say. It was silent on all the other far more significant aspects of the car that are rumoured to have been deleted from the UK version. So UK customers can hardly be blamed for expecting that none of the rumours are true as if you took the time to tell us about the loss of a measly five horsepower points, surely you would have told us if there were any truth in the suggestions that we’re not getting a tower strut brace that will cost \$200.00 plus shipping and fitting and the increase in insurance premium as it will be treated as a modification if we choose to reinstate ourselves, that hood vents are due to be deleted from UK models which will affect the appearance of the car, or that you intend to delete operational “gill” daytime running lights which make a significant difference to the overall appearance of the car. This last one, which has been

confirmed in so far as it applies to Europe, is causing particular dissatisfaction. I appreciate that there is the homologation process to go through but I am unable to believe that all the deletions are down to that. Even if they are, Ford, either itself or through the dealers should have written to us telling us. Even with cars on boats as I write apparently, we do not know exactly what we will and will not be getting.

Finally, there is the salt in the wound in that as we patiently await deliver of 2015 Mustangs ordered months ago, we start to read reports of the first 2016 Mustangs getting delivered and then, of course, the launch of the GT350 and the GT350R.

I think we all appreciate that compared with the bulk of your production, the right hand drive market is “niche” and that you have to focus on your primary market – the American one. However, bearing in mind we share Bill Ford’s dream as described by Mr Farley, we agree with Mr Nair’s statement that we want the best Mustang you’ve ever done and everything Mustang stands for and we agree with Mr Callum’s sentiments in the European promotional video series that *“It was the 50th anniversary so we wanted it to be quite special”*, I hope you will agree that in the UK, whether it is Ford US, Ford UK or the so called specialist dealer network, there is evidence on the ground that tends to suggest that someone, somewhere is not playing their part in achieving these objectives and this is leading to customers being poorly treated – particularly when one considers the immense faith and loyalty to the Ford brand those customers have shown.

At the start of this letter, I mentioned that I had started it in September. I postponed finishing it because Andy Barratt, Head of Ford UK took the unusual and brave step of getting on the forum and telling us to raise his questions with him. The members did just that and it looked like the flow of information might be starting. However, 6 weeks on, some customers (still not me I hasten to add) are getting updates that their cars are now going to be delayed significantly and still the information coming out of Ford is unacceptably poor.

Of course, I don’t know why it is going to take so long for UK cars to be delivered. I don’t know why despite the initially unambitious timescales for achieving delivery indicated by dealers, even those seem too difficult and production seems to have stalled. I can speculate that the reason is that the car is successful beyond your imagination and you have to serve your primary market. But I don’t think it is fair that we pay the price for that. Do you ?

If you don’t then forgive me if I make a suggestion. I appreciate that accelerating production isn’t practical and frankly, it is too late anyway. If you look over the forums, particularly in Europe where they get their cars in lightning time compared with those in the UK and Australia, you’ll see a whole industry springing up as customers seek to get the car back to what they thought it was going to be – the US Mustang in Europe, the UK, Australia but with the steering wheel on the right side. There’s even a chap in Poland trying to “bake” headlights open to try to restore the operation of the “gill” daytime running lights – he’s a braver man than I. Spending £35,000 on what is your halo product shouldn’t involve this sort of thing. So my suggestion is this : show your RHD customers some appreciation for their loyalty and patience. Organise for these ambassadors to be able to order from the Ford Stores some of the parts they are trying to import from the US but at a US rate and with no shipping. You know who all the early customers are so it isn’t too difficult to isolate them and set something up. Enlist the help of CJ Pony Parts or someone similar – I suspect they’ll be pleased at the chance to create a body of customers abroad. You might stipulate that the parts and modifications have to be ordered within a certain timeframe so the whole lot can be shipped

together. Too expensive ? There is a suggestion that something like 10% of early UK orders have been cancelled and dealerships are only too happy for that to happen as they can recycle the order but at the higher list price. By April 2015, the press were reporting that there had been around 1,200 UK orders. If that's the case and the suggestion of the level of cancellations is right, then that's a windfall for Ford in the region of £120K or so – perhaps more. You can use some of that pot to fund this suggestion. I doubt you would spend it all and you'd get your ambassadors back on board because we're all desperately looking for a reason to keep the dream alive.

I understand the commercial need to keep the much bigger, more lucrative US market satisfied but as we pay the price of that, take a leaf out of your 80's marketing strapline and Ford, give us more.

If you took the time to read this, then thanks and I hope to get a reply in due course – feel free to make it by email.

Yours sincerely

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