



Sporting Stars Expose Toxic Side of ‘Banter’ as Ford Launches Video Series to Fight LGBTQ+ Discrimination

Ford is launching ‘Ford Presents Tough Talks’, a new series of videos exploring how the automotive industry, and places beyond, can foster a culture of inclusion and allyship for the LGBTQ+ community.

The first episode, hosted by Welsh sporting legend and first openly gay rugby union professional Gareth Thomas, introduces the series and discusses the specific LGBTQ+ issues faced in the automotive industry. He’s joined initially by Ed Rogers, a Ford employee in the UK who is chair of Ford Pride – Ford’s LGBTQ+ employee resource group – and founder and chair of Driving Pride, a cross-automotive group dedicated to driving out discrimination in the industry.

Charlie Martin, a British racing driver and transgender rights activist then takes the passenger seat to talk about the challenges she faced transitioning within a male-dominated sport. Then it’s her turn in the driver’s seat, putting Ford-created Very Gay Raptor pickup truck – that features throughout – through its paces on a hill climb.

Each episode of Tough Talks will feature conversations between Gareth Thomas and prominent members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies – straight people who actively support the equality and fair treatment of the LGBTQ+ community – from across Europe focussing on distinct themes, their impact and the challenge of various stereotypes that are found in, and beyond automotive culture.

The first episode is released today and is one of a number of activations by Ford in its mission to drive out discrimination and give the LGBTQ+ community a voice in the automotive industry.

Ford Pride ERG

Since 1995 the employee resource group, Ford Pride ERG (formerly GLOBE), has championed LGBTQ+ rights across the globe as well as workplace inclusion in all aspects of corporate life. It was launched in Europe in 1996, making Ford one of the first companies in the corporate world to establish this type of employee resource group and to develop a Gender Identity Commitment.

Ford is also a founding member of Driving Pride; a network launched this year for professionals associated with the automotive industry who identify as LGBTQ+ and straight allies who support them.

In Europe, Ford has given long-term support to the Christopher Street Day event in Cologne, an annual LGBTQ+ commemoration of the Stonewall riots. It was main sponsor for the first time back in 2002 when it created a special rainbow-painted pickup version of a Ford Ka.

The company is currently providing a training programme specific to sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and is also developing programmes and policies that will assist with the integration and smooth transition of transgender employees.

In 2001, Ford implemented Domestic Partnership Benefits, which provided same-sex couples with equal rights in all Ford policies (car schemes, international secondment, etc.) long before civil partnerships were legally recognised.

Ford Pride is one of a number of Ford employee resource groups, which include the Disability Support Group, Parental Network and Women in Ford.

Very Gay Raptor

Last year, Ford instinctively used its voice and its most badass nameplate to create the Very Gay Raptor; a stand against online discrimination and a showing of allyship of the LGBTQ+ community following a derogatory comment on a social media post.

The rendering of a Ford Ranger Raptor in sparkling gold adorned with rainbow graphics and pink heart on the rear received such a positive social media response, Ford made two real life Very Gay Raptors in the UK and Germany.

Quotes

“One thing I’m always fed up with is people saying ‘well, that doesn’t happen in 2022 because society has progressed and things have changed’. But the fact that we’re openly having this conversation is the reality of 2022 from lived experiences.”

Gareth Thomas, former Welsh rugby union player

“For me, toughness is often about being authentic to your emotions and what you’re experiencing and being able to show that in an open way with people.”

Charlie Martin, racing driver and transgender rights activist

“As a company, we actively champion all forms of diversity and are a committed and long-standing LGBTQ+ ally. The world is changing and there’s no place for discrimination of any kind, yet the message needs to be reinforced again and again. These videos are just another way to keep pushing the message but in a relatable and human way.”

Peter Godsell, vice president Human Resources, Ford Europe

Links

- Video: https://youtu.be/1_UmlurTCYc
- Hashtags: #FordPresentsToughTalks #LGBTQ+

About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company (NYSE: F) is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan, that is committed to helping build a better world, where every person is free to move and pursue their dreams. The company’s Ford+ plan for growth and value creation combines existing strengths, new capabilities and always-on relationships with customers to enrich experiences for and deepen the loyalty of those customers. Ford designs, manufactures, markets and services a full line of connected, increasingly electrified passenger and commercial vehicles: Ford trucks, utility vehicles, vans and cars, and

Lincoln luxury vehicles. The company is pursuing leadership positions in electrification, connected vehicle services and mobility solutions, including self-driving technology, and provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. Ford employs about 183,000 people worldwide. More information about the company, its products and Ford Motor Credit Company is available at corporate.ford.com.

Ford of Europe is responsible for producing, selling and servicing Ford brand vehicles in 50 individual markets and employs approximately 41,000 employees at its wholly owned facilities and consolidated joint ventures and approximately 55,000 people when unconsolidated businesses are included. In addition to Ford Motor Credit Company, Ford Europe operations include Ford Customer Service Division and 14 manufacturing facilities (10 wholly owned facilities and four unconsolidated joint venture facilities). The first Ford cars were shipped to Europe in 1903 – the same year Ford Motor Company was founded. European production started in 1911.

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