

07.18.19

THE 2020 CORVETTE STINGRAY: DESTINY ACHIEVED

SABRE Submission



THE OPPORTUNITY

When it was first launched in 1953, the Corvette became an instant icon. More than just another new car, it was a rolling symbol of new-world American ingenuity, style and excitement, capturing imaginations and buyers in ways beyond the wildest dreams of Chevrolet designers and engineers.

In its 65-plus years, the Corvette has enjoyed unequalled status among owners and enthusiasts around the world as America's Sports Car. A true icon with a legendary status, heritage and reputation, it transcended all but the most expensive supercar brands in the automotive universe.

Present-day perceptions of Corvette, however, have seen its prestige diminish among some members of the press and its fan base, due to relentless competition in the sports and supercar space over the last few decades. While purists still love the car, younger generations that place a premium on technology and innovation have tended to place European supercars with advanced mid-engine designs above it.

It was time for a change, a new direction. The Corvette needed to redefine itself.

That redefinition was revealed to the world on July 18, 2019. A Corvette unlike any other ever built, representing the most radical transformation in its long, storied history – changing from its traditional front-engine design to a new, advanced mid-engine configuration.

This launch, coming amidst an overall cultural change within Chevrolet, focusing on innovation and technology, was vitally important to enhancing and expanding the reach and reputation of the brand. Replacing such an icon with something so radically new and different was fraught with challenges for the brand. Everything about the messaging and the reveal event itself had to be bulletproof, on point and able to obliterate objections to be successful.

JULY 7, 2016

**“THE MID-ENGINE CORVETTE
IS A TERRIBLE IDEA.”**

THE DRIVE

JANUARY 30, 2019

**“WILL THE MID-ENGINE CORVETTE KILL
OFF THE CORVETTE WE KNOW AND LOVE?”**

CORVETTE
FORUM

WEBER
SHANDWICK



RESEARCH AND INSIGHT

While the all-new Corvette is superior to the previous models in almost every way, the potential for its legions of fans to be disappointed or even reject it based on preconceived notions was high. If there was any suggestion among fans and media that Chevrolet had ruined its most iconic vehicle, or just was following in the footsteps of its European competition, the launch would fail.

Chevrolet intended the new Corvette to be advanced, innovative and capable enough to place it within the ranks of the world's supercars – exactly where its original creators always intended it to be. But purists had to be convinced that the new vehicle was not only groundbreaking, but also authentic to the Corvette brand. And a new generation of buyers had to be convinced it would be better and more technologically advanced than anything else out there. Both audiences needed it to be attainable.

In order to prove its authenticity, we discovered a hidden nugget about the Corvette itself, something

only the most die-hard enthusiasts and owners might know about. It was that the Corvette's father, Zora Arkus-Duntov's original vision for the car was always a mid-engine configuration. The team knew this idea of the Corvette's "destiny achieved" had to be locked in before the launch.

It was decided to come out of the gate early and fast, so influential media and the enthusiast public would understand and accept that the Corvette was finally what it was always meant to be.

The goal was to dispel any doubts or myths about the car and its mid-engine configuration up front and as fully as possible before the launch efforts commenced. That way, by the time the car was actually revealed, attention would be focused on the Corvette's engineering and design features, horsepower and low, eye-opening starting price.





THE STRATEGY

Our mission was to elevate the Corvette from America's iconic sports car to the world's most attainable supercar.

To do so, we designed and implemented a cadenced integrated public relations and digital-driven campaign using earned outreach and a multi-channel social media approach to create buzz and suspense leading up to the July launch. The plan commenced in early April and built over the next four months. Earned coverage and social chatter helped deliver the message that the mid-engine design of the new Corvette was actually the product of decades of development to perfect the new vehicle.

This plan included a finely-tuned embargo strategy touching print, digital and broadcast to ensure the right media and influencers were engaged – and allowed access to the vehicle and executives – early. The pre-seeded storytelling with key automotive, lifestyle and national broadcast outlets helped secure deep stories at time of reveal.

The Corvette made its debut in a historic World War II dirigible hangar in California to allow for a blockbuster event for 1,400 reporters, celebrities, dealers and enthusiasts. The location was intentional: California has the largest concentration of Corvette fan groups, and their participation would amplify the excitement level. It was critical to deliver jaw-dropping information at the event itself, and get the information out simultaneously via a live webcast to facilitate the global conversation on social media.

To keep momentum going post-event, a unique cross-country consumer and dealership tour was announced and deployed. Immediately after reveal, consumers were also able to customize, visualize and pre-order their 2020 Corvette via a dealer.

EXECUTION AND TACTICS

These earned and digital tactics brought media and enthusiasts along for a fully integrated, four-month long, activation and content-packed journey before, during and after reveal day.

On April 11, 2019, we made an unexpected appearance with the camouflaged 2020 Corvette in New York City, confirming the reveal date: July 18, 2019.

Teaser videos with hidden news nuggets and rare historical photos followed for several weeks on social channels and in digital media. Fans and media reacted to embedded Zora references and mid-engine prototypes. These videos confirmed the mid-engine shift and kicked off an integrated PR/social media campaign that reinforced our “destiny achieved” storyline to keep Corvette on screens and top-of-mind.



On July 18, 2019, the new Corvette made its dramatic global entrance, seeming to drive off the 100-foot digital screen onto the stage following a powerful cinematic buildup.

As leadership described the vehicle, augmented reality highlighted its mid-engine configuration and key features, live at the event, and in a global webcast. Retired astronauts with an affinity for Corvette were included to emphasize innovation, draw design parallels between Corvette and aerospace design, and celebrate American ingenuity. The reveal was deliberately timed to the 50th anniversary of the moon landing. On the live, global webcast a “news ticker” crawl detailed important news and drove the conversation to Twitter, where Chevrolet replied to consumers with never-before-seen photos and videos.

At the same time, embargoed stories from lifestyle, tech and auto media began to appear online and gave technical insights about its radical new design and the shift to mid-engine configuration. People talked about the new look, compared it to Ferrari, called it a supercar and engaged in spirited conversations.

True to its “attainable performance” roots, it was announced at the end of the event that the new Corvette would start under \$60,000 USD. After the show, the audience explored the engineering and design expo on display, and chatted with executives, engineers and designers.

EFFECTIVENESS AND RESULTS

“THE NEW CORVETTE HAS BEEN UNVEILED AND IT IS READY TO TAKE ON FERRARI.”



“I’VE NEVER REALLY BEEN A CORVETTE GUY, BUT WHAT CHEVY PUT OUT IS UNDENIABLY COOL. THE ACURA NSX AND AUDI R8 ARE ALREADY ON SHAKY GROUND. THIS WILL PROBABLY PUT THOSE TWO OUT OF PRODUCTION.”

–jjp11, FerrariChat.com

“THE 2020 CHEVROLET CORVETTE ARRIVES WITH SUPERCAR SPECS AND A BARGAIN PRICE TAG.”



Our cross-channel PR approach ignited record levels of enthusiasm with media, influencers and social media driving high demand for pre-orders for the all-new Corvette and making reveal day the “most visited day” for Chevy.com in history, with 1.3 million total visits.

Backed by a heavy embargo and targeted pitch strategy, we earned:

- 1,500+ broadcast clips with 46.9 million in potential viewership
- 3,200+ online and print articles with a 51.1 million estimated earned reach
- A top discussion thread on Reddit (the 6th largest and most trafficked website in the U.S.)
- Homepage placement on Associated Press, Yahoo, CNET, Esquire and others

Media and influencers also published their own video reviews on YouTube, ushering in the next generation of Corvette enthusiasts and earning over 7.5 million views. One YouTuber streamed our event with live reactions, reaching an audience of 480,000 viewers.

On social media, we generated 22.5 million total impressions across Chevrolet’s owned channels and, during the reveal event, hit #5 on Twitter’s top U.S. trends.


Overall, our livestreamed press conference saw over 291,000 unique viewers from over 140 countries in attendance, with more than 110,000 replays and counting. It saw a higher audience than the Conan O’Brien show running during the same time slot.

Best of all, our earned program drove business results. Since July 18, 2019, we received more than 37,000 reservations from the Chevrolet.com “Pre-Order” functionality alone, on top of strong demand reported by our Dealer partners.

The Corvette team didn’t just start a conversation, it started a rush.

37,000+
RESERVATIONS FROM THE
CHEVROLET.COM “PRE-ORDER”
FUNCTIONALITY ALONE

4,700
BROADCAST, PRINT &
DIGITAL STORIES

 #5
TWITTER’S TOP
U.S. TRENDS

22.5M
TOTAL IMPRESSIONS
ACROSS CHEVROLET’S
OWNED SOCIAL CHANNELS

291K
UNIQUE LIVESTREAM VIEWERS

140
COUNTRIES

110K
REPLAYS & COUNTING

