



Ensuring the Commercial Customer is Not Forgotten

We're celebrating the two-year anniversary of the Experiences Per Mile Advisory Council with three new episodes of the Experiences Per Mile podcast featuring founding members of the Advisory Council.

This blog post summarizes episode 23 of the podcast where May Russell, Emerging Technologies Executive at Ford Motor Company, explains how Ford is using connectivity to improve the in-vehicle experience for commercial customers.

As an original member of the EPM Advisory Council, May decided to join the organization to continue to advocate for the importance of the customer mobility journey in and out of the vehicle. Not only are vehicles an essential service, but it is also a core part of millions of businesses globally that rely on vehicles in order to realize revenue. That's why Ford wants to be able to develop as many foundational and reasonable services both on and o board the vehicle to serve as many di erent types of vehicles, customers and use cases as it possibly can.

As you can imagine, the in-vehicle experience can di er for commercial customers versus retail customers. This is a passion point for May. "All customers are of equal importance, but we have to recognize their unique needs and their unique journeys that really facilitate and make their lives and businesses better," said May. "Commercial customers use their vehicle as a core part of their business. If the vehicle is not in operation, then their business is not generating revenue."

May explains that while the tenants are the same, such as driver safety, it takes a great deal more to scale in commercial. Part of that is because there are multiple stakeholders, including the fleet manager, the business owner, and the driver, which all result in di erent product and service needs.

In order for an automaker to ensure it is catering to the preferences of all key stakeholders, May says it's necessary to adopt design thinking from each perspective. "There is a wide variety of preferences across drivers, fleet managers and enterprise customers," said May. "And even within those across industries, needs vary. The only way to really uncover it is to partner with them and do customer-centric design in order to come up with the best possible value proposition."

The business opportunity for this part of the industry is significant because the right in-vehicle technology can help businesses run smoother. To ensure the commercial customer is not forgotten, Ford has a dedicated organization to commercial customer end-to-end experience and another for the commercial customer connectivity experience.

Looking ahead, May thinks the mobility space will require a great deal of collaboration and will shift significantly deeper into a completely seamless experience. From V2V communication, to electrification, to signal commonality, there is plenty of opportunity to seamlessly provide digital products and services to commercial customers. "For our commercial customers, it is absolutely crucial," said May. "Really being able to integrate productivity tools that businesses need in the vehicle is key, because for a driver and a small business, the vehicle is their office."