

# Ford Shifts Focus To Ricky Martin

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Entertainment Marketing & Communications International Ltd. of Stamford has a better idea for selling more Ford Motor Co. products - link the Big Three automaker with the most popular Latin singer in the world.

EMCI has arranged for Ford Focus to be the exclusive automotive sponsor of the Ricky Martin "Livin' La Vida Loca Fall Tour'99," which begins Oct. 20 in Miami. The company is scheduled to introduce its Ford Focus small car this fall.

"We saw an opportunity. The two would make an ideal pairing," said Robert Brissette, vice president of event marketing for EMCI. "It made sense for Ford Focus to speak directly to their target demographic that is associated with Ricky Martin. He is one of the world's hottest singers."

Brissette said EMCI worked with its clients and other contacts to get the Ford/Ricky Martin business. No stranger to celebrity hype and commerce, EMCI in past years arranged for actor/comedian Chevy Chase to plug Doritos Tortilla Thins chips, pop icon Michael Jackson to promote Pepsi and boxer George Foreman to push Frito Lay products.

"They are a pioneer in linking the music world with corporate America," said Mayer, publisher of the New York City based Entertainment Marketing Letter.

EMCI will try to ensure that concertgoers see signs and video images of the new Ford vehicle. "We hope we can get Ford on the video screens between the opening act and Ricky Martin's act," Brissette said.

Mayer said EMCI and publicly owned SFX Entertainment Inc. of New York City are leading players in the celebrity-marketing arena. SFX had 1998 revenues of \$884.3 million and employs 1,300 people EMCI, a private firm, does not disclose its revenues.

"EMCI has carved out a pretty good niche," said Jim Andrews, vice president of IEG Sponsorship Report a Chicago based biweekly newsletter it tracks corporate spending on sponsorship of sport events, concerts and cultural venues.

That spending will reach a projected 7.6 billion this year, up from \$6.8 billion in 1998, Andrews said. Corporations will spend about \$760 million, or 10 percent, this year to sponsor Music events. The remainder will finance sporting events, arts festivals, music tours and museum exhibits, he said.

Jay Coleman, EMCI's chief executive officer, founded the company in 1976 as Rockbill Inc., a music marketer. It became EMCI as its focus expanded. EMCI moved from New York City to Stamford in 1992.

EMCI employs about 20 people, the bulk of whom work in Stamford. It also has a small office in Manhattan.

During Martin's concerts, a Ford Focus will be on display and either Martin or his tour manager will be featured in up to three Ford Focus commercials, one to be produced in Spanish, according to Ford.

Tickets for Martin's 16-city tour as originally scheduled sold out in 30 minutes, prompting the addition of eight more concerts. Scheduled stops include: Miami, Philadelphia, Detroit, Houston, San Diego, San Jose, Calif., Tampa, Fla., New York, Dallas, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Atlanta, Chicago, San Antonio Texas, Los Angeles and Anaheim, Calif.

In addition to Ford Focus, other Martin tour sponsors are Pepsi and Emporio Armani.

Ford dealers in selected cities will sell prime tickets to Ricky Martin concerts. A national Ford Focus sweepstakes will select five winners who will meet Martin backstage at one of his concerts. Martin was nominated for six U.S. video music awards this year.

Ford expects to sell more than 300,000 Focus vehicles a year appealing to a diverse group of buyers, particularly the huge youth market.

