

Individual essay contest

**“Unity in Diversity: Russia and the English-Speaking World.
Time for Equal Opportunities”**

**“Ford Motor Company in the history of the USSR and modern Russia”
«Компания Форд в истории СССР и современной России»**

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Theses

Ford Motor Company in the history of the USSR and modern Russia

The history of the formation of the Russian automotive market is inseparable from the Ford brand – it was it that actually brought the culture of foreign car production to the country. The four letters in the brand name not only represent the last name of the creator but also characterize the company's policy in our country. **F - FIRST, O - OBSTINATE, R - RISK-READY, D - DEVELOPING.** Some historical facts, which can prove it:

1. 1920s – Ford returned to the Soviet Union, to a country where everything had changed: from the government and the system to the ideology. Doesn't this show Ford's **RISK-READY quality**?
2. In the spring of 1929 our government signed an agreement with Ford on technical assistance for the construction and commissioning of what was then a giant car plant in Nizhny Novgorod. Ford was the **FIRST** foreign brand to assist in the automotive industry of the USSR. During the construction of the plant, Ford even set up literacy classes. Isn't it an evidence of active involvement and assistance to the **DEVELOPMENT** of the USSR?
3. 1996 - Ford took a **RISK** again and was the **FIRST** foreign company to open a representative office in independent Russia. Ford is a really **OBSTINATE** company.
4. 2002 - Russia's **FIRST** foreign car production facility was launched in Vsevolozhsk.
5. 2011-2015 - Ford, together with Sollers, is actively **DEVELOPING** car production in Russia, opening plants in Yelabuga and Naberezhnye Chelny.
6. 2021 - "Sollers Ford" ramps up production and hires additional staff as a demand for Ford Transit increases.

Ford has gone through different stages of development in Russia, but its stardom in our country is yet to come, because such “**FIRST**”, “**OBSTINATE**”, “**RISK-READY**” and “**DEVELOPING**” company will never rest on its laurels.

Ford Motor Company in the history of the USSR and modern Russia.

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The four letters in the brand name not only represent the last name of the creator but also characterize the company's policy in our country.

F - FIRST, O - OBSTINATE, R - RISK-READY, D - DEVELOPING.

I suggest You to take a trip down the road of time in the USSR and Russia and I will prove to you that this is true.

1907 – Russian Empire. Ford appeared in Russia as far back as 1907. With the advertising and sale of Model T cars, Ford Motor Company sales offices appeared in St Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa and the Baltic port cities. From its Russian dealer, the American M.S. Friede, the company received regular reports of successful sales of Fords and their growing popularity. Buyers included the highest dignitaries of the empire, and at a motor rally organised by the War Ministry in 1912, the car won praise from Nicholas II. Ford was the **FIRST** foreign dealer in the Russian Empire.



Picture 1. Ford’s billboard 1911

USSR

1920s Return to the Soviet Union. When diplomatic and commercial bridges had not yet been established between the USA and the USSR in the twenties, the alienation river had to be crossed by someone. "Ford Motor Company started

selling us wheeled tractors as early as the early 1920s. Between 1924 and 1992, the Leningrad plant Krasny Putilovets made almost 40 thousand Fordson tractors, based on an American design.

To return to a country where everything had changed: from the government and the system to the ideology. Doesn't this show Ford's **RISK-READY** quality?



Picture 2. Tractor Fordson

31 May 1929 Ford and USSR agreement. By 1929 Ford cars were the majority in the car fleet of the USSR. In the spring of 1929 our government signed an agreement with Ford on technical assistance for the construction and commissioning of what was then a giant car plant in Nizhny Novgorod. It was to produce Ford-A cars and Ford-AA trucks. The contract was concluded for nine years. In addition, the company provided blueprints for two of its cars. Ford was the **FIRST** foreign brand to assist in the automotive industry of the USSR.

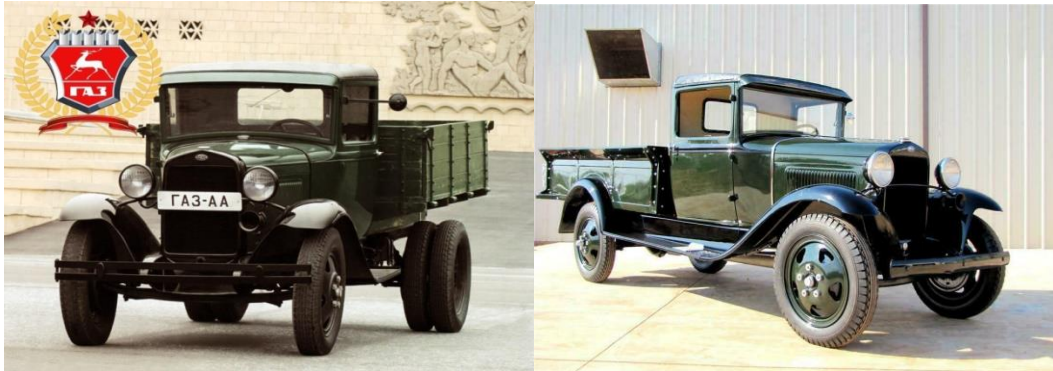
2 May 1930. The first stone was laid for the future V.M. Molotov Nizhny Novgorod Automobile Plant (NAZ). Locals from the outskirts of Nizhny Novgorod and peasants from starving villages came from all over the country to work on the construction. During the construction, Ford even set up literacy classes. Is this not evidence of active involvement and assistance to the **DEVELOPMENT** of the USSR? The car factory was built in just 18 months at a rapid pace.



Picture 3. The first car assembly plant in Nizhny Novgorod 1932

1 January 1932. The first car - GAZ-AA - came off the assembly line of the new

company, and in December of the same year production of GAZ-A with a phaeton body was established. It was the **FIRST** phaeton in Russia. The automobile plant continued to receive technical support from Ford Motor until 1935, when the contract was prematurely terminated by mutual agreement. During the period of cooperation, the parties signed contracts worth more than \$40 million. Another proof of Ford's **DEVELOPMENT** potential, isn't it?



Picture 4. GAZ-AA and Ford-AA

The Second World war. When our country entered the war with Nazi Germany, among 401 thousand vehicles, which the USSR received from the Allies under the Lend-Lease program, there were many Ford cars. Among them there were jeeps GPW (similar to Willys), amphibians GPA, trucks 2G8T, four-wheel drive trucks WOT8 and armored vehicles M8 - so solid, reliable vehicles, which veterans still remember with gratitude. Such assistance contributed markedly to the victory in the Second World War.



Picture 5. WOT8

Late 1940s and early 1950s. A period of "medievalism" in relations with Ford Motor Company and the US automotive industry in general.

1959 – a breakthrough in the relationship – the American National Exhibition in Moscow. Ford cars featured prominently amongst its vast display of automobiles. And the visitors showed great interest in them, as if they were meeting someone they knew well. Such a brave act to take part in an exhibition held inside an iron

curtain-covered Soviet Union deserves respect.

Later on, Henry Ford Y, grandson of the founder of the famous company, came here twice on a business trip. He brought proposals for business cooperation with our car factories, but time was not yet conducive to joint projects. I suppose that it was so **OBSTINATE** action from Ford.



Picture 6. Exhibition 1959, Moscow

Russia

1990s. A new stage in the development of Russia's business relations with American firms, among which our motorists invariably singled out Ford Motor Company. Its cars were demonstrated at the International Automobile Exhibition MIMS-92 at the All-Russia Exhibition Centre in August 1992. At the annual Russian motor shows, Ford's exposition became more and more extensive with every year.

March 1996. The official return of the brand to Russia. Just as in the 1930s, Ford took a **RISK** and was the **FIRST** foreign company to open a representative office in independent Russia in 1996. The **FIRST** dealership was opened in Moscow. Ford is a very **OBSTINATE** company, it was its third appearance in Russia.



Picture 7. The first dealership in Moscow

July 2002. In Vsevolozhsk, Russia's **FIRST** foreign car production facility was launched, and the localised Ford Focus became the absolute market leader in foreign cars for many years. The rules were written under Ford. This was a shock for Russians: the plant began to produce affordable and modern cars, with prices starting at \$11,500. Nothing like that was offered by any of the competitors at the time.

2006. In terms of passenger car sales, Ford becomes **the absolute market leader** among foreign brands in Russia for the first time.

2011. Ford Sollers has been established, which opens the brand's second plant in Elabuga, where production of the Ford Kuga crossover, Ford Explorer SUV and Ford Transit commercial vehicles starts in 2012.



Picture 8. The plant in Naberezhny Chelny

June 2015. Another Ford Sollers production site is the Naberezhnye Chelny plant, where production of the Ford EcoSport crossover and the Ford Fiesta family of compacts starts. Ford continued the DEVELOPMENT of the automotive industry in our country.

2019. Ford Motor Company has announced a restructuring of the brand's European division. The brand's passenger car division in Russia has also been downsized. But as founder Henry Ford said: "Failure only gives an excuse to start again and smarter. Honest failure is not shameful. What is shameful is the fear of failure."

Present: Now "Sollers Ford" sells a range of light trucks and vans as well as minibuses based on the Ford Transit, which are still produced at the plant in Yelabuga. It also continues to operate an extensive network of more than a hundred dealers in the country, which not only sells commercial vehicles, but also carries out all maintenance and warranty services for the brand's passenger cars. To this day, Ford remains a significant vehicle brand in Russia; the Ford Transit and

Ford Tourneo Custom commercial vehicles are the most popular in their class in Russia.

Ford has gone through different stages of development in Russia, there have been ups and downs, successes and failures. I believe that the finest hour of this brand in our country is yet to come, because such **FIRST** in everything, **OBSTINATE**, **RISK-READY** and **DEVELOPING** company will never stop at what it has achieved. Russia is once again in waiting mode for reliable, comfortable, affordable Ford cars...

List of literature

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