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# What Carwash Customers Want

■ Car Care World Expo Preview ■ When Disaster Strikes



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# ICA Launches Car Love Campaign

It is common knowledge that Americans love their cars. The International Carwash Association (ICA) confirmed that fact in a recent survey. As expected, a vast majority of respondents-84 percent-said they feel affection or emotion for their cars. What was surprising was that despite that they claim to feel car love; they certainly don't practice it by taking better care of them.

The results were startling. Although 62 percent of car owners believe car appearance is essential, 52 percent of car owners wash

containing factual and entertaining information and tips about professional car washes, car care services and their benefits. The purpose of the Web site is to be a powerful tool to educate consumers and serve as the central informational hub for the PR campaign.

To keep with the theme, the campaign was launched on Valentine's Day with the premier of [www.CarLove.org](http://www.CarLove.org). In addition, the Car Love spokesperson Courtney Caldwell of *American Woman Road and Travel* magazine participated in a radio media tour

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their cars less than once a month-and 16 percent never wash their vehicles. This translates into 73 million grimy automobiles across the nation.

In order to better educate consumers about the importance of caring for their vehicle's appearance, ICA has embarked on an unprecedented national consumer public relations campaign. To accomplish their goal, ICA hired Ketchum, a global public relations agency, to develop the strategy. Ketchum was tasked by the ICA to educate consumers about the benefits professional car washes and detailing services offer from a financial, emotional and environmental perspective.

Because the survey results emphasized Americans' love for their cars, Ketchum titled the public relations campaign "Car Love." At the heart of the campaign is the new Web site [www.CarLove.org](http://www.CarLove.org). The Web site is an online resource

covering over 20 markets and a satellite media tour covering 25 markets. Car Love sponsored Metro Traffic on radio in the New York, Los Angeles and Chicago markets over the Valentine's Day weekend.

ICA was energized by the initial success. "Though the campaign will be a year-long effort, it was great to see such nice progress so soon," said ICA Executive Director Mark Thorsby. "I hope that this indicates that our message has struck a chord with the driving public and that the campaign will continue to build momentum and hopefully, in the long run, lead to more cars being professionally washed."

The campaign has already recorded an impressive hit list. According to ICA Director of Marketing Jeff Mitchell, Car Love has received print coverage in the *New York Post*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Chicago Sun-Times* and the *Peoria Journal-Star*.

The goal of the new Car Love public relations campaign is to educate the public about the advantages of having their vehicles professionally washed.





The campaign was also featured on the morning news in markets across the country including Denver, Minneapolis, Philadelphia and Dallas. On the radio, Car Love received coverage in New York on WCBS and in Chicago with the popular WTMX morning hosts, Eric and Kathy. Mitchell said media blasts will continue throughout the year.

The idea of having a campaign is not new. "ICA has long been considering a national advertising or public relations campaign, but until this time, there were some roadblocks that needed to be overcome by both ICA and the industry," Mitchell said. "For




example, we needed to get our environmental (water usage and waste water) facts straight so that it could complement the message about why a professional

car wash is superior to driveway washing. ICA's environmental efforts over the past two years have enabled us to state, without question, that a professional car wash is more environmentally friendly than a wash in a driveway."

With the success of the launch of the PR campaign, ICA would like to expand on it. "We're hoping to leverage the power of local public relations as well," said Thorsby. "Participation at the local level will be crucial to the overall campaign's success."

There are many different ways operators can participate in the campaign and membership in ICA is not a requirement. "As an industry focused membership organization, ICA has sponsored this program for the good of the industry as a whole...not just our members," Mitchell said. "At the end of the day what benefits the industry will benefit ICA members."

ICA will be sponsoring a Car Love session at this year's Car Care World Expo in Las Vegas to show operators how they can leverage the Car Love campaign in their local markets. In the meantime, operators can download the Car Love press release from [www.CarCareCentral.com](http://www.CarCareCentral.com), personalize it for their business and submit it to their local media. ICA is also working on a press kit that will be made available for operators to use as well as some potential premium items that will tie into the Car Love theme. 

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