

How to Talk About EVs Part 2: Changing the Conversation



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Electric vehicles (EVs) surpassed 9% of all new cars sold in the second quarter of 2023 and analysts expect they'll pass 50% of new cars sold in the US by 2030. One thing is certain: the EV future is here. That's because EVs are better to drive and far less expensive to fuel and operate. The only question is who will build them.

American automakers have stepped up to the plate. Supported by billions in federal investment, US autos are scaling up EV production to meet growing global demand. Expanding US EV manufacturing makes American companies more competitive with their Chinese peers, whose decades of investment in EV manufacturing have made them the global leader in production.

Still, some Americans have concerns and worry about limited charging infrastructure and reliability. Others fear that attempting to compete with China's significant market share is a futile effort. And autoworkers, especially union workers, are concerned about what this transition means for their livelihoods in America's most prominent manufacturing sector.

How can communicators talk about the benefits of the EV transition, while taking the concerns of their audience seriously? We've got tips below to respond to common questions and help more Americans understand the benefits of the EV transition.

Topline Message

- Electric cars are about to become the standard for drivers around the globe.
- Unless we expand domestic EV manufacturing, the US risks losing a strategic industry to a global competitor and the 4 million jobs—including at least 150,000 union jobs at the Big Three—that come with it.
- American leadership in EV technology is how we protect these jobs in the long term, create new opportunities for American workers, and position our businesses to compete with China for a massive global market

Reality Check: EVs and American Labor

EVs are gaining market share in the US and across the globe, and, as noted above, their dominance is largely inevitable at this point. US investments in EV manufacturing are, therefore, not just about environmental benefits but also about maintaining and growing jobs in auto manufacturing and related sectors.

The US auto industry is responsible for more than **4 million jobs, with more than 150,000 union workers at GM, Ford, and Stellantis**. By investing in EV manufacturing and onshoring other parts of the supply chain, we can keep those jobs in the US and create new opportunities for American companies and their workers.

We have the opportunity to ensure the EV transition grows American jobs, both in existing union-led fields like auto manufacturing and in new industries, like battery manufacturing.

Third Way's [analysis](#) shows that battery and powertrain manufacturing alone will contribute to an astounding **35,000 jobs annually from now until 2050**. That's a massive increase that brings new opportunities for American workers to secure stable employment, and negotiate better benefits and better working conditions.

This is a point of transition for the US auto industry—as ongoing negotiations between the United Auto Workers and the “Big Three” have shown. But this moment also represents an opportunity to ensure the EV transition maintains the role of union labor in American manufacturing while keeping US companies competitive.

Reality Check: EVs and China

Almost two decades of massive government subsidies have helped China dominate the EV supply chain and they now produce more than 50% of the world's electric vehicles. Some Republican lawmakers [have said](#) that's insurmountable and a reason for the US to throw in the towel on EVs and stick to making internal combustion engine vehicles.

To us, that argument rings false.

This is the moment for the United States to lean in and grow its manufacturing sector by clawing back market share from China. Their lead is not permanent and, [as research from Third Way shows](#), the U.S. is well-positioned to expand its market share in various sectors of the EV supply chain and develop new areas of expertise. US auto companies see opportunity in EVs, and, as a result, they've bet big on EV manufacturing.

Expanding EV manufacturing in America isn't capitulating to China, it's competing with them. And we're well positioned to succeed.

Through federal investments, tax credits and strong domestic content rules, the Biden Administration has laid the foundation for a strong domestic EV supply chain, one that is not reliant on countries like China or Russia for critical

materials. Building this supply chain here in the US will create tens of thousands of jobs over the next three decades while reducing our reliance on our adversaries.

And it's already working.

In the 24 months since battery production incentives went into effect, the United States went from virtually no domestic battery cell manufacturing to a fast-growing industry, with new domestic projects announced almost weekly. It's a good reminder of America's ability to use government investments to mobilize the private sector and create economic opportunity. It's that same ability that will help us succeed and lead the global EV transition.

Looking for more on EVs? [Click here](#) to read **How to Talk About Electric Vehicles Part One**.

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