

HAPPILY EVER AFTER...



Ford is trying to break the impression that its service costs are high with its 'Feels like Family' campaign. So we took our long-term Figo Aspire in for some TLC to find out what a customer really faces at a Ford Service Centre.

Words and Photography: RAHUL KAPOOR

We Indians are heavily influenced by the affordability and availability of spare parts in our decision to buy a new vehicle. Unfortunately, for Ford India, customers have formed the impression that their cars are high maintenance.

Over the years, Ford has realised that in order to be successful in India, this

preconceived notion about the brand has to be broken. So they've set about addressing the issue by breaking down many of the components in their vehicles into smaller sub assembly parts that are cheaper to buy and replace. For example, the new Figo and Figo Aspire have a bouquet of close to 850 parts that are available as sub assembly repairs.

Ford has also appointed authorised parts

dealers across the country, so you don't necessarily have to go to a dealer for genuine parts. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, in order to ensure absolute transparency, they've put a service cost calculator online for every car in their portfolio.

Being an owner of a Ford since 2011, I never really felt that their service was expensive – but I will concede that changing

faulty components for my beloved Figo is a relatively costly affair. But now Ford claims that their service and maintenance is actually the most affordable in the market. And since we had a Figo Aspire in our long-term test fleet, which was due for service, I took it to their service centre at Moti Nagar in Delhi to see how affordable it really is.

At the service centre, after a 10-minute wait for a service bay to open up, our Aspire was summoned to the lift – following which I was greeted by Kunal, my service engineer. He got right to work, with a quick check of all the electrical components. With everything functioning, and in order, he moved on to the engine bay. A quick clean of the air filter housing, and replacement of the air filter and engine oil filter, the car was then lifted to drain the engine oil.

With the engine now sorted, Kunal moved on to check the condition of the wheels. Tyre treads seemed alright and a quick inspection revealed that the bearings too were in order.

But, on checking the brakes, he noticed that the front pads were nearing the end of their life while the rear drums were fine. Kunal claimed the car could manage another 3-4,000 kilometres, but we decided to swap them out for new pads right away just to be on the safe side. After a quick underbody inspection, and the wheels back in place, the car was finally taken off the lift. With the engine oil topped up, the battery was then inspected and awarded a clean bill of health. The car was then sent for wheel balancing and alignment, an ECU diagnostic check and then off for a quick test drive by the service manager – accompanied by yours truly. As the final checks were completed and the car was sent for a thorough cleaning, the invoice arrived.

Even though Ford's online service calculator estimated the cost of service, brake pads and labour to be ₹6,770 inclusive of all taxes, the invoice I received was just ₹5,613. The reason for this price

difference could be down to the fact that brake and clutch fluid replacement, which was included in the online calculator, was not required. But with under 20,000 kilometres on the odometer, it did seem like the brake pad change was a bit premature. Perhaps the fact that this is a press car explains this anomaly – since it's been driven by some pretty lead-footed drivers for the majority of its existence. In the case of my own Figo, the front pads typically last in the range of 35-40,000 kilometres.

All said and done, it does seem like Ford India has addressed the main chink in their armour. This is a step in the right direction for Ford in the Indian market – the only problem is that first impressions are lasting. Suffice to say, it'll take some time for a real change in the mind-set of Indian customers. The only thing Ford can do is continue to consistently provide a service experience such as the one we received with our long term Figo Aspire. **FXI**



FORD FIGO ASPIRE 1.5 TDCI 20,000km SERVICE COST

ENGINE OIL FILTER	₹354.76
ENGINE AIR FILTER	₹200.87
GASKET DRAIN PLUG FOR OIL SUMP	₹41.18
ENGINE OIL (3.8 LITRES)	₹1,116.60
WINDSHIELD WASH FLUID	₹55.80
FRONT BRAKE PAD	₹1,406.98
TOTAL PARTS COST	₹3,176.19
SERVICE LABOUR COST	₹1,725.00
FRONT BRAKE PAD REPLACEMENT LABOUR COST	₹49.00
TOTAL LABOUR COST	₹1,774.00
TOTAL TAX	₹663.15
TOTAL COST OF SERVICE	₹5,613.00

