

Kathleen Seibel
MKT 435
Internet Watch
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“The Inside Story of BMW’s Cyber-Cinema Ads”

Technology is changing everyday and it increasingly offers marketers new ways to market their ideas. The article that I read is about BMW’s new cyber-cinema advertisements. BMW realized there was an opportunity to promote their brand in a unique way. The company has incorporated a series of short films into their website. These films were created to entertain their customers along with informing them about the different cars that BMW offers. Each film features a different BMW car and the films are designed to show what it is like behind the wheel of that particular car. The purpose of these films is to portray BMW as a “cool” and “likeable” brand.

BMW wanted to find a way to entertain their customers along with promoting their brand. The short films that they produced feature stars such as Madonna, Mickey Rourke, and Stellan Skarsgaard. The films are backed by traditional marketing campaigns such as TV, print and Web ads, and viral marketing. The company felt that the Web provided a cost-efficient way to reach its core market and it would also create much interest. Moreover, researchers have found that 85 percent of buyers have researched their car purchase on the Web before ever stepping foot into a showroom (Vagnoni, 2001). BMW claims that these films have been downloaded 6 million times; this figure does not include repeat viewings. Moreover, in the month of June 856,000 visitors spent an average of 16 minutes on the site. This figure is impressive in today’s fast-paced

environment. This means that the customer was exposed to the brand about 15 minutes longer than they would have been if they were merely watching TV. This statistic could indicate the future of traditional advertising.

The first concept that this article addresses is positioning/targeting. BMW is trying to position themselves as a brand that is “cool” and “likeable”. Moreover, the company wants to veer away from their image as a brand that is owned by arrogant, “yuppies”. The characters in these films are strong, confident, and rebellious. These characters portray the image that BMW is trying to achieve. By positioning themselves this way, BMW is targeting a more youthful and trendy market. Moreover, because of the nature of these high-suspense, action-packed films, I feel that BMW is gearing these films more towards men. These movies have high energy and target people that have that same energy or appreciate that energy. It is because of these characteristics that BMW is segmenting men who are hard working, overachieving, and who are a part of a fast-paced environment. Usually these men have high incomes and are very work-oriented thus they can afford the BMW brand. Furthermore, these men are well educated and are more Internet savvy. Moreover, they definitely have access to these films. I feel that BMW has effectively repositioned their brand to target this particular market.

A second concept that this article addresses is market opportunity. BMW wanted to position their brand differently in the eyes of their consumers. The company realized that there was an opportunity to promote their brand in a new and unique form. Moreover, BMW realized that they could promote their brand in an entertaining way. It is important for a company to stay on top of their competition and one way a company can do this is by creating a unique promotional campaign. BMW took actions to seed

this opportunity and created a short series of web films. By taking initiative and acting on this opportunity, BMW was able to create a high valued customer experience. They were able to create a Web advertisement that was as entertaining as a traditional TV advertisement. This type of marketing could be the new wave of the future.

A third concept that this article addresses is customer experience. Companies want to create a unique and positive experience for their customers. BMW has created such an experience by providing a unique form of entertainment to inform their customers and to also enhance their awareness. This site engages their customer's sensory experience by providing a visual film along with narration. By incorporating intense visuals along with narrated sound, it creates a more intense experience for the customer. Furthermore, BMW's intent is that their customer's cognitive reaction is that the site is exciting and entertaining. Moreover, BMW wants their customer's emotional reaction to be that the brand is "cool" and fun. BMW enhanced their customer's experience by showing what a BMW car can do in the most extreme situations and the suspense kept viewer's interested for more. BMW wants consumer's to perceive their experience as being fun and exciting. Moreover, they want this experience to bleed-over into the customer's image of the brand.

Personal Evaluation:

I feel that this article addresses a very important issue, the capabilities of Web-marketing. I thought that it was very impressive that BMW reported that 856,000 people visited their site in the month of June, and spent an average of 16 minutes on the site. This amount of time is much longer than a TV commercial. I think that if all companies

could find a way to advertise their brand, while also creating a high level of entertainment, they too could spark such an interest.

Another interesting statistic in this article was that 6 million people have reportedly downloaded these films. This site has obtained a great deal of attention from the media and the statistics are a result of that. These statistics are why marketers must find ways to stay ahead of their competition. BMW saw the opportunity to market their product in a new way and they did. In all honesty, these films even altered my perception of the brand. I watched the film that Madonna appeared in and I definitely think that seeing a star like her in a BMW ad has many rewards. I think that BMW has definitely accomplished their goal in making the brand look “cool”. These films definitely portrayed the “cool guy” image. The only concern that I have is if car shoppers are looking to inform themselves are they really going to care about watching a film? I wonder who those 6 million people were that downloaded BMW’s films. I would have to guess that many of those people were not looking to buy a BMW. On the other hand, BMW has achieved its goal; they portrayed their brand as a “cool” brand and they have enhanced consumer’s awareness.

Reference:

Vagnoni, A. (2001, July 23). The inside story of BMW's cyber-cinema ads, Advertising Age. Pgs. 10&12.