

TITLE OF CASE STUDY: Audi A6 Intelligent Road

CHALLENGE

Sell more for more

Audi is on a roll. The brand has successfully launched the A5, A4 and Q5. Brand metrics have hit all-time highs. Sales records continually have been broken. And the brand has made significant market share gains. But the work to establish Audi as a true player in the luxury car market wasn't done. The next challenge we faced was moving the brand up market – selling bigger cars at higher prices.

A critical component to this success was the launch of the all-new Audi A6. Breaking into the C-Segment (the mid-size luxury sedan segment) is a challenging task. For years the Mercedes E-Class has sold 4 times as many cars and the BMW 5 Series has sold more than 3 times as many cars.

The A6 is not new to the U.S., but in the past the car has struggled to gain a stronghold. The product was strong – it was recognized over and over by automotive journalists to be the best of the segment – but the brand didn't have the luxury presence or cachet to support the price point.

The good news for us was that in a make or break segment, we now had the right car at the right time. The appearance had gotten bolder, the automotive press recognized it and awareness, consideration, opinion and purchase intent for the brand were at all-time highs. Audi was ready to make its mark in the C-Segment.

RESEARCH

The Initial discovery

When we looked at the daunting challenge of breaking into the C-Segment and taking on the BMW 5 Series and Mercedes E-Class we realized that we needed to learn more about what it is that drives people in this segment. Our first step was to dig into the Strategic Vision New Vehicle Experience Study, which gave us insight into purchase motivations and behaviors. What we found is that the C-Segment is one built on Prestige and Brand Reputation. And the E-Class and 5 Series embody what people believe Mercedes and BMW are all about.

As we dug into the data deeper, we uncovered a fact that made our challenge seem a bit more daunting – shopping in the C-Segment was non-existent. When people bought a 5 Series or an E-Class, their propensity to cross-shop dropped substantially. In fact, when they bought their car over

one-third of 5 Series owners didn't consider another car and for E-Class the number who didn't consider was over 40%



Source: Strategic Vision New Vehicle Experience Study, 2010

Getting beneath the surface

In order to get insight into the deep commitment of the BMW 5 Series and Mercedes E-Class and to understand what it was that made these two vehicles the prestige leaders in the segment, we needed to find a research approach that got beyond surface reasons. To do this we employed hypnosis focus groups – this let us get into the respondent's subconscious and get to their true reasons for making decisions.

A key component of this research was a regression exercise. We had respondents take us back to their first encounter with Mercedes or BMW. And while most of these encounters happened in their childhood and teenage years, all of the now middle-aged drivers remembered vividly their first encounters with these cars. BMW and Mercedes had made an imprint that has stayed with them to this day. BMW and Mercedes were something special, something unlike other cars they'd seen and something that they wanted to be a part of. At the point that these desires and aspirations for Mercedes and BMW were being shaped Audi had no presence in the luxury market.

After the regression exercise we brought them back to their present-day motivations, perceptions and behaviors when it came to buying luxury cars. What we learned was that most of these people saw themselves as experienced luxury buyers. They have owned luxury cars for years and are surrounded by them in their social circles. They see the ubiquity of their cars as a sign of success and a signal that they belonged – and in fact found it funny that they sometimes couldn't find their car in the golf club parking lot because there were so many of them. This has caused them to become apathetic and disengaged with what was going on in the luxury car market. Essentially it has led to a belief that there was no point in really shopping when looking for a new car because there couldn't be anything better out there. And it didn't help Audi, that the Mercedes and BMW dealers were great at taking advantage of their loyal customer base and would make it incredibly easy to move from one car to another.

STRATEGY

New leaders require new tools

We realized the way to launch the A6 was to connect with the progressive mindset of these consumers and use this as a way to draw them out of their entrenched and close-minded approach to buying cars. We leaned into the fact that these consumers were informed, intelligent and forward thinking, creating a campaign that offered a point of view on the world. This just didn't translate to their car buying behavior.

While they weren't all entrepreneurs, they did all have an entrepreneurial mindset that applied to the work that they did. And they saw themselves as thought-leaders in their respective careers. Whether it was in coming up with new types of insurance or being the financial advisor that was offering people solutions in a down economy – these people saw themselves as driving the ever-changing world.

And in their quest to always stay ahead, they were looking for tools. We found that the A6 aligned with this perfectly, as it is the most intelligent car on the road. Our goal was to help bring their forward-thinking outlook into their car purchases.

In an ever-changing world, Audi believes that new leaders require new tools in the modern success story. And the A6 is the car for those who drive progress.

CAMPAIGN

The road is now an intelligent place

Audi launched the A6 in the fall of 2011 with a campaign that focused on making the road a more intelligent place. The campaign called out the frustrations of driving on America's roads and positioned Audi and the A6 as part of the solution. The campaign worked to reach progressive-minded drivers who were looking for a brand and a car that matched their mindset.

The campaign was centered on the idea that the road is not exactly a place of intelligence. You read about it. You hear about it in the news. You witness it every day on your commute. Which is exactly why Audi engineered the highly intelligent new Audi A6 – built to combat whatever “genius-ness” the road throws its way. The TV worked to shed some light on the current state of unintelligent roads and drivers, offering up a solution in the new Audi A6 – a technologically advanced car that makes 2,000 decisions every second. This work ran in high-profile media environments with a focus on Sunday programming, including morning news shows and “*Sunday Night Football*”. Sunday was chosen because we learned that our target spends more time with media on Sunday than the rest of the week.

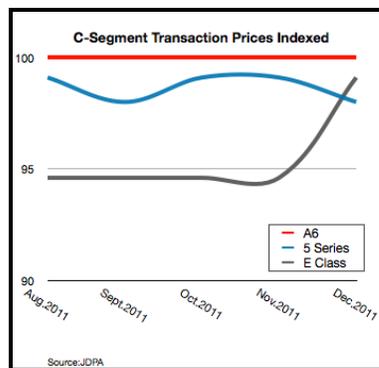
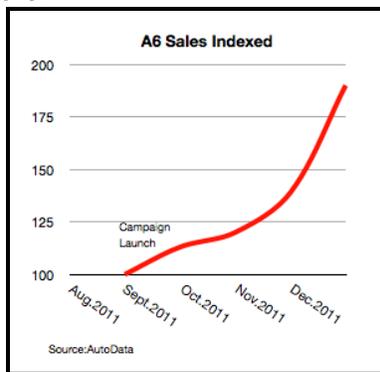
Print that ran in newspapers such as The New York Times brought to life the features that help make the A6 the most intelligent car on the road – highlighting product features such as Audi connect and Audi Drive Select flanked with facts that spoke to the barriers and frustrations that drivers faced on the road. OOH brought the message to key markets including LA, Miami and New York, with statements about the drivers and road conditions in those markets.

This was complemented by the Road Frustration Index that was created in partnership with the SENSEable City Lab at MIT. This index gave consumers insight into the level and cause of frustration where they lived and insight into how to help overcome some of these frustrations on the road. The index also linked to sources – including Waze, SeeClickFix and Roadify – that allowed consumers to report road issues, be alerted to accidents or other hazards, and offered helpful tips such as where to find affordable gas. The goal of this was to bring consumers together to help make the road a bit more intelligent.

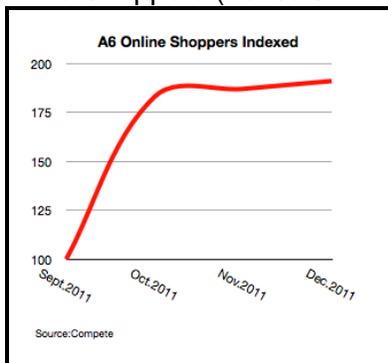
RESULTS

The campaign was a success on multiple levels: model, consumer and brand. With a record number of A6's now on the American roadways, the road is now a more intelligent place.

Model: from its launch more A6's were sold (+53%, Source: AutoData) at transaction price higher than its competitors (source: JDPA). We accomplished our number 1 objective of selling more for more.



Consumer : we shook people out of their entrenched car shopping behaviors, as we saw a rise in Online Shoppers (+52% Source: Compete)



Brand: during the course of the campaign there was a lift across core brand metrics.

Audi Brand Metrics	% of change pre and post campaign
Awareness	+1.3%
Overall Opinion	+4%
Excellent Opinion	+5.1%
Purchase Consideration	+3.4%
1-year Intentions	+7%

Source: gfk