

AdRelevance Intelligence

Are Customers Getting the Message?

Examining Messaging Strategies in the Automotive Industry

August 9, 1999

The automotive industry is wasting no time in taking advantage of the power of the World Wide Web in reaching its audience.

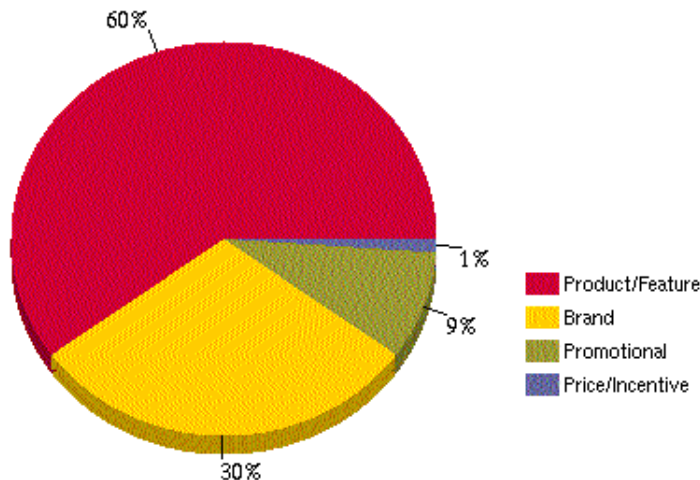
AdRelevance Intelligence has analyzed a full array of banner advertisements placed by all automotive manufacturers for the month of June, 1999. While traditional product/feature messages dominated during the month with 60% of all impressions, a full quarter of all banner impressions focused on building brand equity. Future AdRelevance Intelligence reports will monitor which manufacturers are seeking to emulate traditional media messages on the Web, in contrast to those who are developing brand messages uniquely for the Web audience.



Key findings in this report:

- Product/Feature Messages Dominate
- Online Branding is Alive and Well
- Buick Loves Promotions
- Price/Incentive Messages Out of Favor

Product/Feature Messages Dominate



Message Type	Impressions
Product/Feature	43,000,000
Brand	21,000,000
Promotional	6,500,000
Price/Incentive	660,000

Automotive advertisers are using a wide array of online messaging strategies. The tried and true product/feature message is most popular. Sixty percent of all banner impressions during the month of June simply showcased a specific make or model without mentioning a price, incentive or promotion. The BMW 3 series racked up 11 million impressions with this basic strategy, followed by Pontiac Bonneville, Mitsubishi Eclipse and Toyota Tundra.



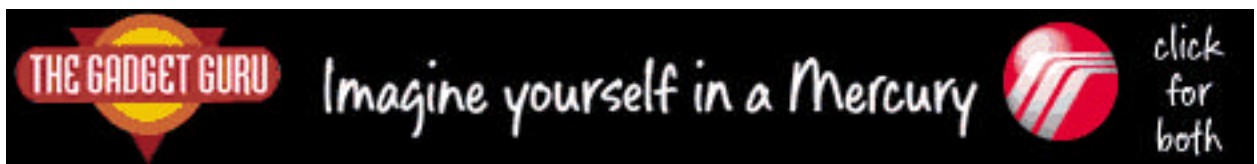
Online Branding is Alive and Well

Manufacturers also devoted a full 30% of banner impressions to building overall brand equity via online advertising. Some brand messages carry over from traditional media, like the "Ford Racing" campaign. But other campaigns are taking a new approach specially tailored to the online world. Some of these campaigns leverage database access capabilities unique to the Internet forum. Common applications include subscribing to a brochure mailing list, building a customized option package and finding a local dealer. A prominent example is the "Get a Quote" campaign by Dodge and Chrysler. Their sites enable potential customers to submit a request for a personalized quote that is then routed to a certified local dealer.



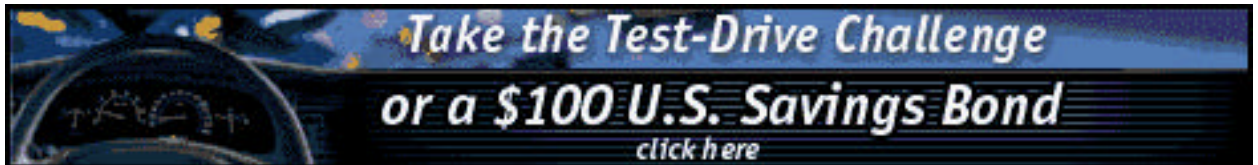
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Mercury makes use of a different Internet phenomenon by leveraging the endorsement of an online celebrity, the Gadget Guru. As part of this co-branding arrangement, Mercury has a fixed button on the Gadget Guru site, sponsors the "Imagine This" column, and provides a link back to www.gadgetguru.com from the "Cool Stuff" section of its own corporate site.



Buick Loves Promotions

Although the promotional message strategy garnered only 9% of impressions overall, it found a fervent advocate in Buick. Seventy-five percent of Buick's total banner impressions this month were dedicated to promotions ranging from free gifts to sweepstakes to contests:



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- Test Drive Challenge
- 45 Cars in 45 Days Giveaway
- 2000 LeSabre Win a Golf Course Sweepstakes
- Family of the Century Essay Contest
- Regal Supercharged Lives Sweepstakes
- Regal \$1,000,000 Supercharged Shootout
- Taste of Park Avenue Sweepstakes

All told, Buick ran 31 promotional banners amassing over 4.3 million impressions during the month of June.

Price/Incentive Messages Out of Favor

Price/Incentives messages were remarkably rare this June. A scant 1% of impressions gave a list price, set a reduced APR, provided a cash allowance or offered some other sort of discount. Oldsmobile was the only advertiser running a price/incentive campaign that registered over a half million impressions. Perhaps as the '99 model year draws nearer to a close more manufacturers will employ price/incentive messages to turn over outdated inventory and jump start sales of the millennium models.



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The AdRelevance Service provides advertisers, agencies and publishers with marketing intelligence that tells them when, where and how the competition is communicating on the Web. If you are looking for a service that enables you to better plan, place, develop and execute your online communications programs, call AdRelevance toll-free at 1.877.884.5083 or visit us at www.adrelevance.com.