



Case Study:

Micro Level Segmentation & Grassroots Development

Background:

An automotive manufacturer engaged R.L. Repass & Partners, Inc. to conduct micro level segmentation research (micro targeting) and test grassroots concepts. Analysis from this research was used as inputs for the development of a grassroots campaign to “bring cars to people.” Specifically, the client organization was interested in increasing the volume of test drives of one of its brands and specific new vehicle models within the brand’s portfolio. The hypothesis to be tested was that increased exposure to the brand outside of a traditional dealer environment, combined with paid and earned media, would increase positive opinion and purchase consideration. The research findings were used to identify micro targets and refine grassroots concepts, messaging and offers to increase awareness in and perception of the brand, as well as purchase consideration.

Research Objectives:

The primary objectives of this research program were to identify:

1. What were the attitudes, lifestyle characteristics, demographics, and influences on consideration and selection of the client’s brand and new models?
2. What factors were most likely to impact perceptions and influence consideration of the client’s new models relative to the consumer’s competitive set of vehicles?
3. What grassroots initiatives and offers were most likely to enhance opinion, consideration, and a triggering event?
4. What messaging concepts were most likely to break through and impact consumer perceptions of the client brand versus the competitive set?



5. What events and other non-traditional activities were most likely to appeal to targeted buyers at the grassroots level?
6. What types of influencers were most likely to impact perception and consideration?
7. What direct channels are best for reaching these micro targets (events, direct communication, direct mail, Internet, buzz/WOM, specialized email, etc.)?

Methodology

To achieve the research objectives, both qualitative and quantitative research was conducted. Focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted in seven U.S. markets with consumers, influencers and automotive dealers. Following the focus group research and in-depth interviews, quantitative research was conducted with a national sample and with over quotas in the seven targeted markets. Qualified respondents were consumers planning an automotive purchase within the next 24 months. An oversample of past buyers of the client's brand was also included in the sampling frame. In addition, transactional data related to past purchase of the client's brand and competitive brands was included in the analysis to define micro targets and potential effectiveness of grassroots concepts.

Findings & Action Taken

Each market tested up to eight unique grassroots concepts. The research identified two-three concepts in each market that would impact awareness, opinion, and consideration with segment targets and influencers.

In targeted markets and within micro-segments, favorability of the client's brand improved significantly. Positive perception of the client's models improved dramatically after implementation of the grassroots initiatives and combined with other marcom tactics. Purchase consideration also increased over national averages in markets where micro-target and grassroots solutions were combined with traditional media advertising and promotions. The micro targets and strategies were an integral part of increasing awareness, consideration and sales of the client's new models within a one year period.

