

AUTOINTELLIGENCE™

Monthly automotive competitive insights from Compete

Ford Burns Racing Fuel to Sell the Fusion Hybrid

Recently Ford Motor Company announced an online promotion in which contestants have a chance to win a new 2010 Fusion Hybrid along with a trip for two to NASCAR's Championship weekend in Miami. Contestants register at a site developed by Ford called weraceyouwin.com. Ford is promoting the sweepstakes on social networking sites Facebook and Twitter.

Certainly this promotion plays off Ford's heavy involvement in racing, but is the Fusion prospect that in tune with what's going on in the world of NASCAR? And to what extent does leveraging Facebook and Twitter further the cause?

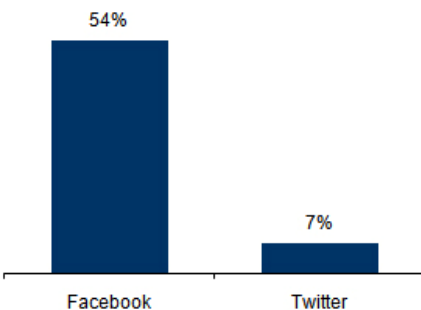
Assuming Ford is targeting mid-size car intenders, people who recently bought or shopped for a mid-size car, Compete was able to assess the extent to which this consumer segment visits nascar.com and the extent racing enthusiasts are on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter? And if they are, will social networking sites reach them?

As the result of a collaboration with JD Power and Associates, Compete has been able to match our panel of online consumers and their behavior with vehicle purchase data from JD Power. One result of this collaboration is the Online Media Behavior Study which tracks the current online activity of recent new vehicle purchasers. With this tool we are able to isolate mid-size sedan purchasers to determine their propensity to visit nascar.com as well as other sites like Facebook and Twitter to see if the weraceyouwin.com promotion has the potential to effectively reach the right prospects.

At first glance, one could get the impression that this promotion might be better suited to another group of prospects than mid-size car purchasers. Using January 2009 data, indexing mid-size car purchasers' propensity to visit nascar.com against the internet browser population, we find they are less likely to visit the racing site. However, December and January is the off-season for NASCAR, with no racing until the season opening Daytona 500 in early February.

Take a look at what happens when we use data from Summer 2008, the height of the NASCAR season. The mid-size car index jumps to 167 suggesting that just maybe mid-size car purchasers need to hear the roar of the engines and the smell of racing fuel to get their interest up. When they do, look out. They're big fans.

% NASCAR Enthusiasts Who Also Visited <Site>



In fact, interest in NASCAR increases as the season progresses for many new vehicle purchasers. Not surprisingly, Full-Size pickup purchasers are fans all year round but their interest really picks up in the summer. The same is true of domestic purchasers in particular while import purchasers don't show as much interest - which is something Toyota should take a closer look at given their recent NASCAR involvement with Camry.

Mid-size car purchasers are also on Facebook, and not just during the summer but in the winter, too. That means a Ford/NASCAR promotion could effectively reach the right prospects with the sweepstakes message even before the NASCAR season revs up. Twitter doesn't reach mid-size car purchasers as effectively as Facebook but that could be driven by the fact that most people

tweet via their mobile devices and don't return to the site very often. As further proof of Facebook's potential to reach this target, over half of NASCAR enthusiasts in general (those people who visit other sites with NASCAR sub-domains such as CNN and Fox Sports in addition to nascar.com) also visit the social networking site.

Understanding your prospect's online behavior is critical to developing effective online campaigns. It can help you better target your best prospects and more efficiently reach them with the right messages. Compete and JD Power's Online Media Behavior Study takes that a step further by identifying the online behavior of new vehicle purchasers. Understanding the behavior of purchasers can help auto marketers make the most out of the web by more efficiently using it to accurately target and reach new vehicle prospects.

Compete provides automakers with the most detailed and immediate insights into vehicle demand generation and conversion, as well as vehicle and brand competitiveness. Our services help automakers optimize marketing and incentive decisions and benchmark performance against rival actions.

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