

MOBILE

## Acura exec: Consumers not yet ready for mobile offices

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*Acura*

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By **Michael Barris**

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NEW YORK – An executive with Honda’s Acura division at the 2015 Mobile Marketing Association Forum New York said that while consumers want more integration between mobile devices and cars, the luxury brand is unlikely to try to attract millennial buyers by marketing the car as a technology hub.

Although Acura blazed a trail by offering a practical alternative to exotic European luxury vehicles and helped pioneer the six-speed manual transmission, it is unlikely to follow Ford Motor’s example in focusing on marketing vehicles not just as transportation but as a technology experience to attract millennial buyers who regard cars as an expensive burden.

“I think we’re all kind of chasing the same thing,” said Michael Accavitti, senior vice president and general manager of the Acura division of American Honda Motor. “Acura has a lot of firsts in the technology part of the business.

“We try to tie in with millennials or all people. Again, people who buy our cars, they value that anyway,” he said. “They value not just the safety we provide but the technology.

“As far as making it a mobile office, or Wi-Fi, I don’t know if that’s what customers want yet.”

## **Mobile mix**

The presentation focused on how Acura is increasing its mobile mix to reach luxury consumers.

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### *Configuring cars on Twitter.*

Last summer, an Acura campaign on Twitter invited users to configure their dream 2015 Acura TLX without having to leave Twitter. A key feature of the campaign was that by keeping the interaction within a user’s feed Acura retained engagement. Users selected an Acura model with starting price shown. They could choose colors, accessories and additional accessories. A summary showed the manufacturer’s suggested retail price.

Acura also partnered with comedian Jerry Seinfeld, a noted car collector, for his hit Crackle digital video series, Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee. One segment featured Seinfeld and friend and fellow comic Jay Leno discussing the innovative features of an Acura.

Mr. Accavitti’s point was that in marketing – mobile or otherwise – it is important to choose the right partner, which Mr. Seinfeld has proved to be.

A number of automakers have been using connected car technology to market their brands.

Ford, aiming to satisfy younger buyers who desire not to be left behind with a product that has become outdated, is marketing to millennial buyers by enabling the car to act as an all-in-one platform for software, service, content and applications.

General Motors has equipped more than 30 models with fourth-generation Wi-Fi [4G LTE] hot spots, allowing consumers to connect up to seven mobile devices at once and to remain connected up to 50 feet away from the vehicle.

## **Knowledge-driven**

Acura’s deep dive into mobile is partly driven by consumers’ ability to walk into a dealership already knowing more than the sales representative due to the enormous amount of information available on smartphones, tablets and desktops.

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### *Michael Accavitti at MMA Forum New York.*

“What we’re seeing now is people generally go to the dealership 1.6 times before they buy a car,” Mr. Accavitti said. “That’s the average. That means a lot of people only go once.”

## **Final Take**

*Michael Barris is staff reporter on Mobile Marketer, New York*

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/yaDLi6FvdhY>

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