

ADVERTISING

## Mercedes-Benz 360-degree marketing strategy increases sales 14pc

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By RACHEL LAMB

Mercedes-Benz's multichannel marketing is undoubtedly why the brand's sales have sprung up 14 percent in the past month, following a phenomenal year in 2010.

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The automaker's January sales recorded 17,273 vehicles sold. The brand is especially known for its strong social media, mobile applications and behind-the-scenes video footage.

"Luxury brands must always spend their resources effectively to ensure that the entire customer experience from research to purchase to loyalty is developed impressively across all channels," said Errol Apostolopoulos, head of innovation strategy and marketing at [Optaros](#), Boston. "It is a well-known fact that customers that engage with brands in more than one channel are four to five times more valuable than those that interact in a single channel."

Mr. Apostolopoulos is not associated with Mercedes. He agreed to comment on consumer engagement and branding.

Social savvy

Mercedes' Facebook page is a main hub of interaction between the brand and its

customers.

Amassing a following of 2,327,135, the brand offers sweepstakes, videos, images, news and links to its blog, the [Mercedes Reporter](#).

Customers and brand fans avidly post on the walls, take part in discussions and share images and videos on the automaker's page.

Mercedes is also in the middle of sponsoring the Mercedes Tweet to the Big Game, which involves four teams of celebrities whose only way to advance to the Super Bowl is the amount of Twitter activity they get from their followers ([see story](#)).

“Luxury brands must expand their acquisition strategies into social marketing, because - quite simply - that is where their customers are spending time,” Mr. Apostolopoulos said.

“In fact, it is imperative for luxury brands to have a well-designed social media presence, since they tend to have the most devoted and enthusiastic followers,” he said.

Video virtue

In another notable initiative, Mercedes’ use of video to connect to and inform its consumers is spot-on.

The brand’s YouTube feed is updated with not only campaign videos, but behind-the-scenes footage from commercial shoots and other events.

*Behind-the-scenes look into Mercedes' latest commercial*

“Prestige brands devote considerable time and effort towards creating a high-touch and personalized customer experience throughout the consumer's purchase journey,” Mr. Apostolopoulos said. “They make this investment because consumers of luxury goods are characterized by their strong desire for quality products and for being made to feel special.

“As such, luxury brands that are able to give their customers an insider view with behind-the-scenes videos are fulfilling a desire to make their customers feel privileged and like members of an inner circle, which in turn increases the connection and value of the

relationship,” he said.

Furthermore, the feed is neatly divided into types of vehicles and commercials for easy navigation.

Other marketing madness

Mercedes does not only do digital.

The brand has featured its latest campaigns in a variety of print magazines, including Monocle, which caters to extremely affluent, well-educated and tech-savvy individuals ([see story](#)).

Mercedes also uses billboards and direct mail as a way to reach its customers.

Multiple mobile applications with push notifications are a huge way that the brand engages, informs and entertains affluent consumers.



*Mercedes' applications in Apple's App Store*

With the 125th brand anniversary coming up, Mercedes is holding quite a few events and participates in auto shows year-round.

The brand hits nearly every media outlet, which is why it is so recognized internationally. Its multichannel is what accounts for its recent sales boom.

“By participating with their devotees, luxury brands can create stronger and more valuable connections to enhance and expand their business effectively,” Mr. Apostolopoulos said. “Luxury brands must be cognizant that each new channel expands their customer base and value with reach and convenience.”

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