

MOBILE

Mercedes explores new terrain with help from GQ

November 17, 2015



Inside a Mercedes GLC

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is exploring uncharted territory on men's lifestyle magazine GQ's mobile site.

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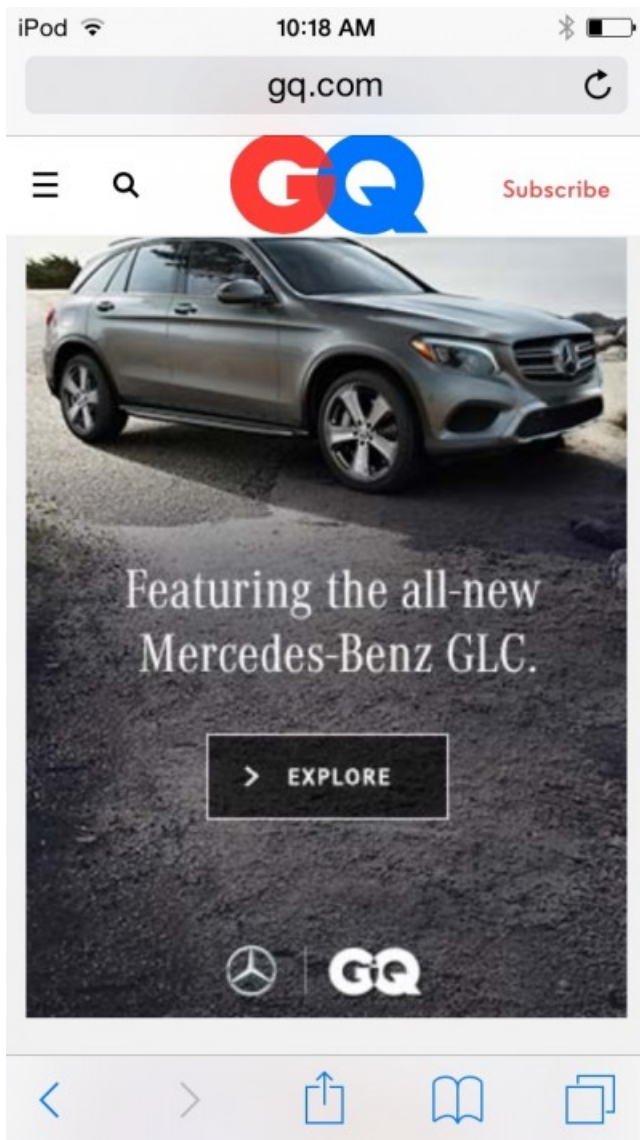
The homepage of the Cond Nast-owned magazine contains an advertisement for the Mercedes GLC, which lands on a site for the vehicle that takes the user on a GQ-sponsored trip in the car alongside a photojournalist. Placing Mercedes next to the magazine in different locations helps to clarify Mercedes' values.

"GQ caters to adventurous buyers who strive to have a distinctive personality and have a genuine appreciation for lifestyle driven experiences," said Gay Gabriliska, COO at **Gravit8 Marketing**. "It goes without saying that GQ is an ideal launching pad for Mercedes especially when you consider the demographic they are targeting, the uniqueness of their audience, and the personality of their brand."

Uncharted territory

The mobile ad appears below the first four stories on GQ's homepage and shows a picture of a Mercedes GLC and text reading "Uncharted featuring the all-new Mercedes-Benz GLC." At the bottom is a click-through prompt to "explore" along with logos for both the automaker and GQ.

The landing page is a Web site dedicated exclusively to the GLC and the Uncharted campaign. The video at the top of the page also features GQ's logo, positioning the magazine as a partner rather than merely a place for Mercedes to advertise.

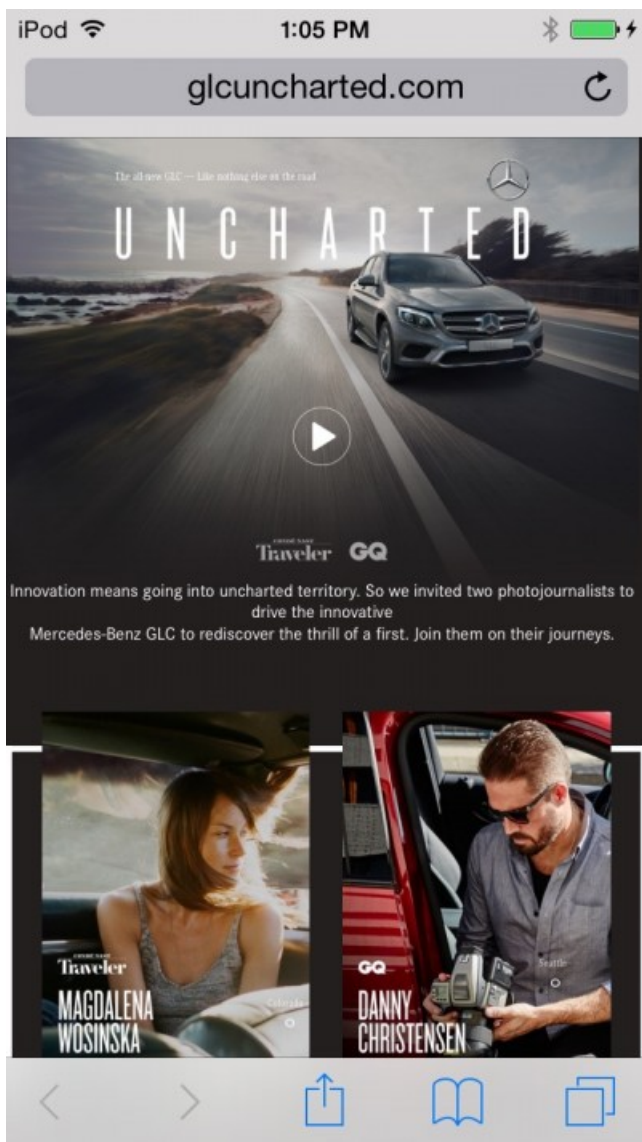


Mercedes-Benz ad on GQ

Just below the video are two further prompts to "explore," one sponsored by Cond Nast Traveler featuring photographer Magdalena Wosinska and the other sponsored by GQ, also owned by Cond Nast, and featuring photographer Danny Christensen.

"Adding the photojournalists trips to the campaign adds a level of authenticity and relate-ability to the campaign," Ms. Gabriliska said. "Real people, traveling to destinations previously uncharted in their new Mercedes GLC makes the car seem obtainable regardless of your socioeconomic status."

The GQ reader who wants to continue to investigate the connection between the magazine and Mercedes will be taken on a trip from Seattle to Portland, OR, with Mr. Christensen, passing through an oyster farm, Olympic National Park and Klickitat County. Each destination, as well as the cities of Seattle and Portland, is captured in six captioned photographs and a time-lapse video of the drive.

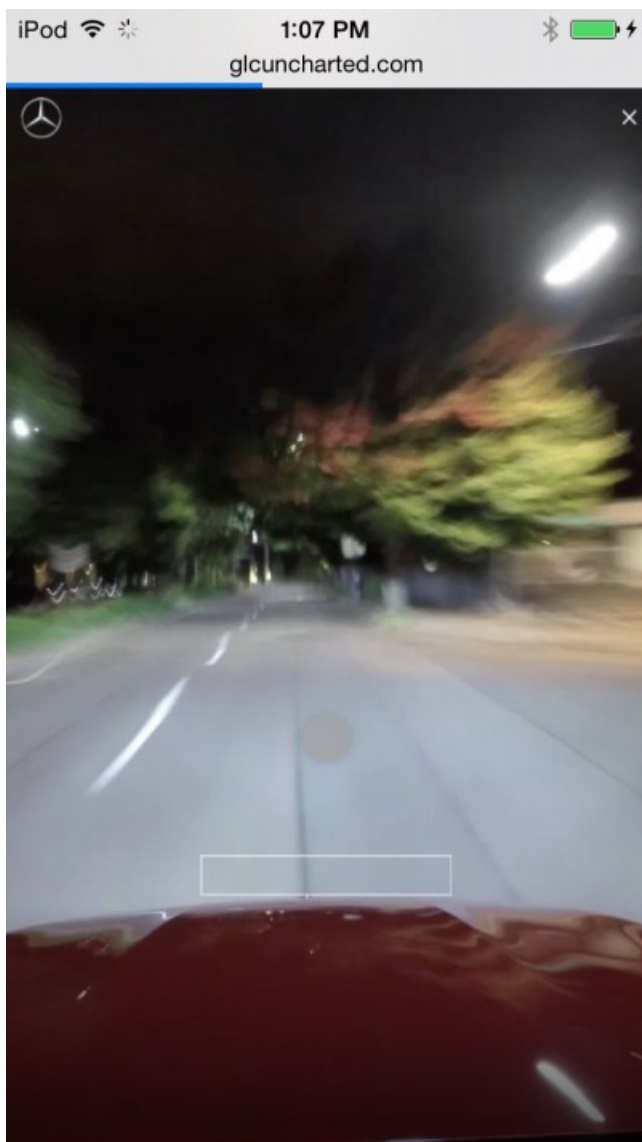


Landing page

Klickitat, a rural county in Washington near the Oregon border, is the "uncharted" destination. It was selected because an analysis of geo-tagged Flickr and Instagram photos revealed that it is rarely captured in social photography.

The journey to capture it in professional photographs creates a lifestyle association for Mercedes and the GLC. The campaign suggests that Mercedes is the brand for someone with a sense of adventure interested in finding beautiful and surprising new places.

Considering the marketing-savvy of today's consumers, a creative campaign such as this one that engages rather than just sells to the audience is likely to be more effective than a more traditional ad. Similarly, the emphasis on the partnership with GQ on both platforms provides lifestyle indicators that will help the consumer distinguish Mercedes from competing automakers.



Seattle to Portland image

On the other hand, the journey from Seattle to Portland unfolds all in one script and on one page, meaning the load time could be considerable for mobile-users. Although the advertisement itself is creative and engaging, brands must be careful to ensure a desire to reach consumers on mobile technology does not exceed the technological limitations in doing so.

"Through this campaign Mercedes is making a concerted effort to broaden its audience by appealing to a "throw caution to the wind" type audience," Ms. Gabrilaska said. "This is no longer your grandparents' Mercedes a status symbol for the wealthy - but rather a car that will be part of the experience of your next adventure."

New frontiers

Cond Nast has hosted Mercedes' mobile ads before, although the strategy was different with other recent placements.

In August, pushed its 2016 GLE through a banner advertisement on Cond Nast men's magazine Details' mobile Web site.

The ad appeared at the top of Details' home page and atop various articles, and a click took users directly to the 2016 GLE's mobile-optimized page on Mercedes-Benz's Web site, which prominently displays the vehicle's \$51,000 MSRP. The placement on Details suggested that Mercedes is targeting affluent and fashionable younger men ([see story](#)).

Other automakers have also looked beyond simple ads to get closer to consumers.

For example, August also saw German automaker BMW advertise and sponsor content on men's magazine Esquire's mobile site to promote its brand and 6 Class Series.

While some ads appear to promote offers on the new BMW 6 Class series and land on BMW's homepage, others allow users to scroll through several images of BMW cars and redirect to another page on Esquire featuring BMW's

sponsored content. The strategy promotes a partnership between Esquire and BMW and also allows readers to discover BMW's 6 Class Series on their own ([see story](#)).

"The partnership brings legitimacy to the campaign because Mercedes is tapping into an audience that is inspired by going outside 'the norm' and is inclined to having new discoveries," Ms. Gabriliska said. "Tapping into GQ's audience is a smart way for Mercedes to get in front of an audience that strives for adventure and uniqueness in all that they do."

Final Take

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