

RESEARCH

Mercedes prioritizes safety and convenience with new research

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Mercedes Citan van

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is going outside its comfort zone for the sake of consumers in the United Kingdom.

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Mercedes-Benz Vans has launched its first insight papers, focusing on winter operations and Sunday delivery services. As online shopping grows, reliable vehicles will be needed to get goods to consumers, and Mercedes is positioning itself as an ally of 21st century convenience.

"Mercedes makes vans used in the courier business and they claim their Sprinter model 'rules this section,' said Al Ries, founder and chairman of [Ries & Ries](#), a Roswell, GA-based marketing strategy consultancy. "Mercedes is apparently counting on their high-end reputation to encourage van buyers to read their insight reports on the courier business. I'm not sure the ultimate customer is going to be very impressed."

Sprinter

Mercedes estimated that UK consumers would spend around \$5.25 billion from Black Friday through Cyber Monday, with over \$3.3 billion of that being spent online, a 16 percent increase from last year. Mercedes insight papers will examine how delivery fleets prepared for this flurry and share that knowledge with couriers everywhere.



Mercedes van

The insight reports, conducted and written in collaboration with Fleet News, touch on winter operations, business services and facilities management, utilities, construction and transport and food distribution. Mercedes is a big player in the industry, as it provides major construction companies with Sprinter, Citan and Vito models and the Sprinter is a popular choice for couriers and delivery services.

"For courier companies to deliver on their promises, it is crucial that they choose a vehicle that can keep up with their demands," said Steve Bridge, managing director, Mercedes-Benz Vans, in a statement. "This time of year, not only do courier fleets have to deal with Black Friday, but also extremes in weather we have already seen the first snow of the season, and the gritters are now officially out."



Mercedes delivery van

By releasing the insight papers, Mercedes provides both couriers and consumers with benefits by sharing the information that makes delivery safer and more efficient and also positions its own brand favorably. Although knowledge of Mercedes' role in quick delivery may not lead to vehicle sales, it positions the brand's products in a favorable light, emphasizing reliability and honesty.

"It makes me incredibly proud that the vehicle of choice for courier companies is Sprinter [] it is not by accident that Sprinter rules this sector, and we look forward to celebrating the successes of Black Friday with our customers," Mr. Bridge said in the statement.



Mercedes Citan

As automotive brands continue to venture outside of products and offer innovative surfaces and reposition themselves as lifestyle brands, having ties to an industry associated with convenience lends credibility to future excursions.

Mercedes' insight report can be found [here](#).

Safety first

Mercedes has recently found subtle ways to emphasize the reliability of its own vehicles.

For example, in November it asked consumers to join it on an African safari.

Issue 3/2015 of Mercedes-Benz Classic Magazine, the automaker's editorial and lifestyle outlet since 2002, features

Carel Roux venturing through South Africa in a restored 1974 Unimog U 406. Connecting the brand with diverse lifestyles through heritage helps to sell Mercedes as a lifestyle rather than simply a product and may appeal to new consumers ([see story](#)).

Mercedes is also making more intuitive pushes for convenience by focusing on autonomy and mobility.

In October, the automaker began to look beyond the millennial market with its "mobile club lounge."

The "Vision Tokyo" concept model is an electric-powered, autonomous driving vehicle aimed at the urban trendsetters of Generation Z. A variety of technological advances are presenting automakers with enormous opportunities to redefine the luxury automotive market ([see story](#)).

"Mercedes has a 'high price' reputation which works well in selling luxury vehicles to individuals," Mr. Ries said. "But most van buyers aren't going to want to pay a lot more money for their vehicles. That's why Mercedes' vans are relatively inexpensive as compared to their sedans."

Final Take

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