

AUTOMOTIVE

Luxury brands top rankings for social discussion with auto

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Ferrari F40, circa 1988

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Automakers should pay more attention to what drives consumer discussion in regards to their brands, as offline performs better than online when it comes to the automotive industry.

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According to a new report from [Engagement Labs](#), a significant portion of discussion in regards to automotive brands happens offline. In both word-of-mouth and social discussion, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Audi and BMW topped the rankings, respectively.

"One of the most surprising learnings for marketers will likely be how consistently the automotive category performs better offline compared to online," said Ed Keller, CEO of Engagement Labs, NY. "These are sophisticated marketers investing billions each year, but many have no view into how that media and marketing investment is paying off from a word of mouth perspective.

"In a high involvement category where conversation is as much about auto enthusiasts as it is about practical recommendations from owners and drivers, it is imperative that brands understand what consumers are saying about them," he said. "In the automotive category, brands that are garnering the highest TotalSocial scores are luxury and sports brands: Ferrari, Lamborghini, Audi and BMW top our rankings.

"While mass market brands such as Ford, Chevrolet, and Toyota generate the highest volume of offline and online conversation, luxury brands edge them out because of high performance on measures like Sentiment, how positively or negatively they are talked about, and Influence, how well they do among people with larger than average social networks and who get sought out for their advice and recommendations."

Auto brands and social

Engagement Labs' TotalSocial rankings saw only two non-luxury auto brands within the top ten list, Toyota and Honda. Tesla, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche and Lexus were also mentioned within the top ten.

Audi recently had record-breaking sales, which helped its status within the top ten.



Audi's Silvercar partnership

Luxury auto brands' ability to elicit significant brand loyalty and positive brand image helps these manufacturers top the list.

While for the most part across the board, it looks as though auto brands do much offline compared to online that is not the case for Corvette.

Corvette, ranked number 15 in the TotalSocial list, has a below average score offline. However, online the brand has the highest ranking of all brands.

Some auto brands are not taking full advantage of the reach social media has and their loyal customers. For instance, both Infiniti and Buick are ranked extremely high in terms of consumer sentiment online but when other factors are added in drop off the top list for brands via TotalSocial.



Neiman Marcus' limited edition Infiniti

Buick and Infiniti should tap the positive sentiment to extend it further to a larger audience.

Additional insight

In an example of how brands can leverage social media for awareness, Italian automaker Maserati recently wielded Facebook's advertising capability to drive direct sales for its Levante SUV, leveraging custom audiences and data-driven pushes.

Maserati saw 127 vehicles sold directly from its recent two-phase Facebook campaign that built a targeted audience for those most likely to engage with the ads. The brand worked with outside data to discover Facebook users that were luxury SUV shoppers ([see more](#)).

Another report from L2 showed that between standard luxury and ultra-luxury auto brands, there is a substantial gap in digital offerings with the latter falling increasingly behind.

L2's Auto 2017 Digital IQ Index shows that higher end luxury automakers such as Ferrari are continuing to focus on traditional media, neglecting offerings such as search and email. While these brands do particularly well on social, the lack of multichannel strategy can see these brands falling to those that do better ([see more](#)).

"Social influence is a key driver of marketplace performance for brands of all types, including automotive brands," Engagement Labs' Mr. Keller said. "What is important for brand marketers to understand is that social influence extends far beyond social media posts or likes.

"Brands that want to ride the power of social influence need to understand how they are being talked about through

all the channels that consumers use to seek out advice and share their experiences and this means offline word of mouth as well as through social media channels," he said.

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