

MOBILE

## Porsche draws dealership visitors with model-specific bar codes

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By RACHEL LAMB

German automaker Porsche is driving dealership traffic as the first luxury automaker to use Microsoft Tag bar codes that reveal details specific to certain models.

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Consumers who scan the bar code are led to a mobile site where they can look at product information, prices and videos. Rather than speaking with a salesperson, consumers can do all of the research themselves.

"We wanted to be able to make our products and our dealerships more accessible," said Josh Cherfoli, online and relationship marketing manager for Porsche, Atlanta.

"On the surface, some may see the steel facility and be a little intimidated, but placing a sales presentation literally in a customer's hand makes the process a little less intimidating and allows that consumer to have that knowledge with a little more confidence," he said.

Microsoft did not respond by press deadline.

Thinking outside the Boxster

The partnership began in the beginning of June in dealerships in Georgia, California, New

York, Connecticut, Texas and Florida.

The technology works specifically to each car. Therefore, if a consumer is scanning in front of a black Boxster, he will see the exact information for a black Boxster.



*Consumer using smartphone to scan a bar code*

Each scan leads shoppers to a mobile-optimized site that features product information including vehicle videos, press reviews and the sound of a Porsche engine.

Porsche is the first luxury automaker to make this kind of model-specific technology, per the brand.

Only users with Microsoft Tag will be able to scan the bar codes.

If desired, the customer can provide contact information for a follow-up from a Porsche representative.

Will this dilute the brand's customer experience strategy?

"I think it will do exactly the opposite," Mr. Cherfoli said. "It enables the customer service aspect."

"Based on the uses where our dealers have already been trying, it is putting the initial conversation in the power of the consumer," he said.

"Our salespeople are showing and teaching consumers how to use it when they walk into the show rooms."

Porsche has already seen this initiative resonate with consumers.

Consumers will go back to the page that they have scanned after they have left the dealership, possibly to share with their friends and families or to influence a purchase decision, per Mr. Cherfoli.



*Affluent consumer using the bar code scanner*

### Cracking the code

Porsche has been dabbling in quite a few mobile initiatives.

The brand is implementing bar codes into print campaigns in magazines and The Wall Street Journal.

"These bar codes lead to pages with more general information, rather than details about specific cars," Mr. Cherfoli said.

Porsche has also designed new Web and mobile tools that help on-the-go consumers quickly locate and connect with dealers and service information, per the brand.

The latest innovations include customized dealership information including available inventory, special offers and easy driving directions.

There is also a location-based mobile version of the Porsche Dealer locator, where customers can find local dealers, search all dealers nationwide or find their nearest service center via their smartphone.

Porsche dealers are now using the SalesPad app for iPad, which instantly displays and shares information on a particular car, per the brand.

The app also accesses the brand's Car Configurator, which allows consumers to customize Porsche models.

This will increase the likelihood of finding the exact Porsche the customer wants in stock, per Porsche.

"We hope that it will resonate fabulously and we've seen that hypothesis prove itself in first interactions," Mr. Cherfoli said. "This will also build interactions in the showrooms and dealerships."

"The first reaction that people are saying is, 'Wow, that's really cool,'" he said. "That's a pretty consistent statement with how people are interpreting it."

## Final Take

*Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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