

AUTOMOTIVE

## Cadillac focuses on innovation in both design and customer experience

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*Book by Cadillac's services focused on innovation. Image credit: Cadillac*

By DANNY PARISI

NEW YORK For an automotive company, innovation on the design and engineering side is key, but innovation in how the product is presented is just as important.

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At Forrester's CX NYC conference in New York on June 19, an executive from Cadillac spoke about the creation of the brand's Book by Cadillac service and how it evolved. The main thrust of the panel was that brands need to understand what kind of story they are trying to tell as well as anticipate what kinds of experiences customers want to have.

"We want to insert pleasure into the journey at every step," said Tara Brannigan, head of marketing and member services for **Book by Cadillac**. "Little touches, new vehicle technology, access to one-of-a-kind events, anything that improves the experience."

CX innovation

Cadillac is in a unique position among luxury automotive brands.

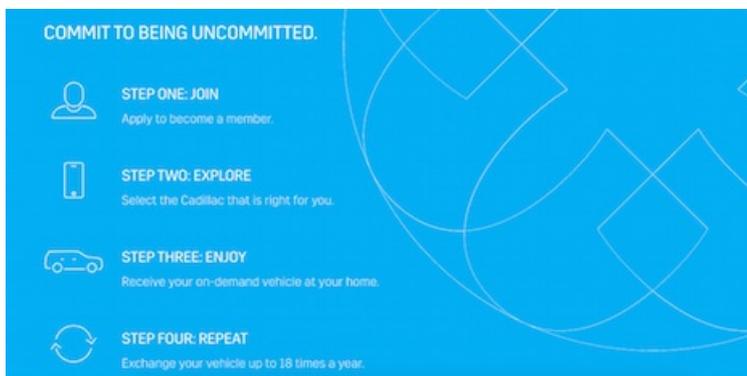
Once, only a few years ago, the brand was consistently ranked up with the best and most desirable luxury cars around. People used to call things "the Cadillac" of whatever category to signify that it was high-end and precious.

Now, however, the brand's image has taken somewhat of a hit.

"Cadillac was once a brand that everyone aspired to own," Ms. Brannigan said. "We have some lowered desire from consumers.

"But a 30-day trial for Book by Cadillac lowered the barrier for entry considerably," she said. "Eighty-five percent of the people we have doing it have not driven a Cadillac before.

"We are not cannibalizing existing sales at all. Its bringing new people into the brand who will hopefully buy a Cadillac in the future."



*How Book by Cadillac works. Image credit: Cadillac*

To combat this change in stature, Cadillac has been focusing on innovation.

But notably, Cadillac's innovations are not entirely focused on creating new features for its cars or developing new technologies, although that is part of it.

Instead, the company has been focusing on how to innovate on the product side. Book by Cadillac is the best example of that.

With Book by Cadillac, customers can subscribe to a service that lets them rent their Cadillac of choice, exchanging it for another whenever they desire up to 18 times a year.

This service is consistent with the brand's desire to reinvent itself.

"Cadillac has been on a journey to reinvent themselves over the last few years," Ms. Brannigan said. "How do you do that when you have a 100-year-old company?"

"We were the first car company that led with design first," she said. "We were the first company to create the electric starter.

"Prior to that, you had to hand crank your vehicle in order to start it, which was dangerous and difficult. In developing Book by Cadillac, we have taken innovation further."

All hands on deck

Book by Cadillac has been a major success since its launch early last year.

Cadillac responded to interest in its Book by Cadillac membership plan by taking the pilot to new markets. As affluent consumers gain comfort with the idea of sharing a car, services such as Book by Cadillac are poised to change the idea of vehicle ownership ([see story](#)).

These types of efforts are helping Cadillac to bring its way back into the mainstream conversation about luxury cars.



*Cadillac is rebuilding its brand image. Image credit: Cadillac*

Ms. Brannigan also spoke about the discussions that went on behind-the-scenes to make Book by Cadillac a reality.

One of the most important things that Cadillac found was that an auto brand cannot only be focused on the design aspect. Brands must bring together voices from throughout the company to ensure a coherent vision.

"When we incubated this we worked with multiple teams – IT, sales, etc.," Ms. Brannigan said. "Everyone had an equal say at the table.

"We had enough respect for each other to have this open dialogue and have a push and pull over what we were making," she said.

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