

AUTOMOTIVE

How Slingshot caters to the affluent market with recreational vehicles

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Polaris Slingshot caters to affluent joy riders. Image credit: Polaris

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

As affluent consumers look for more experiences rather than luxury goods, recreational vehicles offer a unique position, straddling the two.

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Polaris' Slingshot, a three-wheeled open-air recreational vehicle, caters to affluents with this important concept. With a variety of customization possibilities and experiential marketing tactics, the company has learned how to cater to this new experience-driven customer.

"The Polaris Slingshot is a unique, one-of-a-kind experience," said Josh Fulkerson, senior director of **Slingshot**. "With a three-wheel open-air design and side-by-side seating, it fits in a category of its own.

"In many ways, it brings adults back to their childhood and puts a new level of 'fun' into their life, whether on a weekend getaway or a joyride through town."

In this Q&A, Mr. Fulkerson explains how the company uses these marketing tactics to appeal to the affluent market.

What goes into catering to the affluent market with recreation vehicles rather than products for necessity?

The affluent market is often seeking new, fun adventures and experiences. Given their financial disposition, they have the luxury of owning multiple vehicles and "toys" to enjoy in their free time.

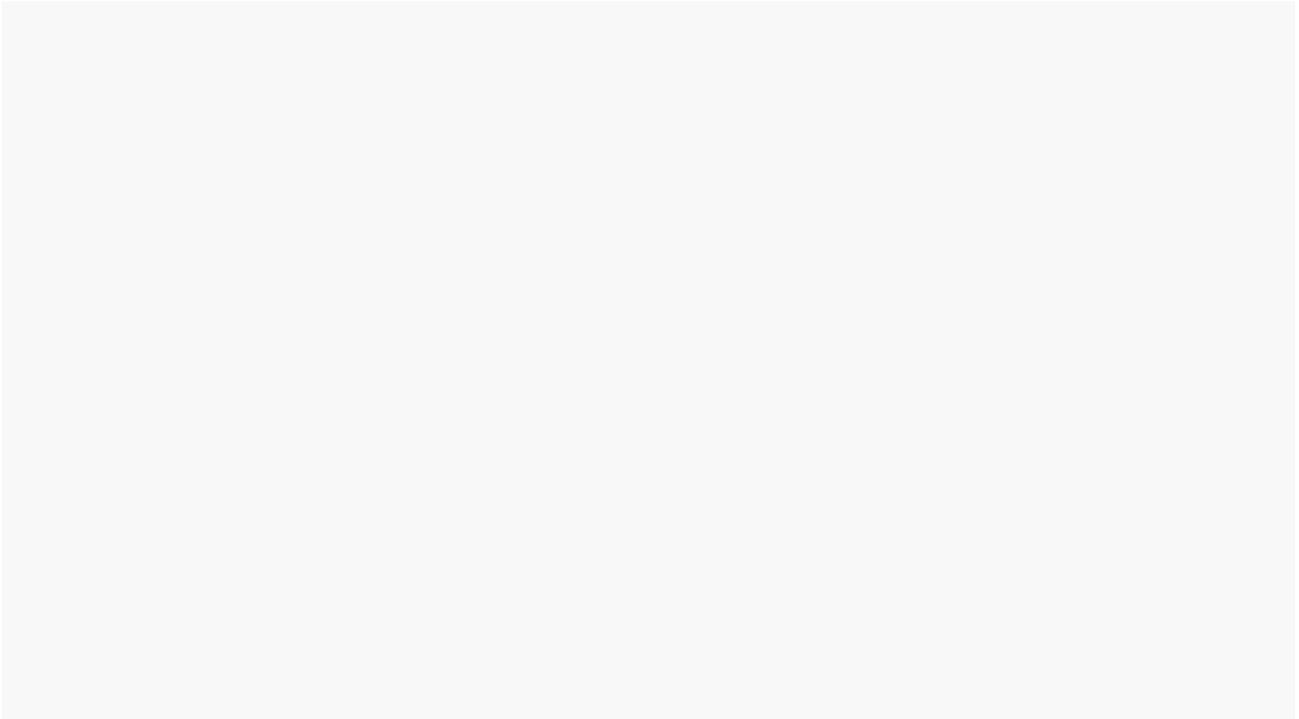
More than just a fun driving experience, Slingshot offers an incredible opportunity for customization and personalization.

How has the rise of experiential marketing come into play with the affluent market and Slingshot marketing?

We have a very successful joyride campaign that allows customers to not only drive a Polaris Slingshot, but ride passenger with a professional driver around a tight course to truly experience everything the Slingshot has to offer.

In addition, we recently launched Polaris Adventures, which provides an opportunity to get behind the wheel while away on vacation in exotic locations around the U.S. What better way to enjoy the beauty of the Hawaiian Islands than in an open-air Slingshot roadster?

Those first impressions and experiences have an impact on their desire to own, sparking ideas on how they can customize and personalize their new "toy" in the garage.



Fun would be an understatement. #PolarisSlingshot

A post shared by Slingshot (@polarisslingshot) on Jul 5, 2018 at 10:29am PDT

What makes Slingshot appealing to the affluent consumer?

The Polaris Slingshot is a unique, one-of-a-kind experience. With a three-wheel open-air design and side-by-side seating, it fits in a category of its own.

In many ways, it brings adults back to their childhood and puts a new level of "fun" into their life, whether on a weekend getaway or a joyride through town.

Owners can also personalize their Slingshot through custom paint schemes, lighting, graphics and interior options. Slingshot offers a variety of factory parts and accessories that are color-matched and provide the best fitment.

Additionally, there are a variety of aftermarket suppliers and builders who provide Slingshot-specific parts and accessories that allow you to make it your own. With this platform, a custom, one-of-a-kind vehicle allows affluent consumers to take the idea of being unique one step further.

When it is all said and done, we have seen Slingshots purchased off the showroom floor at \$20,000-\$30,000 turn into \$80,000+ machines with personal style and customization.

What trends are you seeing in high-end recreational vehicles?

The rise of technology in automobiles has carried over into many industries including ours.

At Polaris, our proprietary and industry-leading Ride Command infotainment system offers a seven-inch, touch-screen display with customizable driver screens that feature GPS navigation, Bluetooth and USB phone integration, vehicle information and more.

Additionally, the Slingshot SLR packs a Rockford Fosgate premium audio system, Sparco components for a premium fit and finish, along with a back-up cam, sport seats and forged aluminum wheels.

Where do you see Slingshot headed in the future?

When Polaris engineers designed the Slingshot, we knew we were blazing new roads.

Now, four years after launching the Slingshot, we have a much-clearer understanding of what we are, who we serve and why we exist. The answer is quite simple: fun.

Whether it's your first time or your 100th time driving the Slingshot, you will get out of the driver's seat smiling. As the category continues to grow, so will our product offerings.

Through customer feedback, our future is about delivering additional features and innovative enhancements that will continue to deliver on our promise to be "The Ultimate Joyride."

Can you share a brief history of the popularity rise of Slingshot?

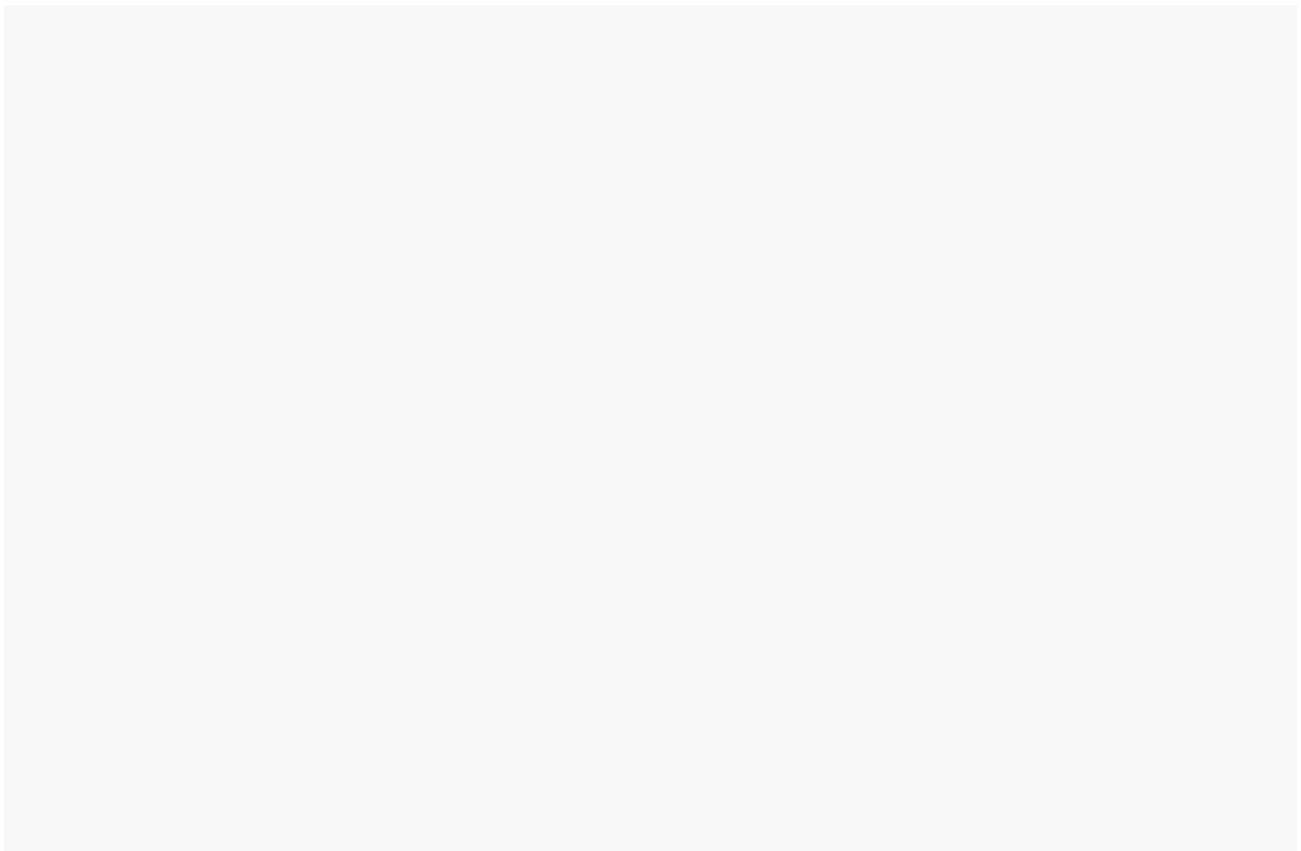
Slingshot and the three-wheel, open cockpit category is relatively new.

We started with the launch of our 2015 model lineup and have seen an impressive meteoric rise in ownership and popularity. Since launch, we have more than 25,000 Polaris Slingshot owners.

With that rise has come an organized establishment of clubs and ownership groups of like-minded individuals making the Slingshot life a community. It has become a social gathering for so many owners.

This year, Polaris further embraced the community by establishing Club Slingshot, the first national owner's group. In its inaugural year, new and used Slingshot owners will receive a complimentary one-year membership, which includes special offers, access to events and rides, as well as a first-edition Slingshot owner's magazine.

As more and more Slingshots are turning heads on the road, there are more consumers that are looking to find out how they can get behind the wheel and experience The Ultimate Joyride for themselves.



The best way to catch a sunset. Photo by @Jessekphotos #PolarisSlingshot #myslingshot

A post shared by Slingshot (@polarisslingshot) on Jun 20, 2018 at 4:28pm PDT

What are some marketing tactics Slingshot uses to appeal to affluent?

The current Slingshot owner profile is a diverse group of individuals that enjoy the status and sense of adventure that the roadster offers.

We connect with this audience through various marketing tactics, including displays and joyrides at major automotive shows, participation in industry events like SEMA and partnerships with parallel brands, influencers and customizers.

For example, Slingshot has integrated into celebrity charity events, including those from former professional basketball player Ray Allan (Ray of Hope) and current professional football player Larry Fitzgerald (First Down Fund). These events give us a platform to not only give back and get involved with incredible charities and help make a difference in local communities, but also provides Slingshot the opportunity to engage with celebrities, athletes, business executives and the affluent audience.

Additionally, we have close working relationships with customizers and builders around the country, including West Coast Customs and Alex Vega of the Auto Firm. Both teams regularly build and modify Slingshots for musicians, actors/actresses and athletes.

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