

AUTOMOTIVE

Cadillac does not cast off its heritage when looking to future

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Cadillac focuses on looking to the past while focusing on the future. Image credit: Cadillac

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

NEW YORK Heritage brands have the unique opportunity to cater to consumers by tapping into their deep history, and while navigating the past coupled with the modern age can be difficult for some, Cadillac finds a window for innovation in this juxtaposition.

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During a fireside chat at Luxury Interactive on Oct. 15, an executive from the automotive brand cited how the brand was able to work with Viacom for a special campaign that showcased Cadillac's history during a relevant television program. Through this spot and many others, the automaker is able to cater to the millennial audience and build awareness.

"Cadillac has been around for 116 years and when you look at its position in automotive history, it has a unique position in culture," said Raymond Warren, senior manager of media and multicultural at [Cadillac](#). "Cadillac and Hollywood have kind of grown up together, since they were born around the same time.

"It is important for us to embrace who we are and have the customer know who we are," he said.

Modern versus heritage

As it set out to develop a campaign for MTV's Video Music Awards, Cadillac looked to the channel's owner Viacom to help create a spot that showcased the brand's heritage and relationship in pop culture.

Coming soon? Think again. The [#XT4](#) has arrived. pic.twitter.com/15ZuGazOpz

Cadillac (@Cadillac) [October 3, 2018](#)

In response, Viacom made a commercial that showcased the name Cadillac mentioned in pop culture songs throughout the years in chronological order, starting with an old classic tune and ending with a new hit by Kesha.

Through this spot, Cadillac was able to attract millennials while also unveiling a new car at a mass scale.

In keeping the focus on its history, when iconic singer Aretha Franklin passed away, the brand made sure to take on a simple and "respectful" approach to pay tribute.

Cadillac created an image that simply said, "Respect," against a pink backdrop with a classic image of the brand's old logo. This tweet was in homage to Ms. Franklin's mention of a pink Cadillac in one of her old songs, which prompted significant sales growth of pink models and created a national phenomenon.

pic.twitter.com/9x9DrPuMOB

Cadillac (@Cadillac) August 31, 2018

This single tweet generated more than 100 million impressions. Cadillac then extended this into print with the image as an advertisement, generating even more engagement online as users discussed it.

Cadillac is also hoping to fit in to the fast pace of today's retail environment by starting to release a new product every six months, Mr. Warren said, which is huge for an automotive brand.

Strategies from Cadillac

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.

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 ([see story](#)).

The automaker also recently responded to interest in its Book by Cadillac membership plan by taking the pilot to new markets.

Originally launched in early 2017 in New York, a Book by Cadillac subscription entitles enrolled consumers to borrow a car at a time from a range of models, allowing them to have a vehicle that fits their evolving needs. 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](#)).

"At the VMAs we decided to embrace culture and where we've been and tell our story in music," Mr. Warren said. "We partnered with Viacom and said, Tell the story for us."

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