

INTERNET

Mercedes-Benz uses Facebook data to personally connect with consumers

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

Mercedes-Benz is engaging consumers with a new Facebook application that features the German automaker's new C-Class coupe and integrates users' friends into the playing field.



The Drive & Seek game places the consumer in the role of special agent with short video clips explaining the game and featuring the C-Class coupe. The Facebook app game was released on the branded page earlier this week.

"This application is great because it not only creates an immersive experience, but it pulls in friend data from the Facebook social graph, involving the user's friends in the missions," said Ron Schott, senior analyst at [Spring Creek Group](#), Denver.

"These sort of immersive experiences in the Facebook environment are great for getting messaging across in a way that feels less intrusive than an ad," he said.

"Consumers are more likely to share information from the experience than they are to share an ad or other marketing message."

Mr. Schott is not affiliated with [Mercedes-Benz](#), but agreed to comment as a third-party expert.

Mercedes-Benz was not able to respond by press deadline.

A-class effort

The game begins with a short video that contains four individuals running through a city and driving the C-Class coupe.

A narrator explains that they are a team of special agents working to retrieve a piece of art that the mafia has hidden in a bank vault.

The video ends saying, "They need one more team member, do you have what it takes to be a special agent?"

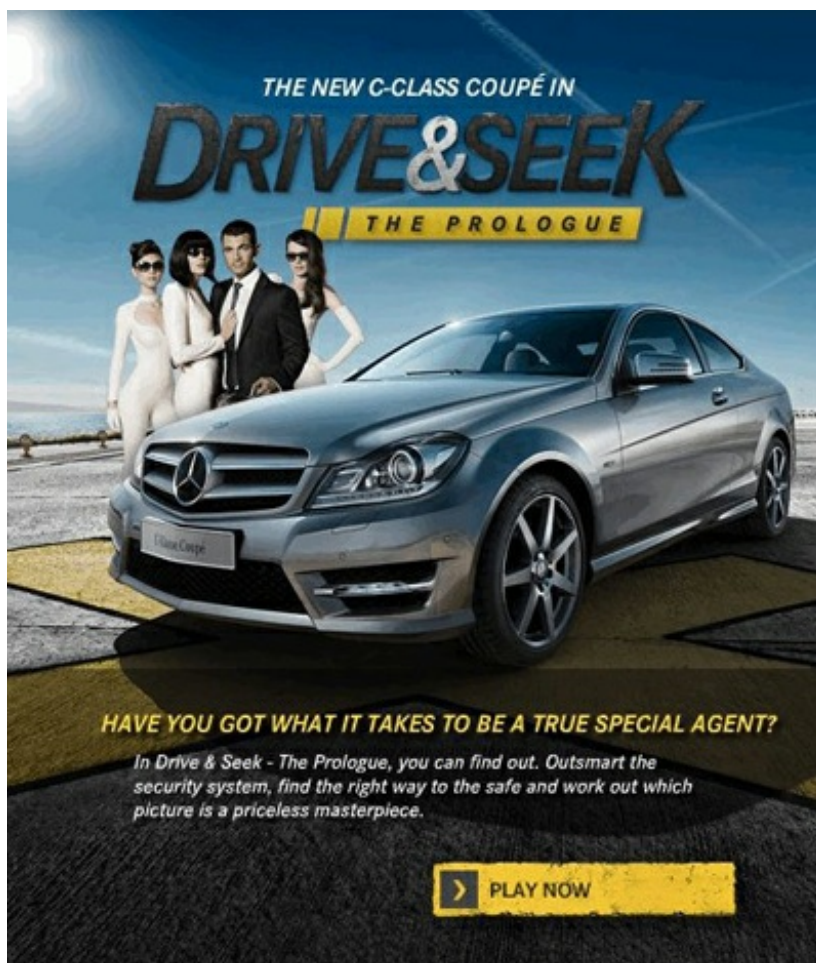
The consumer can then choose from three different missions.

The first is "Find a safe route," which is a maze game that asks users to get the other side of a bank.

The next mission is entitled, "Outsmart the system," which asks consumers questions about their friends' hometowns, ages and relationship status.

The last option is, "Do you have a good eye?" which has players name which friend's profile picture is scrambled in the frame.

Each level begins with another short video that features the C-Class coupe driving to or escaping from a mission.



Joy ride

The game is located in its own tab on the Mercedes-Benz Facebook page.

Mercedes alerted fans to the new tab and the game with a Facebook post challenging them to see if they had what it takes to become a special agent.



"I think the idea sort of transcends the product, but in this case, Mercedes does a great job of putting their car at the forefront of the video footage and letting it sort of be the story without being the story," Mr. Schott said.

The Drive & Seek game app will most likely be successful, as most people log-on to Facebook when they are bored or want to waste time.

Mercedes' game will also improve brand recall as consumers engage and learn about their friends throughout the game.

"One of the biggest things users are seeing with the app is that they're thinking about friends on their friend list who they might not have connected with in a long time – something that might not have been a part of Mercedes' plans, but is a secondary effect of the game," Mr. Schott said.

"Connecting the brand to relationships through this app is a great way to keep the brand top-of-mind," he said.

Final Take

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