

AUTOMOTIVE

Audi adopts “hold nothing back” mantra to market entry-level model to millennials

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Audi is making a millennial push for its Q3. Image credit: Audi

By SARAH JONES

German automaker Audi is taking a modern artistic approach to market its Q3 SUV to a millennial audience.

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Playing off the car's name, Audi worked with designers and animators to create a series of three-second clips for Instagram, dubbed "Q3 in :03." The compact campaign and a broader millennial-minded push for the compact SUV has helped the brand engage a younger buyer and drive sales.

"The theme for this campaign and the launch of the Q3 was the idea of 'Hold Nothing Back,'" said Loren Angelo, vice president of marketing at **Audi of America**. "For Audi, this meant meeting the demands of a new, younger generation of consumers whose expectations defy what is expected from their vehicle.

"Nowhere is that more articulated than the all-new Q3," he said. "From the functionality of its thoughtful design to its performance and technology, the Q3 was engineered for drivers who know what it means to hold nothing back."

Three seconds

Audi's Q3 is positioned to capture the entry-level luxury buyer, with a starting price of \$37,800. The compact SUV is now in its second generation, with updates to the exterior design as well as connectivity and functional features.

The premium compact SUV category is growing in the U.S. In September, the Q3 reported a 58 percent year-over-year growth.

Looking to drive the conversation around the model, Audi developed a social media series.

Q3 in :03 is an ongoing string of clips that range in format from animation to collage.

In a Claymation short, a pair of hot pink hands snaps a photo of a Q3 with a retro camera.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Feeling ourselves. #ThatQ3Life

A post shared by Audi (@audi) on Sep 19, 2019 at 8:40am PDT

Instagram post from Audi

An 8-bit clip finds a Q3 amid flashing billboards in a city scene. Another finds a realistic SUV cruising through an animated metropolitan backdrop.

Other clips nod to the model's trunk space. One shows numerous balls bouncing out of the hatchback, while another depicts a mountain range in the open trunk.

In a comic book-style animation, a close-up shot of the Q3's tires in the rain nods to its "storm ready" nature.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Storm ready. #quattro #ThatQ3Life

A post shared by Audi (@audi) on Sep 20, 2019 at 8:30am PDT

Instagram post from Audi

All of the clips have been posted with the hashtag #ThatQ3Life, building an idea of a lifestyle around the car.

"An interesting insight that we leaned into for the 'Q3 in :03' content is that the millennial demographic is consuming social media in very short bursts hence the idea of creating dynamic GIF content that lasts only three seconds," Mr. Angelo said.

As part of its millennial push, the automaker also worked with D.C.-based No Kings Collective on an out-of-home project in Nashville, TN.

Coinciding with an event for young entrepreneurs in the city, a series of custom murals portray the message "Hold nothing back" in colorful art.



Audi's mural. Image credit: Audi

No Kings Collective also wrapped a Q3 for the event.

"Given the demographic for the Q3, our strategy with this launch was to bring this younger audience content that felt native to how they are already consuming and engaging with media," Mr. Angelo said. "Given our highly-engaged Instagram community of more than 15 million, the 'Q3 in :03' content and the partnership with No Kings Collective to create an interactive mural in Nashville was born out of that strategy, to leverage thumb-stopping images and videos that seamlessly fit within the target's social feed.

"With the mural created by No Kings Collective in Nashville, we leaned into the trend of blending art and social media," he said. "Of course the mural is designed to inspire people to take photos and selfies, but it also endures as a vibrant contribution to the city of Nashville. So while not a traditional out of home placement, we certainly hope that when people see the mural they think art first, ad second and are drawn into our Audi brand message."

Hold Nothing Back has also been the tagline of an experiential Q3 push. Audi worked with the James Beard Foundation to support female entrepreneurs in the culinary and hospitality industries.

As part of the project, the automaker held a series of four pop-up dining events in U.S. cities ([see story](#)).

"In fitting with the larger 'Hold Nothing Back' theme of the Q3 launch strategy, each of the featured chefs in the Audi Culinary Dinner series demonstrated this mindset as individuals making an impact within their communities and using their platforms to inspire other future chefs and culinary leaders," Mr. Angelo said.

Millennial minded

Audi has launched a number of initiatives aimed at a millennial audience.

In the U.K., Audi used Snapchat in a scavenger hunt-type campaign to promote its personal contract plans.

Through a film on YouTube, Audi showed off its fun campaign in which it surprised citizens of Brighton, England with their own personal vehicle for a day. The film used common themes from Snapchat, such as one of its common font options, and helped show that any consumer can own an Audi through its PCP ([see story](#)).

The automaker also expanded its multi-year partnership with Major League Soccer, as it aims to remain a fixture in the minds of enthusiastic American soccer fans.

Audi of America will be the league's official automotive partner through the 2022 season and continue to serve as title sponsor of the MLS Cup Playoffs. With the most millennial fans of any United States sports league, MLS has an audience that Audi and other luxury brands are hoping to turn into buyers ([see story](#)).

To-date, the brand's social media strategy around the Q3 has been paying off.

"The response to the campaign has been phenomenal and we're still seeing rapid growth and engagement on the Audi Instagram channel," Mr. Angelo said. "For example, the post featuring the Audi MMI system has nearly doubled the KPIs we set internally for this campaign, showing that dynamic animation is something that really excites our fans.

"To note, Audi grows on average 50,000 new fans each week and just hit 15 million followers last week," he said.

"The campaign has also been met with great reception offline as well. We recently announced that August sales were up 3 percent, with the new Q3 experiencing a significant 78 percent year-over-year growth."