

AUTOMOTIVE

Luxury car drivers respond to print advertising and marketing

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Affluent automotive buyers respond to print media. Image courtesy of Archant Dialogue

By DIANNA DILWORTH

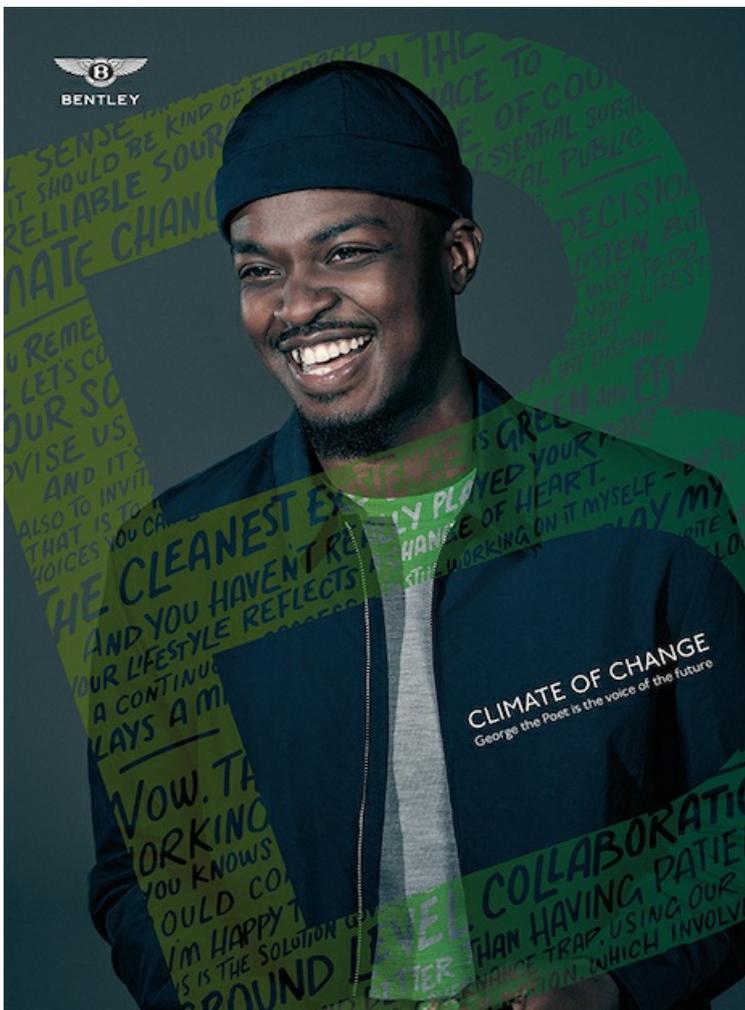
Even as digital continues to accelerate as a luxury marketing channel, print publications still have an important role to play when it comes to selling luxury cars to consumers.

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The top 10 percent and 25 percent wealth groups discovered new brands and products more through print than other channels, according to a new report from [Archant Dialogue](#) and [entSight](#).

"These magazines play a role in retention, building brand loyalty and engendering word of mouth, increasingly important as the acquisition part of the marketing mix is becoming complex," said Zoe Francis-Cox, agency director at Archant Dialogue, London.

"With the repercussions of COVID-19, doubts about the future of real-world shopping and an increasing trend to sell online, the need to editorialize brands and products is likely to increase," she said.



Bentley branded magazine. Image credit: Archant Dialogue

Branded magazines

Bentley, Porsche, Aston Martin, BMW and Harley-Davidson are just some of the luxury automakers using print to connect with consumers.

These brands have produced branded print magazines and sent them to high-net-worth individuals, aiming to enamor them with glossy pages of photography that highlight features of new cars.

Even as virtual test-drives and digital car launches become more prominent, print still has a lasting effect. It sits around on a countertop or coffee table, ready to be glanced at in moments of relaxation when consumers get inspired.

Interestingly, Archant Dialogue's data revealed that the top 10 percent wealth group over-indexed in preferences for print materials for luxury cars by 79 percentage points more than the global sample.

This interest in print is not simply for older affluent consumers.

In fact, each age group of affluent consumers over-indexed in preferences for print communications from automotive companies by at least 35 percentage points.

Even Generation Z ages 16-24, who over index on social media use, is open to print. Some 50 percent of this demographic said they are members of at least one brand community.

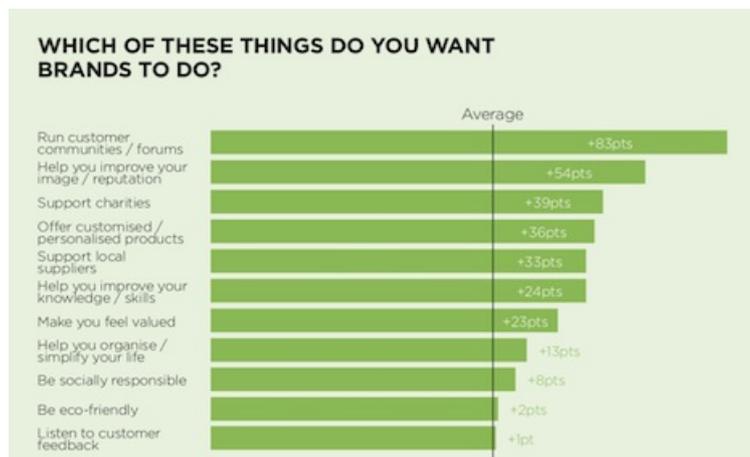
Additionally, this audience likes to discuss brands or products with which they are connected, both online and offline. Some 31 percent said they frequently discussed a brand and 57 percent said they sometimes discussed a brand, according to the Archant Dialogue report.

The research found a correlation between people discussing offline content online, such as consumers discussing stories from automotive magazines in the online forums supporting these groups.

"Branded magazines bring the brand and its values to life," Ms. Francis-Cox said.

"As with other magazines, editorial is created with the target audience in mind, marrying brand values with audience

interests," she said.



Actions that consumers want from brands. Source: Archant Dialogue

Affluent car shoppers

Auto marketers must understand and acknowledge that the post-purchase experience is highly significant in the customer journey.

Customers want to feel confident that they have made the right decision after they have bought a car, which means ongoing communications from the brand and dealership. These connections can build customer loyalty for life.

Indeed, customers who spend large sums of money on a single product are looking for aftercare and community support and expect brands to provide this level of service.

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars' Whispers, a virtual members' club offering one-of-a-kind experiences, is an example of these ongoing connections.

From online communities and forums on how to get the best performance out of the car, these exclusive groups help vehicle owners feel a connection to the brand as they continue to drive their cars.

Print media can help by offering a unique channel that stands out in a digital era.

"Luxury consumers are looking for some sense of community and post-purchase follow-up to validate the high-ticket cost of the car," Ms. Francis-Cox said. "Showcasing what the brand offers its members should be key in the acquisition stage, though often it isn't.

"In addition, content from magazines can fuel social media and vice versa," she said.

For instance, Porsche Club used content from print magazines to fuel social media content when the coronavirus pandemic shut down events and active marketing campaigns.

"Thankfully, we were able to draw from a back catalogue of assets and repurpose copy from magazine features earlier in the year," said George Woodward, digital executive at Porsche Club, London.

"We posted the incredible imagery on social media to ensure club members continued to enjoy a stunning supply of Porsches in their timelines," he said.