

MULTICHANNEL

Mercedes pushes A-Class to European market via 360-degree campaign

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By TRICIA CARR

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is enacting a multichannel campaign to lead up to the European A-Class introduction that will focus on the car's design and its integration of the iPhone.

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The automaker is looking to create further buzz for the A-Class before it is available for purchase Sept. 15 through print advertisements, billboards, five television spots, digital efforts, a live tour and mobile touch points. The automaker has more than 40,000 orders for the vehicle, but it wants to keep the momentum going, per Mercedes.

"We want to appeal younger customers to the Mercedes brand and, if you look at the new A-Class, you see that it is a very progressive car, and the campaign reflects the same thing," said Tobias Müller, head of lifestyle, brand and social media communications at **Mercedes-Benz**, Stuttgart, Germany.

"The new Mercedes A-Class is the first of our new cars in the compact segment," he said. "It has a very passionate design and capabilities to help drivers live in their digital network – that is what the campaign and synergy is all about."

"We want to convince people that the new A-Class is a cool car, create fascination and, of

course, sell that car.”

Best in class

Mercedes is centering its multichannel efforts on the phrase, “The new A-Class. The pulse of a new generation.”

The print and TV ads will point out the features and design of the A-Class as well as invite consumers to attend launch events, encourage test drives and promote financing offers.

Print ads will run in Germany in consumer publications, high-circulation news magazines, special-interest media and national daily newspapers.

The ads will also show a QR code that leads to the **A-Class section** of Mercedes’ Web site. Users can scroll to go down a city street and see different parts of the campaign.

The content of the print ads will also be shown on billboards in German cities.

Meanwhile, the five TV commercials will each present a story that highlights a feature of the A-Class.

For example, the “Parking” commercial highlights the "Parking Finder" app found in the Command Online in-car system.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/8z7r04liA1Y>

Parking commercial

The print and television campaign will run through October. The online components will be live through December.

More, more, more

Mercedes seems to be adding a few additional elements to the A-Class campaign to reach new, young consumers beyond a standard advertising campaign.

First, the automaker is in the midst of a three-month tour across Europe called A-Roadshow. During this time, it is bringing a fleet of approximately 50 A-Class models to event venues and public spaces.

In addition, consumers can interact with A-Class models in the SimCity Social Facebook game.

Users can add branded game pieces such as a car factory, billboard and Mercedes showroom filled with A-Class models to their virtual cities (**see story**).

Mercedes is also producing a 2013 A-Class calendar that will tell the story of a young couple taking a trip in an A-Class vehicle.

For the first time, Mercedes is giving A-Class drivers the option to access the complete owner's manual on smartphones via the "A-Class Guide" app. It is available for download in Google Play and Apple's App Store.

A mix of traditional and out-of-the-box marketing channels could be Mercedes' tactic to reach consumers in Europe.

"The European economy is not doing well, so automobile buyers are downsizing," said Al Ries, chairman of focusing consultancy **Ries & Ries**, Roswell, GA. "That is, they are looking for less-expensive vehicles to buy.

"The Mercedes-Benz A-Class is less expensive than the rest of the Mercedes line, but Mercedes wants to create the impression that the A-Class is truly a luxurious vehicle, but at a lower price," he said. "Hence the emphasis on the luxury features such as the integration of the iPhone in the vehicle's display."

In addition, the difference in views of the Mercedes in Europe versus the United States could have warranted the indiscreet marketing approach.

"European automobile buyers tend to be more practical than American buyers," Mr. Ries said. "In Europe, for example, Mercedes is considered to be more of a mainstream vehicle.

"You will find many Mercedes taxis in Europe, but seldom will you see Mercedes being used in America as a taxicab," he said. "In America, Mercedes is more of a luxury vehicle than a mainstream vehicle."

Final Take

Tricia Carr, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York