

INTERNET

Mercedes displays fan support via Facebook profiles

September 3, 2013



By JOE MCCARTHY

Mercedes-Benz USA is honoring dedicated fans by showcasing the stories behind their passion for the brand and how they became owners on its Facebook page.

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The "Owner's Stories" profiles vary in formats ranging from question and answer to brief anecdotes and personal histories. Mercedes demonstrates its commitment to fans and will likely fortify brand loyalties by going beyond fleeting social-media interactions to delve into the lives of consumers.

"The blending of personal involvement with one's brand brings both emotion and credibility together, adding a personal touch that fully envelopes its readers," said Deb Pollack, Los Angeles-based luxury automotive marketing and public relations expert.

"By reaching out to fans for their own stories, the loyalty only grows deeper as it brings a heart to the brand and can portray a global entity with a warmer and more intimate face to the public," she said.

Ms. Pollack is not affiliated with Mercedes, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Mercedes-Benz USA did not respond by press deadline.

More than numbers

The Owner Stories began in October 2012 and each issue investigates the stories behind six Mercedes-Benz owners.

In the latest issue, the profiles are organized according to performance and lifestyle.



One fan, Lewis Irving, drives a 1972 280 SE 4.5 Sedan. His profile is arranged with a question and answer format and the excerpt says, "Only a true diehard could turn an ant-infested backyard relic into a showstopper."



Mr. Irving

Questions asked by Mercedes include, "Were you always into stance culture?" and "What kind of reception does the 108 get from other people?"



Mr. Irving

Another owner, Daniel O'Keefe, is profiled with a personal narrative describing how his early passion to own a classic Mercedes materialized when he took a test-drive in a 1967 250 SL Roadster.

Also, owners Larry and Mimi Gidi describe their 1,758 mile road trip spanning four countries in a 2013 E350 Coupe.



Mrs. Gidi

Each issue closes with an invitation asking fans to tell their own story for a chance to be featured in future issues.

A world of stories

Mercedes has consistently displayed its prowess for social media and technological innovations.

For instance, Mercedes-Benz USA invited five of Instagram's most lauded users to ignite interest in the CLA model among young consumers by touring the United States in the vehicle.

The automaker up the journey to a sixth entrant who will be selected by the five recognized photographers to boost fan interest in the promotions. The contest appealed to Generation Y consumers buying Instagram and allowing fans to participate in the campaign ([see story](#)).

Also, the brand is looking to stay ahead of its competitors by fine-tuning a Google Glass door-to-door navigation system that will likely pique the interest of technology enthusiasts.

The automaker's quest to create an operational Google Glass navigation program may encounter obstacles, but the innovative bent of the project demonstrates the brand's forward-looking objectives. Reliance on GPS navigation is second-nature for drivers today, so searching for ways to enhance this technology will likely appeal to huge swaths of consumers ([see story](#)).

While maintaining a presence on social media it is essential for brands to find thoughtful ways to stand out.

"The stories create a social network amongst an exclusive group of people that have something in common, and that something is there love for a brand," said [Lauren Fix](#), automotive expert and author of "[Lauren Fix's Guide to Loving Your Car](#)," Lancaster, NY.

"The more continual and constant contact you have with final consumers, the better results you have with sales and the more they will talk positively about the brand," she said.

Final take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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