

Selling luxury: cadillac advertisements essay

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



As a luxury car brand, Cadillac has undoubtedly been facing marketing questions when it comes to their brand in recent years. With a growing consumer focus on cars with high gas mileage and an upper-middle-class with shrinking disposable income, luxury goods manufacturers like Cadillac have had to make changes in the way that they market their goods. In the past, Cadillac could rely on brand recognition and brand name to sell their cars, but with the diversification of the car market and the growing consumer discontent with the traditional options available, name recognition is not enough anymore. The brand must continue to attract new and an increasingly diverse population of customers into the fold, and keep the customers that they have loyal to the brand. This means that any marketing strategy employed by the company must be carefully constructed to be appealing to both the type of people who do have enough disposable income to fund a luxury purchase like a Cadillac car, but also to people who are on the cusp of having that type of disposable income. This paper will examine two separate advertisements, noting the differences between these two styles and the marketing purposes that each advertisement serves within a complex and varied market.

The first advertisement, found on Cadillac's YouTube page, is entitled "The All-New 2014 Cadillac CTS: Moon," and it was released early in the fall of 2013 with the reveal of the new 2014 Cadillacs. This video features images of a young child in the backseat of a Cadillac sedan, looking out the window as two adults drive the car towards the rising moon, while the static-ridden messages of astronauts play in the background. The narrator says, "A funny thing happens when you shoot for the moon. You get there" ("The All-New

2014 Cadillac CTS: Moon"). This spot is clearly targeted towards parents; it plays on television, primarily during the times of day which parents of young children are likely to be watching television-- notably the early evening.

This is an advertisement that serves a number of different purposes. First, the advertisement makes the car itself look, for lack of a better word, cool. The car is sleek and quiet as it shoots off towards a huge rising moon; it's a car designed with cutting-edge technologies and many different options for the consumer. The implication is that the car can do anything, without limit-- even drive on the moon. The second important aspect of this car commercial is somewhat more complex. The introduction of the child into the frame indicates that this car is designed to appeal to young, well-to-do parents-- parents who are still concerned with looking cool, as well as being safe and caring for their child. This is not a family car advertisement; there are no laughing children and there is no chaos. Instead, there is merely a sense of calm and connection between the father and son in the advertisement, as though they are bonding over this late-night ride to the moon. This ad is designed to appeal mainly to men, particularly fathers; the thinking of the advertisers is to design an ad that appeals to both the father and the man within an individual, providing him with a multi-layered reason for checking into a Cadillac as an option for an automobile.

One of the problems of advertisements like this is that they are generally focused in a male-centric manner. In the past, most households had men as the main breadwinners; however, in America today, most households have parents who are joint breadwinners (Michman). This type of male-centered advertising can be detrimental to a car's sales if a woman within a household

does not feel the same type of pull from the marketing campaign as her male partner does. It is for this reason that a more varied approach to luxury brands like Cadillac should be considered by marketing professionals-- however, they seem to be somewhat behind the curve.

According to Okonkwo, brands like Cadillac are facing increasing pressure from the Internet and all the technologies that have come along with the Internet. Okonkwo writes, "Luxury is neither a product, an object, a service nor is it a concept or a lifestyle. It is an identity, a philosophy and a culture. Recent publications have raised the issues of the compatibility of luxury and the Internet, the suitability of luxury goods in the virtual environment and strategic approaches to maximising a luxury brand's presence online. Until recently, the luxury industry showed low commitment towards integrating advanced Internet technologies and its accompanying interactive and digital tools in the sector's marketing and overall business strategies" (Okonkwo). However, in recent advertisements, Cadillac has shown a distinct movement towards integrating their marketing strategy with new technologies; they seem to be focused on cultivating a new crop of customers, customers that have a very different mentality than some of the other, older customers that have long been the mainstay of the Cadillac customer base.

In the second advertisement, entitled "The All New 2014 Cadillac CTS Sedan: Garages," the commercial shows a variety of different garages, informing the viewer: "The Wright Brothers started in a garage Amazon started in a garage you never know what kind of greatness is going to come out of an American garage" ("The All New 2014 Cadillac CTS Sedan: Garages"). This is another advertisement for the younger people that are

thinking of purchasing a Cadillac. The self-created millionaire is one of America's most-loved fables; by aligning themselves with this particular American myth, Cadillac has the attention of a generation of young people that have grown up on the stories of the self-made millionaire. However, this is something of a disingenuous comparison, as all the companies that are named by the commercial created something; Cadillac is encouraging consumerism rather than creation.

Both of these advertisements focus on an upper-middle class, young, and hip viewer, with the hope of luring in more young people to the brand. With the exception of a few different models of car-- the Escalade, notably-- Cadillac has become known in recent years as a car preferred by older people. This means that Cadillac is losing out on a large share of the population that could become life-long Cadillac customers, a share of the market that they cannot afford to lose, especially with the heavy competition from foreign cars in the American car market.

These are two of the new advertisements that have come from Cadillac's recent campaign, just unveiled to help them sell their 2014 sedans. They cannot compete with some of the other options on the market insofar as gas mileage is concerned; instead, they focus on trying to rebrand the car itself, hinting in every commercial that it is more "American" to buy American cars over foreign-made cars, and also indicating that the new Cadillacs can compete with other foreign cars insofar as technology is concerned.

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