

WPPED CREAM 2008

PUBLIC RELATIONS | CRÉMÉ DE LA CRÉMÉ | COHN & WOLFE SHANGHAI
FORD CHINA/EXCITEMENT CHALLENGE

SUMMARY

People don't just buy products. They buy brands ~ especially when it comes to autos and especially in China. That's why Ford seeks to build a brand image in tune with its vision/mantra: "Make Every Day Exciting."

Ford sensed that people need excitement for purposes of balance, release and overall life satisfaction ~ and decided to do something about it, declaring that "Make Every Day Exciting" would not be just another pithy marketing slogan.

That's when Cohn & Wolfe created the Ford China Excitement Challenge (CEC) ~ a programme to link Ford with the notion of excitement beyond just its product offering.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY

Ford is an automotive pioneer, famous throughout the world. It also enjoys high awareness in China. However, it was late to market compared to other brands. It entered with products that did not inspire consumers. In addition, Ford was burdened by perceptions of inefficient engines and low fuel economy. In effect, it was seen as an old brand producing big, heavy American cars. Hence the need to rebuild a powerful and heroic brand image in China.

In fact, things have changed: Ford now offers good looking, high-quality products designed in Europe, featuring superior driving dynamics, Euro styling and German engineering - all appealing to a young, fashionable, adventurous, energetic Chinese consumer.

With this in mind, Ford wanted to actually "Make Every Day Exciting" for its target on many levels. To do so Cohn & Wolfe helped develop an integrated campaign to generate national and grass roots consumer involvement.

RESEARCH

Nielsen was authorized on behalf of Ford to conduct the "What excites you, China?" nationwide consumer poll of 1000 adults. The key finding of the study was a big gap between the importance people place on excitement and their actual ability to achieve it: 75% thought excitement is very important. Only 26% get enough of it in real life. Lack of time and money was perceived as a barrier to an exciting life.

The study also revealed what people think is most exciting (success in business and romance scored high), who the most exciting people are (Bill Gates, Li Jia Cheng), and who leads the most exciting life (world travellers and artists).

These and other findings directed design of programme content.

WPPED CREAM 2008

PLANNING

1. Communications Objectives:

- Make Ford a relevant, respected, exciting brand
- Bring the brand vision to life
- Generate incremental dealer visits/test drives

2. Measurement Criteria

Traffic to the website, online registrations, participation in blogs and chat rooms, dealer visits, media coverage and incremental sales volume.

3. Target audience:

The emerging Chinese middle class is comprised largely of white-collar workers aged 25-45 with household earnings of RMB 10k or more per month.

4. Campaign Messages

- Chinese people want and need more excitement in their lives
- Ford can be a source and solution to get it
- CEC will show you how
- Ford is a brand of adventurous spirit and positive energy offering exciting products with superior driving dynamics

5. Communication tactics:

External: Advertising (prepared by JWT), advertorials national press events, dealer events, promotions, local market events, website, BBS, blogs, chat rooms, third party spokespersons, ongoing media relations, collateral, premiums and CRM.

Internal: Employee events, contests, collateral.

6. Dealer support:

- Campaign videos, TVC, "Making-of the TVC", print ads, postcards, keychain premium, campaign signage all on site
- Ford Excitement Quotient (FEQ) quiz used to gauge excitement levels pre- and post-test drive.
- Dealer involvement in grassroots recruitment and events in 14 local markets.

EXECUTION

1. CEC theme website: www.excitechina.com.cn

The official site for CEC contained the FEQ Test, Excitement Coach Online AI search engine, Press Room, BBS, Excitement 101, Blogs and Excitement 21 daily Video Broadcast. Website content included:

EXCITEMENT 101: A searchable online database with 101 exciting things to do in China, coupled with a monthly calendar update of current activities and by-lined tips from celebrities on how they put excitement into their lives.

FORD EXCITEMENT QUOTIENT (FEQ): A proprietary scientific quiz to measure excitement in common life situations and mental states. This diagnostic offered results-based "prescriptions" on how to increase levels of excitement as well as suggesting which Ford model would be most appealing. The FEQ was also used as a registration device online and to help screen candidates for Excitement 21.

WPPED CREAM 2008

2. Excitement 21

The centerpiece of the programme was designed to be a life altering experience; in this case to change behaviour to make life more exciting. 18 people from all over China were screened from the online registrants and divided into two groups of nine. Each group would visit seven cities and undertake exciting activities on 21 consecutive days. (Noted: 21 consecutive days is the amount of time many behaviour modification programmes use as the minimum time need to change behaviour).

Among the many activities that were designed for this programme were spider man (dressed in a velcro spider man suit, participants would jump and stick to a moving truck), water surface floating (the players would power a huge transparent ball from the inside across a river) and time-limited shopping (a wild competitive race in a hypermarket to fill a shopping cart with goods that would exactly match a specified shopping “allowance”).

A video of each day’s activities was uploaded on the website so people could watch and vote for “China’s Most Exciting.” The vote was held via online and a special judging panel.

Participants’ excitement levels were also scientifically monitored on pre- and post- excitement states. Metrics included heart rates, skin temperatures and galvanic response, physical reaction times and so on. Subjective tests and scientific hardware were used to do this. Measurements were developed by former NASA space-programme expert Dr. Mark Rosekind and his team of human factors experts:

3. Spokespersons: The excitement Coach and the Social Psychologist

Adventurer and Travel Channel TV host, Arthur, was spokesperson cheerleader for Excitement 21 and the website personality, Psychologist Dr. Zhang Yiyun, consulted and spoke to media.

4. Press events:

Three national press events were held during the 6-month programme cycle with 200 press plus special guests attending each.

CEC campaign kick-off event on July 17, in Shanghai: CEC campaign was announced in a non traditional venue, Shanghai Circus World, with a special show illustrating the excitement theme.

Excitement 21 kick-off event on Sep 6, in Shanghai: Excitement 21 is a grass roots “intervention” that took people on a 21-day journey around China, engaging in exciting activities in each of 14 cities.

Finale event: Summarized the campaign and awarded new cars to “the most exciting contestants” of Excitement 21.

WPPED CREAM 2008

RESULTS

- More than 250 primary media produced over 1000 media treatments including two full hours of television coverage
- Travel Channel produced a 30 minute documentary that aired five times on national television
- 430,000,000 audience impressions
- 300,000,000 visitors and 680,000 registrants at the CEC website
- Viral video has been reviewed over 2.5million times
- Dealer visits for test drives increased 473%
- Product sales grew 177%
- Average excitement increase levels among Excitement 21 participants were up 531%

ACCOUNT TEAM

Doug Buemi, Lydia Shen, Derek Meng, Ray Wu, Cecily Chen, Jacqueline Liu, Christie Zheng, Reggie Wu, Vivi Guo