

Entry: 9056

Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa Social Media Campaign

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Page: Entrant Information

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Membership

Member

Membership Type

Student

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Awards Program

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Entry Title

Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa Social Media Campaign

Page: Entry Form

RESEARCH

In the Spring 2019 semester, I served as an account executive in Mississippi State University's Department of Communication student-led public relations media agency. My client was Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa, and the main thing they wanted my team and I to focus on was their social media accounts.

Before creating and implementing a strategic social media communication plan, we conducted a thorough SWOT analysis to identify the potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing our client. The key findings were as follows:

- One of the greatest strengths we identified was our client's location. The dealership is in the middle of a city with a population of 239,589, according to the last census, and the average income is \$48,344.
- Our client's greatest weakness was their lack of social media engagement. In this digital age, every business must attempt to have an active presence on social media. Studies show that inactive social media accounts could negatively impact the perception of one's business in the community.
- One of the main opportunities we identified was being able to pay for advertising (boosting) on social media. We could input the demographics we wanted to reach and see the return of investment instantly.
- The main threat facing our client was competing dealerships in the region. Other Mercedes-Benz dealerships nearby included ones in Birmingham, Memphis, and Jackson. If we could not use social media to showcase why someone should do business at the dealership in Tuscaloosa, we could potentially lose clients.

As part of the SWOT analysis, we also critically reviewed Mercedes-Benz's social media accounts, discovering an excessive reliance on stock photos, little-to-no engagement, and no strategic posting plan. Additionally, we reviewed the social media accounts of our client's primary competitors and found that all of their accounts, except one, had higher engagement than Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa's.

Ultimately, we determined that our campaign needed to focus on growing the engagement, analytics, and quality of posts published by Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa.

PLANNING

After conducting the research, we created the following opportunity statement: "Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa has the opportunity to develop a compelling social media presence by creating content that humanizes, engages, and showcases the service of the dealership."

Our two goals for the campaign were:

1. to build Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa's brand recognition
2. to increase Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa's social media engagement

We had two objectives for our campaign. The first one was to increase Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa's digital presence within the community of Tuscaloosa by increasing the quality of content produced and promoted by 25 percent on their Facebook page by April 12, 2019. Our second objective was to encourage and increase the amount of engagement between Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa and its current and potential clients by cultivating and monitoring digital engagement by 40 percent by April 12, 2019.

The main strategy we used to accomplish our goals was to generate engaging posts that could help create relationships with potential clients. The key publics, or areas of influence, we identified included residents of Starkville, Tupelo, Columbus, West Point, and Tuscaloosa, which totaled 483,445 people, according to the latest census data.

IMPLEMENTATION

We planned to execute our objectives through strategic and engaging social media posts. Our tactics included:

- #MercedesMonday - showcases a Mercedes-Benz vehicle
- #TeamMemberTuesday - highlights a team member's strengths, knowledge, and interests
- #WeCareWednesday - shows how the dealership ensures affordable prices and quality vehicles for clients
- #WhatsOnTheLotWednesday - displays pre-owned and new cars that have been difficult to move off the lot
- #ThankfulThursday - features employees expressing what they're thankful for
- #ThrowbackThursday - gives customers insight into the dealership's brand and history
- #FeatureFriday - Features a part of a vehicle or features what is going on in the dealership

As a team, we spent an entire day in Tuscaloosa producing videos and photos with the staff to later post on Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa's social media accounts. We also told the story of

the dealership through captivating verbiage and eye-catching visuals. We highlighted several Mercedes-Benz vehicles and employees throughout the campaign.

Timeline

Initial Proposal (3 weeks)

We proposed an initial plan that included creating a strategic communication plan to increase social media engagement. We came up with five themed days to implement over the campaign: #MercedesMonday, #TeamMemberTuesday, #WeCareWednesday, #WhatsontheLotWednesday, #ThankfulThursday, and #FeatureFriday.

Content Calendar Production and Implementation (11 weeks)

B-roll day: The team went to Mercedes-Benz of Tuscaloosa to shoot photos and videos. B-roll day was successful, and we had many assets to work with to implement our plan. We also scheduled two staff meetings during the week to discuss the plan for the following week and also to review the current week analytics. After B-roll day, some of the content we created was features on vehicles, employees, and their work. We also created visually appealing graphics that captured the attention of our online audience. We also highlighted customer testimonials to create transparency between the clients and staff.

Evaluation (2 weeks)

At the end of the 11 weeks, we evaluated what worked about our campaign and what we could improve moving forward. The evaluation period included creating a final report, presentation, and portfolio for our client.

Budget

Our team went in knowing that our client would approve boosting posts. We requested approval each time we wanted to promote a post. We had to justify to the client why the visual deserved boosting. The account team determined if a post was boosted if it was doing well without promoting and if it was backed up with strong verbiage. We tried to advertise all of our videos since those were unique to the dealership.

EVALUATION

Upon completion of this campaign, we evaluated its effectiveness. From Jan. 2019 - March 2019, their Facebook account had a 1,678.72% increase in engagements (likes, reactions, comments, shares) and reach (how many times a person sees a post). The campaign's objectives were exceeded and were accomplished within our timeline. We produced 46 posts, 6,852 engagements, and reached a total of 54,764 Facebook accounts. Page followers engaged with our content 1,155 times, left 50 comments, and was shared 170 times. We spent 206 hours on the campaign, 36 on research, 69 on creative, and 101 on administrative duties. We spent a total of \$200 on boosting and advertised seven posts. Every day a vehicle is on the lot costs the dealership money. Our creative social media campaign helped sell a Weekender van through a feature video, which in turn saved the dealership thousands of dollars. One limitation that arose was when the dealership contracted another agency to do social media posts. We had to overcome posting back-to-back and when the other agency published underperforming posts. We addressed this problem with the client during the campaign, and the underperforming content was no longer published. After our final presentation of our campaign, the dealership decided to continue to partner with our team for future campaigns.

Please upload supporting documentation and project materials for the judges' review. These materials supplement your summary and execution of the four-step process above. **Each entry must include at least one file**, but up to three files are allowed.

Multiple file types are allowed, but **PDFs are highly recommended**. Please contact the Awards Chair if you have any issues.

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Page: Presentation Materials

Should your entry be selected for recognition, this information will be engraved on the awards and used during the presentation ceremony. At least one line is required, but you may provide up to three lines of text. It is not necessary to provide the entry title and category name. **Please keep individual credits to 60 total characters or less.** Credits that exceed these limits will be edited to fit existing space.

Suggested Format:

Award Line 1: Organization

Award Lines 2-3: Individual Credits

Award Line 1

Mississippi State University Public Relations and Integrated Student Media Agency

Award Line 2

Blake Williams

Award Line 3

Presentation Image

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