

Auto Ads Win Over Car Shoppers During Super Bowl® XLVIII

Searches for advertised brands and vehicles spike on AutoTrader.com during the big game

ATLANTA, Feb. 3, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Automakers spent millions on ads during Super Bowl® XLVIII to grab the attention of car shoppers, and based on search activity on AutoTrader.com®, the investment paid off. For the third year in a row, analysts measured activity on AutoTrader.com during the big game to see which ads went beyond entertaining viewers to entice them to actively seek out more information about the brands and vehicles shown.

One of the big stories of the night was around shopper interest in luxury vehicles, particularly exotics. Surprise advertiser Maserati saw the biggest lift in searches at both the make and model level: searches for the Ghibli model rose 2,143% the hour after their ad ran, while searches for Maserati as a whole were up 385%. First-time big game advertiser Jaguar wasn't too far behind – searches for the F-Type were up 1,460% the hour after their "Rendezvous" spot ran, while searches for Jaguar overall rose 208%.

Luxury vehicles from the higher volume manufacturers also drew in a significant amount of car shopper interest: the Audi A3 saw the third largest gain from a make/model perspective with a 379% increase in search activity coming from their "Doberhuahua" spot, with Hyundai right on their heels with a 373% lift in searches for the Genesis. However, automakers didn't necessarily have to have a high-end offering to break through; the lift in searches for mainstream models Toyota Highlander and Ford Fusion were also significant – up 84% and 81%, respectively.

"While the strong performance of the exotic manufacturers was impressive, it's in a way more relevant to see which of the volume vehicles broke through," said Rick Wainschel, vice president of automotive insights, AutoTrader.com. "Models like the A3, Genesis, Fusion and Highlander have a significant amount of competition and are on more consumers' shopping lists, so it means a bit more when they can stand out."

From a brand perspective, Kia was another big winner of the night, with a search lift of 150% the hour following "The Truth" spot. Hyundai and Audi performed well in the brand category as well, with searches up 50% and 47%, respectively. The Chrysler brand ad featuring Bob Dylan was another strong performer, with a lift of 47%.

"It's not easy to achieve these kinds of large shifts in search activity at the brand level, so it's clear that these ads were doing something right," said John Kovac, vice president of Marketing, AutoTrader Group. "The Kia ad in particular was a great example of leveraging smart creative to shift brand perception in a very relevant, intentional way, and it definitely resonated with car shoppers."

To reach these conclusions, AutoTrader.com expert analysts measured search activity at the make and model level in the hour immediately after the ad ran and compared it to activity the hour before the game (5-6 p.m. EST). This timeframe was determined to be the most statistically appropriate baseline after an extensive analysis of site traffic patterns over several years. With more than 17 million consumers visiting the site every month to research and shop for their next vehicle, AutoTrader.com is an ideal bellwether of automotive shopping behavior.

[AutoTrader.com](#) analysts will continue to monitor how the ads impact searches in the days and weeks ahead to identify which spots were most effective in sustaining consumer attention. Researchers will also be gathering attitudinal insights from on-site surveys and the site's big game [social landing page](#), where consumers can watch all of the automotive commercials, comment and vote on their favorites.

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