

Automakers Leverage Halo Models to Score with Car Shoppers During Super Bowl XLIX

Mercedes, Lexus and Fiat Chrysler among big game ad war winners

ATLANTA, Feb. 2, 2015 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- While some used humor, others promoted performance and a few played on raw emotion, Super Bowl XLIX® was the year that almost all automakers chose to leverage the big game to make a strong brand statement. For the fourth year in a row, AutoTrader analysts measured site search activity real-time during the game to determine which ads won not just the hearts, but the minds of in-market car shoppers.

"Even though several brands chose to sit out this year, this game continues to be an effective way for automakers to reach masses of potential customers," said Michelle Krebs, AutoTrader.com senior analyst. "As our data showed, the key to success is to cut through the clutter and grab car shoppers' attention by showing them a side of your brand that they may not have known existed."

At the brand level, the big winner of the night was Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA), as search traffic for Fiat increased by 143% after its "Blue Pill" spot aired, and searches for Dodge brand overall rose by 27% after "Wisdom," the ad for the Challenger, ran in the first quarter. Additionally, interest in FCA's Jeep Renegade spiked by 1,242% from its "Beautiful Lands" commercial.

Another strong performer at the brand level was Nissan: searches for the brand increased by 11% after the emotional "With Dad" spot aired.

In terms of the model searches, luxury was the name of the game. The Mercedes-Benz AMG GT S and BMW i3 experienced immense increases in search traffic after their spots ran, rising 3,107% and 433%, respectively. Lexus also had a phenomenal night, with searches for the RC350 up 2,069% and NX up 294% after their ads aired. Kia also enjoyed triple-digit increases at the model level, with searches up 205% for the Sorento after "The Perfect Getaway" spot.

"This year we saw a distinct trend of automakers using their lesser-known vehicles to convey brand messages – like Lexus and Mercedes-Benz," said Krebs. "The RC350 and AMG GT S aren't going to be high-volume sellers, but themes displayed in these commercials will cause shoppers to rethink the brands as a whole."

Chevrolet also proved that you don't necessarily need to advertise during the game itself to grab shopper's attention. Pre-game ads for the Colorado ('TV Blackout,' 'You Know You Want a Truck,' 'Back in Black') fueled an impressive 395% spike in search traffic for the midsize truck.

To determine the traffic spikes, AutoTrader.com expert analysts measured site search activity in the hour immediately after each advertisement ran, and compared it to search activity the hour before the game (5-6 p.m. EST). This time frame was determined to be the most statistically appropriate baseline after an extensive analysis of site traffic patterns over several years.

AutoTrader.com analysts will continue to monitor how the ads impact searches in the days and weeks ahead to identify which commercials were most effective in sustaining viewer 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:

www.autotrader.com/autobowl.

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