

Radio: The Perfect “Showcase” For Chrysler



OBJECTIVE

To generate traffic to the Chrysler Showcase, a traveling display of Chrysler products.

MEDIA STRATEGY

Find a medium that's efficient, provides enough time or space to tell a complicated story, and offers plentiful promotional options.

RADIO PLAN

Partner with Radio stations that can deliver an efficient buy, plus an attractive list of events at which the Showcase can appear.

RESULTS

In Atlanta alone, 11 million impressions in 1999, which generated 50,000 visitors to the Showcase. More than 31,000 visitors in the first half of 2000

In February, 2000, FCB Atlanta invited local Radio stations for a briefing about its planned summer promotion. Every single station in the market showed up, ready to listen. Not long after, every single station returned, ready to present.

They were all vying to promote the Chrysler Showcase — a traveling display of Chrysler products created to give consumers a chance to familiarize themselves with the carmaker's product line before visiting their local showroom. In addition to trained “ambassadors” who are product specialists, the showcase includes interactive computer kiosks and a listing of current sales incentives and local dealer locations. The Showcase works best at malls, outdoor concerts, art festivals and other community-oriented events — all of which just happen to be the most common locations for Radio station events.

It's no surprise that in the four-year history of the Showcase, Radio has been “the medium of choice,” said David Woodard, account supervisor at FCB Atlanta. “Radio stations have provided the media support the program needs, and have been highly instrumental in proposing and providing the venues where the Chrysler Showcase appears.” So when station reps filed one-by-one into FCB's conference room, “They not only had to make solid media sense,” Woodard said, “They needed to include a multitude of events.”

For instance, Atlanta oldies station, Fox 97 sponsors the Ultimate Oldies Concert every May in the Georgia Dome, featuring about 20 acts, such as Little Richard, The Beach Boys and Jerry Lee Lewis. There's also a free concert beforehand, which is where the Chrysler Showcase was set up. According to Woodard, “In any given year, we get two to three thousand people who come in and crawl all over our products. People literally wait in line for the chance to get inside Chrysler's PT Cruiser or a minivan.” At the same time, Fox 97 sponsors an oldies car show that flanks the Chrysler Showcase, which only serves to bring more car buffs to the event.

What's significant to Woodard is that Fox 97 and the other stations they participate with are already the “official stations” of various events, so they have natural relationships with local event promoters. As a result, the Chrysler Showcase simply piggybacks on the built-in enthusiasm, existing infrastructure and promotional savvy of each Radio station they partner with.

Another such event is SummerFest, a three-day art festival in Atlanta that's co-hosted by Z93, the local classic rock station. “Because people have made a decision to spend a day down there,” Woodard said, “they have the time to come over to the Showcase display. In a lot of cases, they're just kind of hanging out and seeing everything. You've got a relatively captive audience.”

And as far as Chrysler is concerned, the only work they've had to do was get the Showcase to SummerFest. Everything else had been handled by Z93. As for Z93, the Showcase is an ideal turnkey promo that fits easily into an existing event.

Another reason Radio was selected by Chrysler was that its :60 format is sufficient to tell the company's entire story. “Part of the challenge was that the advertising had to not only describe the Showcase, it also had to communicate dates and locations as well as support other current dealer incentives — all in a manner appropriate to the Chrysler brand,” Woodard said. “Various media were evaluated and explored for this effort,” said Lisa Pilzner, vp/associate media director at FCB Worldwide in Southfield Michigan. “Radio turned out to be the most effective singular medium.”

Once Radio was selected, Chrysler decided to split each :60s into :40s of recorded copy about the Showcase and other Chrysler sales information followed by a live :20 read that allows each station to “inject its own character into the spot,” while providing time and location information about the event.

In 1999, in Atlanta alone, Chrysler's Radio buy achieved 11 million impressions, which yielded 50,000 visitors to the Showcase. In the first half of this year, over 31,000 guests have visited the Showcase, well ahead of last year's pace.

The Atlanta effort has been viewed as so successful by Business Incentive, the company that created and operates the Showcase, that they asked Woodard to present the case study to its national field force for use in markets around the country. They would be wise to listen to him. ●



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