

Objective

Millward Brown Precise were asked by Ford to assess the PR impact of the Streetka launch among the British, both within the context of the Ford brand and against key competitors. Ford also sought to determine whether the image- and design-based marketing had been successful enough to win over the media.

Background

The image of the Streetka is fun and fashionable — very different from Ford's other models. The challenge was to develop highly-targeted marketing, based on the car's image and appeal, aimed at a core target market of young, fashion conscious people — primarily women. An innovative approach was essential in order to make an impact in the increasingly competitive automotive environment. Australian pop star Kylie Minogue was chosen as the face of the Streetka and appeared during the launch at the Paris Motor Show. Ford also used other supporting strategic activity including coverage at London Fashion Week, where fashion designer Julien Macdonald customized a Streetka in his own style.

Analysis

The majority of our analysis was conducted on a broad sample of media — a syndicated list of regional and national newspapers, automotive magazines and selected lifestyle publications. In order to determine the impact and effectiveness of the targeted Julien Macdonald campaign Millward Brown Precise collaborated with sister company Mindshare. Our data were integrated with Mindshare's which allowed the target group to be isolated (women aged 20-34 in socio-economic groups ABC1). The effectiveness of PR agency PiranhaKid's media targeting was then assessed to get a true reflection of the reach of the Streetka PR.

Results

The Streetka launch was a hit. It not only generated more media coverage than any other Ford model, except the Focus, but it also created greater impact than all of its direct convertible competitors. Our analysis of the media coverage showed that Streetka had garnered favorable reporting across its target which proved extremely effective in showing Streetka's success in its general appeal.

The association between Streetka and Kylie Minogue generated substantial interest in the model with the majority of sources praising the link. The idea that Kylie's physical attributes mirrored those of the Streetka was picked up strongly and was reinforced by images of the pop star draped across the vehicle.

Streetka generated very little negative coverage, with the only disapproval stemming from its interior. However, the overwhelming praise for its exterior and image far outweighed any criticism.

The collaborative research with Mindshare vindicated the decision to carry out highly-targeted campaigns on the key audience. Julien Macdonald coverage, which constituted only a very small proportion of the total number of press articles, hit a higher proportion of the target audience than all other coverage combined at that stage. The generic coverage reached 68 percent of the target audience at least once. But when combined with the targeted Julien Mcdonald campaign the Streetka coverage reached a remarkable 96 percent of the target audience.

Conclusion

By integrating Minshare's readership demographics with our quantitative and qualitative media analysis, Ford was able to substantiate the value and success of its Streetka launch and gain greater insight into effective PR launch strategies.