

Kia Motors America

Company Background

Kia Motors America is the marketing and distribution arm of Kia Motors Corporation based in Seoul, South Korea. The company offers a complete line of vehicles in the U.S. and its market share has grown for 16 consecutive years. Kia Motors launched a dramatic design-led transformation in 2009, which began delivering dynamically styled vehicles including the funky Soul, U.S.-built Sorento and the critically acclaimed 2011 Optima. Kia is focused on building the brand through design innovation, quality, value, safety features and with new technologies.

Objective

Kia became active on Facebook when it launched the Soul urban passenger vehicle in 2009. The Soul was intended to be a transformational car for Kia and was designed to appeal to Gen Y, or the “social generation.” Kia saw Facebook as an ideal channel to support the launch of this important vehicle due to the target audience’s desire to consume information in social environments.

“Facebook has become a natural cornerstone of any social media engagement,” says Dave Schoonover, National Manager of CRM and Digital Marketing at Kia Motors America. “What we like most about Facebook is that we not only have the opportunity to create a community, but we can also engage in targeted advertising.” Kia sought to leverage Facebook’s scale, targeting and engagement to

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Dave Schoonover

National Manager, CRM & Digital Marketing, Kia Motors America



Facebook Executive Summary

Client:



facebook.com/kiasoul

Objective:

Drive sales and consideration for the Kia Soul, and build a brand community

Solution:

Run a Facebook Ads campaign to launch the Kia Soul brand to the “social generation” followed by sustaining media on Facebook to grow awareness and familiarity for the brand

Key Lessons:

- Facebook Ads can be a useful tool for driving awareness of a new brand
- Nurturing your Facebook community can turn your fans into brand advocates and can drive word of mouth
- Cross-media campaigns that are built to be social can be more effective than those that add social at the end

create awareness and consideration for the new Soul. It also wanted to generate familiarity with the car to make people aware of its unique and fresh styling, great value and high level of technology. Kia also wanted to build a community around the Soul brand and identify influencers who could help spread positive word of mouth about the car among their friends and colleagues.

Approach

Creating familiarity with the Gen Y target audience was a primary goal for Kia to provide the brand with an opportunity to showcase its new line of vehicles and encourage consumer interaction and education about the Soul's unique features. Kia was able to create an experience within its Facebook Page where it could showcase stunning visual representations of its products.

In addition to engaging consumers with its products, Kia built a custom tab with an augmented reality game called "Go Hamster Go!" The game was highlighted in Kia's ad creative and its use of face tracking added to the cool factor of the campaign. Kia leveraged the natural activities of people on Facebook by using Premium Poll Ads as the primary way to educate its consumers about key product information. For example, in one Poll Ad, Kia asked the question: "What's your favorite setting for your speakers?" as a way to familiarize people with the variety of pulsating light settings incorporated into the Soul's audio system. "This target expects marketers to come to them with

a solid understanding of who they are and deliver customized messaging that is highly relevant," says Dave. "If our target is the social generation and we're not engaging with them in a social manner, we are by definition not legitimate in their eyes."

In order to generate and sustain awareness and consideration, Kia executed a Soul launch campaign in 2009 and a follow-up effort in 2010. The launch phase consisted of Engagement Ads including Premium Video Ads, Premium Like Ads, and Premium Poll Ads. Kia used a mix of Age and Likes and Interests Targeting to reach its customers. After establishing a community with the Soul launch campaign, Kia leveraged those connections in its sustain program by targeting its fans and their friends. Kia's Facebook activity has enabled the company to formulate a unique approach among auto advertisers who typically restrict their media spending to a 12-month period for new vehicle launches and rely heavily on TV advertising. According to Dave, Kia's Facebook strategy "is about outreach and building a community – and ideally one is a function of the other."

Results

- The Soul sustain campaign led to a 13 - point increase in awareness for Kia's Soul, according to a study conducted by media research firm The Nielsen Company
- According to Nielsen, 14 percent of individuals said their perception of the Kia brand improved after seeing the ad (a significant increase over the control group)
- The Premium Video Like Ads, including the names of friends who had already connected to Kia via "Friends of Connections" targeting, resulted in the highest engagement rate for the campaign
- There are now over 89,000 people who are part of the Kia Soul Facebook community, which means the brand can reach over 31 million friends of those fans with Friends of Connections Targeting

The success of Kia's Soul launch effort led Kia to conduct additional campaigns for both the Soul and several other Kia models. "Our 13 - point lift in awareness is significant and indicates that we've found something that works and we will continue to

Sponsored
Create an Ad

The new 2010 Kia Soul



Whatever happened to being unique? Enter the Kia Soul, a car that looks and moves different. It's a new way to roll. Kiasoul.com.

Who would most likely drive a Soul?

Hot Dog Eating Champion

Kung Fu Master

Homecoming Queen

89,385 people like Kia Soul.

leverage that,” says Dave. “To have a brand lift like that, something substantial has to happen. We were fortunate that the catalyst in this case was a great product.”

Kia’s campaigns were also successful in building an engaged community around the Soul brand. That community has given Kia an additional benefit: the ability to educate consumers about the Soul brand and product in a deeper way, which has been critical given the relative youth of both the Kia and Soul brands. “Our Facebook activity has helped increase awareness of Kia,” says Dave. “But Facebook has also driven familiarity so that people are not just aware that we exist, but actually are familiar with who we are today.”

The Future

Dave sees the future relationship between Kia and Facebook as a partnership: “we have a community that we’ve invested in and have established within Facebook. We certainly hope to grow that community and to keep it fresh and engaged, with the ultimate goal of encouraging that community to be our friends and our brand advocates.” Kia is in the process of introducing its product team to the opportunities social media can offer in terms of product

development and customer feedback. “We are definitely increasing our investment in social and you can’t really have a social campaign without Facebook,” says Dave.

Since its first foray on Facebook with the Soul launch, Kia continues to conduct innovative and successful campaigns on Facebook across its growing portfolio of cars, including the Sorento, Sportage, and most recently, the launch of the Optima Turbo and the Optima Hybrid. Throughout these experiences, Dave states, “successful social media requires great strategy that’s executed with diligence and perseverance in a consistent manner over time – having engagements that add value to the community is what’s critical.”

Kia is also focusing its efforts to create more tightly integrated cross-media campaigns that are built to be social. “The real win is having the different pieces work together as a whole and understanding that each piece serves a different purpose,” explains Dave. “It’s an evolution for any brand that’s been heavy in traditional - the first step is to make a TV ad and then wrap social and mobile around it, but that’s not the right way to do it. I tell our creative agency to plan as if they are not even going to be allowed to use TV to get them thinking creatively about building integrated campaigns.”

The image shows a screenshot of the Facebook interface for the Kia Soul page. At the top, the Facebook logo and navigation icons are visible. Below the search bar, the page header for "Kia Soul" is displayed, including a "Like" button and the category "Cars". The main content area features a large advertisement for the Kia Soul, showing a red car on the left and a larger image of a brown car on the right. The advertisement includes the "SOUL" logo and the Kia Motors logo with the tagline "The Power to Surprise". On the left side of the advertisement, there is a vertical menu with icons for home, search, and other navigation options. At the bottom of the page, there is a "Wall" notification and a link to "THE KIA FACEBOOK PAGE".