

Strategic Engagement and Brand Perception: An Analysis of Social Media Marketing in the Luxury Automobile Industry

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Abstract: Internet marketing has undergone significant changes in the digital age, greatly influencing customer behavior, purchasing habits, and corporate marketing strategies. This research examines the impact of social media marketing on increasing strategic engagement and brand awareness in the luxury automotive industry, with a specific focus on Mercedes-Benz compared to other luxury brands. By conducting comparative analysis, case studies, and data analysis, this study demonstrates how luxury automotive companies employ social media content to enhance brand awareness and engage consumers. The results indicate that Mercedes-Benz's comprehensive social media strategy, which includes visually appealing content and interactive campaigns, has successfully improved brand equity and consumer response. This research underscores the importance of implementing an advanced social media marketing strategy for luxury brands to uphold their reputation and cultivate long-term customer loyalty.

Keywords: Social media marketing, luxury automobile industry, brand equity, consumer engagement, Mercedes-Benz

1. Introduction

Internet marketing has changed in the digital age, affecting customer lives and buying habits. Social media is crucial for luxury marketing techniques in many industries. Social media has created a new type of advertising using the Internet or online media platforms, called digital marketing, due to the sizeable economic market potential [1]. Luxury automakers and other businesses have used sophisticated social media marketing tactics to reach their target customers. Luxury social media marketing studies highlights higher revenue, brand loyalty, and customer interaction. However, extensive study on the luxury vehicle industry's strategy and results is lacking. This disparity highlights the need for targeted research on social media marketing's impact on luxury vehicle businesses.

This study examines how social media marketing improves luxury automobile firms' strategic engagement and brand perception, focusing on Mercedes-Benz compared to other premium firms. The article also utilizes Customer-based brand equity to examine how social media marketing works in luxury companies. This study examines how luxury automobile companies develop social media content to increase brand awareness and consumer engagement.

The paper does this through comparative analysis and case studies. To better understand their efficacy, this research compares Mercedes-Benz's social media marketing tactics and content against those of other luxury vehicle companies. This study may help luxury car companies reflect on and compare their social media marketing approaches. This report again points out the social media marketing data of major and well-known brands to refer to and help companies improve their digital strategies and increase brand awareness and engagement. This study adds to the academic literature and provides recommendations for luxury automobile professionals.

2. Introduction to Social Media Marketing in the Luxury Automobile Industry

Initially, digital marketing, which involves promoting products or brands on social media platforms, is presented appealingly by utilizing various applications, including Instagram, WhatsApp, Line, Twitter, and YouTube. In the meantime, social media marketing is employed to promote their products on both company and individual platforms, thereby boosting their online business sales [1]. It is especially pertinent to the luxury automotive industry, where consumer engagement and brand recognition are indispensable. Luxury automotive brands can expand their consumer base while preserving their distinctive identity through social media. It is particularly crucial for luxury brands that depend on maintaining high prestige and appeal that social media can enhance their core value through original and interactive applications [2].

Luxury brands have historically hesitated to implement Internet-based marketing strategies because they are concerned about preserving their distinctive image. Luxury brands must maintain their elitism and image control, as well as the Internet's classification as a largely non-selective mass communication medium [2]. Consequently, luxury brands and the Internet communication medium are not initially considered to be in alignment. Nevertheless, luxury brands gradually acknowledged the necessity of adapting to the evolving consumer behavior and the increasing significance of a digital presence. In recent years, all luxury labels have begun to establish their websites, and some have even launched online stores [2]. This signifies a significant transformation in how luxury brands market themselves and interact with consumers.

Luxury automotive brands use social media to increase brand awareness and engagement. The utilization of high-quality visual content is a current trend essential for effectively communicating a luxury experience. Social media marketing can significantly enhance brand equity and consumer response [3]. Instagram and YouTube are particularly popular due to their visual-centric nature, enabling brands to demonstrate their vehicles' performance and aesthetic features effectively. Photo and video-sharing platform Instagram has over 800 million monthly active users, and 200 playful advertisers cut more focus on visual content [4]. Furthermore, there is an increasing trend toward interactive and personalized content. Brands like Mercedes-Benz and BMW implement interactive campaigns that enable users to personalize the brand's virtual experience, thereby enhancing their perceived value and engagement.

3. Case Study: Mercedes-Benz social media marketing data and tactics in recent years

3.1. Overview of Mercedes-Benz's social media strategy

In the last few years, Mercedes-Benz has been a leader in social media marketing to enhance brand awareness and consumer engagement. The social media strategy of this brand is multifarious, encompassing a diverse range of platforms and content categories to accommodate the diverse segments of its audience. Mercedes-Benz employs a comprehensive strategy for social media marketing, emphasizing the development of visually enticing, high-quality content that resonates with its target audience. The brand maintains an extensive social media presence on prominent

platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. A customized marketing strategy is implemented for each platform to optimize brand awareness and engagement.

3.2. Target Audience and Market Situation

Before describing Mercedes-Benz's social media strategy, first outline its brand's target audience, market situation, and brand perception. Mercedes-Benz targets middle-aged individuals over 40 and young adults 25–40. Mercedes-Benz B-Class advertising dubbed "Safest Car Around For Young Families", and "2017 She's Mercedes" campaign targeted female drivers [5]. On average, Mercedes-Benz owners in the U.S. earn \$145,000, and 72% are highly educated [5]. Mercedes targets upper-middle and upper-class managers and executives who value luxury and riches. The 2018 commercial states that your Mercedes-Benz is more than just a car; it's part of your life and an expression of your style [5]. Mercedes-Benz automobiles are bought for engine performance, attractiveness, safety, and practicality. As collectors, wealthy people may acquire many luxury cars [5]. Mercedes-Benz targets young and upper middle-aged individuals. Middle-aged individuals cherish social class and stability, whereas young people's spending power grows. The image of affluent business people consistently portrayed in the advertisements and the high product price create the impression that Mercedes-Benz cars are symbols of wealth [5]. Mercedes-Benz targets youth with personalization and individualization. Creating a database with personalized information for the new generation shows the brand's focus on young consumers and invites them to enjoy a customized and unique shopping experience [5]. Mercedes-Benz attracts younger customers via celebrity endorsements and promotions. Saturated blues and pinks in Mercedes-Benz ads and the exploration of futuristic technologies leave an impression of novelty in the minds of young people [5]. Mercedes-Benz defines itself as an approachable, cool brand targeting young consumers.

Mercedes-Benz targets young people on social media. Mercedes-Benz has over 20 million Facebook fans and regional accounts for different countries [5]. The brand's Facebook approach involves uploading high-quality photographs, racing news, and automotive innovations. Mercedes-Benz U.S.A. broadcasts high-quality images, racing news, and automotive inventions to promote its historic values [5]. Working with racing stars and journalists helped them create exciting material for their accounts. This technique supports the brand value and engages visitors with regular updates and interactive content.

3.3. Social Media Platform Strategies

Mercedes-Benz has 1.2 million Instagram followers, mainly in the U.S. Mercedes-Benz has 1.2 million followers on its U.S. Instagram account, which is utilized for branding [5]. Brands publish 5-7 times each day on the site to promote themselves. High-quality photography and unique campaigns like #MBPhotoP, a campaign for famous globetrotter Kelly Lund, garnered thousands of likes and shares. In return for a C.L.A. model, the business teamed with Casey Neistat, a well-known American filmmaker who made multiple movies about his driving experiences [5]. This strategy emphasizes visually appealing content and user-written brand tales to boost engagement and loyalty.

Mercedes-Benz's YouTube campaign has 280 million subscribers and 60,822,513 views. Li & Wang [5] state that Mercedes-Benz has over 280 million subscribers and 60,822,513 total views on YouTube. Instead of text advertising, the business posts YouTube videos that boost brand recognition. The "Style Pit, Stop" series comprises documentary-style conversations with Daisy Lowe and Tinie Tempah driving Mercedes-Benz A-Class automobiles. Celebrities can build trust and awareness among youth [5].

3.4. Content Categories and Consumer Engagement

The brand employs various post categories to captivate consumers, as evidenced by a content analysis of Mercedes-Benz's social media posts. For instance, emotionally branded posts can have a substantial and advantageous effect on consumer endeavors, contingent upon the post type, as they can evoke strong emotions and establish an emotional bond between the consumer and the brand. For instance, Emotionally branded posts evoke emotions in consumers by presenting inspiring stories that generate stronger feelings and emotions, thereby establishing an emotional relationship between the consumer and the brand [6]. These postings typically include high-quality visuals or inspiring stories that resonate with viewers and improve brand equity based on digital customers.

Additionally, brand resonance posts substantially benefit share rates, reinforcing the brand's image and personality. The brand's strategy involved effectively distinguishing itself in the minds of consumers, thereby strengthening its association with prestige and luxury. Share rates were positively and significantly influenced by brand resonance posts, reinforcing the brand's image, personality, imagery, and associations [6]. Promotional postings are particularly effective in consumer response because they encourage audiences to take action, which drives engagement and conversion. In terms of response, promotional brand posts are the most effective. This is to be anticipated, as these posts encourage consumers to take action [6].

Mercedes-Benz's social media marketing strategy is a comprehensive approach that effectively leverages various platforms to increase brand recognition and consumer engagement. The brand's emphasis on engaging and high-quality content attracts the target audience. The brand's strategic utilization of emotive and empathetic posts to foster consumer engagement and long-term brand loyalty was somewhat successful. This exhaustive approach is a valuable resource for luxury automotive brands seeking to enhance their social media marketing strategies.

4. Comparison between social media marketing data and other luxury car brands

Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Porsche, and Land Rover are prestige automotive brands widely recognized and have a substantial social media presence. The subsequent comparative analysis analyzes their strategies about the data provided, emphasizing their Instagram and Facebook campaigns.

Table 1: Findings for Official Facebook account [6]

Facebook Page Content					
Categories	Brand Names				
	Mercedes-Benz	BMW	Audi	Porsche	Land Rover
Follower / Visitor	1,988,008	1,189,996	1,164,162	111,524	378,914
Shared Total Content	321	194	266	176	159
Shared Total Photos	257	169	221	115	134
Shared Total Videos	64	25	45	61	25
About	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Mission & Vision	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Present
URL	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Contact	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Visual Design Element	Present	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent

Table 1: (continued).

Commemoration of the Founders	Present	Absent	Absent	Present	Absent
Logo/Logo Design	Present	Absent	Absent	Present	Absent
Status Messages	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Special Days/National Holidays	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Corporate Magazine / Publication	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
Content For Marketing Support					
Categories		Brand Names			
	Mercedes-Benz	BMW	Audi	Porsche	Land Rover
Post Like	1,703,231	1,884,631	1,723,399	230,029	741,072
Post Comment	26,088	18,608	22,186	2136	4603
Post Sharing	45,529	39,523	52,910	6110	14,108
View Message	1,067,485	2,079,077	11,857,900	2,904,300	1,597,800

Mercedes-Benz is the leader in numerous critical metrics on Facebook, such as the number of followers and the total amount of content shared. According to Table 1, Mercedes-Benz is the most followed brand, with 1,988,008 followers, and has shared 321 pieces of content, including 257 photos and 64 videos [7]. Their frequent and diversified posting strategy maintains interest and engagement of users, as evidenced by the high level of engagement. BMW is a close second, with 1,189,996 followers and 194 shared content items. Audi and Land Rover share a smaller amount of content in total, but they maintain a consistent presence by utilizing distinctive features, including interactive content and high-quality imagery [7]. Mercedes-Benz consistently updates its fans on automotive inventions and racing-related news and posts high-quality photos [5]. This all-encompassing strategy guarantees that Mercedes-Benz remains at the vanguard of the social media landscape.

Table 2: Findings for Official Instagram Accounts [7]

Categories	Brand Names				
	Mercedes-Benz	BMW	Audi	Porsche	Land Rover
New product / Series	Present /131	Present/97	Present/85	Present/35	Present/75
Design / Production	Present/17	Present/12	Present/4	Present/10	Present/24
Activities (CSR, festivals, etc.)	Present / 44	Present/16	Present /13	Present/11	Present/7

Table 2: (continued).

Instagram Activities (contest, draw, etc.)	Present / 19	Present / 7	Present /18	Present / 9	Present/4
Brand’s Promotional	Present/2	Absent	Present/3	Present / 7	Absent
Online service (online product, service)	Present/6	Absent	Present/6	Present / 3	Absent
Campaign	Present/ 1	Present / 2	Present/4	Absent	Present/3
Instagram Page					
Categories			Brand Names		
	Mercedes-Benz	BMW	Audi	Porsche	Land Rover
Number of posts	309	177	164	120	172
Photograph	274	150	139	93	156
Video	55	27	30	53	22
Likes	802,191	447,855	414,629	37,742	100,279
Comment	8006	3407	3236	466	595
View	839,791	419,953	477,648	111043	76017
Number of followers	257,000	257,000	264,000	70,800	76,500
Number of followings	11	Absent	21	Absent	1

Mercedes-Benz maintains its position as the most popular brand on Instagram, with 257,000 followers, as indicated by Table 2 [7]. BMW follows closely behind with the same number of followers. The content strategy emphasizes posts that generate substantial engagement, such as 274 photographs and 55 videos. Mercedes-Benz's Instagram content consisted of visually appealing campaigns like #MBPhotoP and partnerships with influencers like Casey Neistat [5]. The Mercedes-Benz post received 802,191 likes and 8,006 comments, demonstrating the efficacy of this strategy in generating a high volume of interactions. BMW and Audi have a robust Instagram presence, with content strategies that prioritize user engagement activities and product demonstrations. Audi, for instance, implements contests and sweepstakes to enhance consumer engagement and brand loyalty. Audi's Instagram campaigns, which encompass contests and sweepstakes, significantly engage followers and encourage user-generated content [7].

Mercedes-Benz and BMW prioritize the development of new product lines and the cultivation of consumer interest in specific product categories. Mercedes-Benz, for instance, released 42 items to stimulate interest in new product categories, surpassing all other brands. This illustrates their strategic emphasis on the generation of audience interest in new developments and effective education. Mercedes-Benz is more active in generating interest in product categories and emphasizes new product promotions than any other brand [7]. Mercedes-Benz was distinguished by a substantial number of post favorites, remarks, and shares in terms of marketing support. Mercedes-Benz's post received 1,703,231 likes and 45,529 shares, indicating a high level of consumer engagement. Their sales and brand image were significantly enhanced by their approach of incorporating corporate accomplishments, sponsorships, and event announcements into social media content.

5. The social media marketing effectiveness of Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Porsche, and Land Rover are recognized for their substantial presence in the luxury automobile market. This section offers a comparative analysis of the efficacy of Mercedes-Benz's social media marketing compared to its competitors. The concentration is on customer-based brand equity (CBBE).

It is imperative to comprehend the concept of Customer-Based Brand Equity in order to comprehend the efficacy of social media marketing. Brand equity is the mechanism by which social media marketing influences consumer reflection. The differential impact of brand knowledge on consumer responses to the brand's marketing is the definition of customer-based brand equity [8]. Customer perceptions of brand ethics, brand awareness, and customer brand attitudes were designated as the three primary determinants of brand equity [8]. Brand loyalty results from the psychological processes and non-random behavioral responses that decision-making units exhibit over time toward one or more alternative brands within a set [3]. Brand loyalty is defined in the luxury literature as the degree to which consumers assert that they have purchased a specific brand and will continue to do so in the future [3].

Mercedes-Benz's brand recognition is enhanced by frequent and visually appealing posts on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Mercedes-Benz employs interactive content, video, and high-quality imagery to guarantee that the brand remains at the forefront of its audience's consciousness. Mercedes-Benz reinforces positive brand associations by consistently associating its vehicles with high-quality visuals and influencers. Influencers and celebrity campaigns are instrumental in developing an ideal brand image that aligns with the values and aspirations of the target audience. The meticulous presentation of Mercedes-Benz vehicles through professional photography and high-definition video enhances the perceived quality. A welcoming appearance and photographs can influence sales, as everyone is uploading images or videos for everyone to view on Instagram and other significant social media platforms [9]. The brand emphasizes the visual allure of its cars' performance and luxury features, solidifying Mercedes-Benz's status as a premium brand. A robust, passionate bond between the brand and its consumers is cultivated by providing engaging content and consistent engagement with followers. This connection results in brand loyalty, as consumers are more inclined to remain loyal to a brand that consistently engages with and resonates with them on social media.

Mercedes-Benz's social media strategy effectively improves its customer-based brand equity by leveraging strategic partnerships and high-quality content to establish brand awareness, association, perceived quality, and loyalty. The study revealed a strong and meaningful correlation between social media advertising and social media promotions, which serve as indicators of corporate-generated content, and the customer-based brand equity of the automobile brand [10]. This comparative analysis demonstrates that Mercedes-Benz dominates in numerous critical metrics due to its comprehensive and engaging approach, despite the fact that other luxury brands have implemented effective social media strategies. Mercedes-Benz has effectively established and sustained robust brand equity by integrating CBBE principles into social media marketing.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides numerous significant insights regarding the efficacy of social media marketing for luxury vehicle manufacturers, emphasizing Mercedes-Benz. A thorough examination of Mercedes-Benz's social media strategy, as well as a comparison with other luxury brands such as BMW, Audi, Porsche, and Land Rover, reveals that Mercedes-Benz excels at using high-quality visuals, interactive content, and influential strategic partnerships to boost brand awareness, engagement, and loyalty. The study's findings show that customer-based brand equity

considerably influences consumer awareness and behavior, emphasizing the significance of visual appeal and continuing interaction in preserving a premium brand image.

This study is significant because it provides a complete evaluation of the current social media marketing in the luxury vehicle business, which will be helpful to academic scholars and industry experts. By deconstructing the techniques that lead to effective brand equity, this study provides a framework for luxury firms to improve their digital marketing strategy and build relationships with customers in the digital era.

However, the study also has limitations. This research, which focuses exclusively on Mercedes-Benz, may not completely reflect the intricacies of other premium brand tactics. Furthermore, given the continuous growth of social media platforms, the techniques found in this study may need to be updated regularly to stay effective. Future study should involve a broader range of businesses and investigate the long-term effects of social media marketing on brand equity. Furthermore, researching emerging platforms and technology may reveal new insights into how luxury firms may reinvent their marketing tactics to preserve a competitive edge.

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