



AUTOMOTIVE SILVER WINNER *"If Looks Could Kill"* Toyota Motor Sales - Camry

Business Situation and Campaign Objectives

Background and Business Objectives

Within the African-American consumer market (AACM), the midsize passenger car segment is a fierce battleground. This category includes the best-selling Toyota Camry as well as two well-known rivals – Nissan Altima and Honda Accord.

The launch of the redesigned 2007 Camry was seen as an opportunity to steal share from the competition but the buyers Toyota hoped to steal did not see a reason to test drive the new Camry. Before even seeing it, African American buyers who were interested in Altima and Accord had stereotyped Camry as a “boring car for boring people”.

The challenge was to convey that the new Camry was the opposite of “boring”; to position Camry as just as surprising and unexpected as the buyers themselves.

Marketing Strategy

The marketing objectives were to:

Generate awareness for the Camry’s styling and technological advancements.

Change perceptions of Camry among African-Americans intending to buy competitive brands (“conquest intenders”) by delivering a surprising experience that would cause the target to reconsider Camry (Increase consideration).

Budget

The total budget for the assignment (“If Looks Could Kill” campaign) was approximately \$2-5 million, spread out over media, production and promotion/PR.

Research Story

In 2004, Toyota conducted a segmentation study of 2,207 African American vehicle intenders to better understand consumer segments within the African American Automotive Market. The study was designed to identify and describe naturally occurring segments and prioritize them based on attractiveness as targets for Toyota.

A key segment were the “*Flossers*” – a slang term for African Americans who “*want to drive fast and be noticed*”. They were positively inclined towards both Toyota and Japanese vehicles. This information was combined with registration data from RL Polk that showed that the African American car buying market skewed more female (57%) and was largely single (54% for African Americans versus 29% for the General Market). Polk data also showed that Toyota’s fiercest competition for the African American car buyer were Honda and Nissan.

Burrell recommended a conquest strategy (stealing share) for the launch of the redesigned 2007 Toyota Camry. We targeted African American single women- dubbed “*Femme Flossers*” - who were predisposed to buying Honda Accord and Nissan Altima. Our hypothesis was that these women might find Camry too tame for their tastes, so we aimed to develop research that would serve as a springboard for a specific creative challenge: “*What could we do to make the new Camry the opposite of ‘boring’?*”

To answer that question, we used qualitative testing and story telling techniques to understand how the *Femme Flossers*’ lifestyles, aspirations, purchase considerations and media habits differed from those of Toyota Camry “loyalists”. We spoke with African American single women who described themselves as self-confident risk takers, representing a range of professions from entrepreneurs to graphic designers. They were style-conscious, street savvy consumers who would buy Nissan Altima for its performance and Honda Accord for its styling. The *Femme Flosser*’s passion points were visceral entertainment, fashion, adventure/vacation travel, socializing with friends, and success – “*it’s all about me*”.

As expected, they considered Camry “*a family car that does not fit my lifestyle.*” In essence, Camry was seen as boring.

So we utilized the qualitative research to get feedback on a campaign aimed at showing the Camry in a surprising and unexpected way: “*If Looks Could Kill*” - a viral, predominantly unbranded approach aimed at appealing to the *Femme Flossers*’ more adventurous nature while showing off the new Camry in ways that would “*surprise and delight*”.

Campaign Description

Target Audience

African American Femme Flossers, 25-40 years of age with a household income of \$70K+, with emphasis on those giving higher purchase consideration to Camry's competition.

Campaign Idea

Toyota approved the testing of an innovative unbranded marketing concept called "If Looks Could Kill" (ILCK). ILCK was one of the first alternative reality game designed especially for an African American female audience. Burrell worked with a leader in the field, 42 Entertainment, to develop a campaign comprised of six episodes that blended digital video with interactive scenes to actively engage our audience with Bianca, our Femme Flosser heroine and her Camry.

The story had all the elements of blockbuster entertainment: exciting locales, mystery, romance, high stakes, proven sensational plot lines, a stylish car and a beautiful, take-no-prisoners femme fatale. Six episodes ran online at www.iflookscouldkill.com over a six-week period, with a new installment delivered online each week. The interactive story moved between traditional and non-traditional media to bring Bianca and her Camry vividly into the real world. When Bianca was really in trouble, she turned to the viewer for help. Participating viewers received more clues, a chance to win glamorous prizes, and opportunities to explore the new Camry while still immersed in the game.

Burrell worked with Toyota's internet marketing agency, iCrossing, to set up a marketing dashboard to track web traffic and gain learning for future African American web marketing.

Media Plan

The support for the campaign ran from June 16th through July 27th. It included print, radio, online advertising, events and public relations.

High-impact units such as custom rovision ads and video pre-roll had excellent performance due to the more engaging nature of the unit. Google targeted placements were also used to seed If Looks Could Kill messaging in contextually relevant target sites which revolved around music and where Femme Flossers could be found.

Trade and consumer press events mixed fashion and espionage via a New York City celebrity launch party and boutique shopping parties in Atlanta, DC, Chicago, Los Angeles and Philadelphia.

Business Results

The “If Looks Could Kill” campaign was tested among people who visited the site (web-intercept sample of 211 out of 194,000 unique visits), as well as among a sample of 118 people who were sent to the site (“push” sample) of Hall & Partners respondents. The site immediately changed competitive intenders image of Camry from “**suburban family car to one that is sleek and stylish.**” There was high resonance among both Camry loyalists and competitive intenders with the hero of the story, “**Bianca**”, a single African American woman seen as daring, independent and resilient.

Verbatims

“It was interesting that a Camry would be featured in a show about fashion. I usually do not associate the two. This episode made the Camry appear young and modern.”

“A new fresh internet interactive movie /mystery /puzzle! I LOVED it and can’t want to finish all the episodes. Noticed product branding that was subtle, but effective.”

“The lead character is smart, decisive, strong-willed and brave.”

“It really shows the car and what it would be like driving it in everyday situations. Those are impressions you cannot see in a commercial. It does not have that family car image. It seems younger, fresh and fabulous.”

In the Hall & Partners study, the “If Looks Could Kill” campaign was perceived as unique, distinctive and offered a clever way to engage with consumers. Those respondents who experienced the website found it entertaining, imaginative and buzz worthy.

Overall, ILCK generated positive opinion about the Toyota brand and shifted Camry perception towards “stylish”, “up-to-date”, and “innovative”. Perceptions of innovation and design (*a step ahead, cutting edge design, technologically advanced, advanced engineering*) were successfully elevated. The campaign was also effective at driving consideration and generating

awareness among targeted African-American women after being exposed to the site. Additionally, the media and PR results far exceeded the campaign's goals.

Results Summary

Our goal was to generate awareness for Camry's styling and technology

- 296 million in paid media impressions achieved, exceeding goal by 257%
- Generated slightly over 1 billion PR impressions, equivalent to \$10,336,370 in paid media

KEY AWARENESS AND ACTION MEASURES	GOAL	ACTUALS
Media Impressions	83MM Impressions	296MM Impressions
PR Impressions	15MM	1B Impressions
Unique Visits	500K-2MM	194K Unique Visits
Actions	10K-100K	25K Actions

Our biggest challenge was changing perceptions of what is already the best-selling car brand among African Americans:

- Post exposure perception of Camry grew by 12 percentage points, exceeding goal by 140%
- Post exposure change in purchase consideration for Camry was 18 percentage points, exceeding goal by 260%
- Post exposure levels of vibrancy (positive buzz) for Camry grew by 33 percentage points, exceeding goal by 560%

KEY BRAND IMAGERY MEASURES (Hall & Partners)	GOAL	ACTUALS		
		Pre-Exposure (Push Sample)	Post-Exposure (Push Sample)	% Change
Change Perceptions	+3-5 % points	84%	96%	+12%
Drive Consideration	+3-5 % points	64%	82%	+18%
Generate Awareness/Vibrancy	+3-5 % points	64%	97%	+33%